

Sermon for The Third Sunday after Pentecost

Date: June 21, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Jeremiah 20:7-13

Epistle Reading: Romans 6:12-23

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

Sermon Text: Romans 6:12-23

Sermon Title: Living the Baptismal Life

Introit: Psalm 36:3-4,10-11; Antiphon: Psalm 56:13

Hymns:

LSB 685 – Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

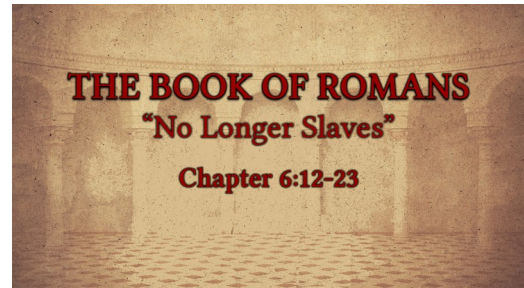
LSB 570 – Just As I Am Without One Plea

LSB 637 – Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord

LSB 555 – Salvation Unto Us has Come

Liturgy:

Divine Service IV p. 203



Songs

Come and Behold Him

Above All

Hide Me In Your Holiness

Hosanna

All Who Are Thirsty

I Believe In Jesus

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Matthew 10:5a, 21–33

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, . . .

“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

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Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today St. Paul teaches us:

Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies.

You'll notice he did not say, "don't let sin happen." That would be, as you well know, impossible. There is not one of us who is without sin and without the need for forgiveness. He said, "do not let sin reign." Do not let it rule you; your thoughts, words, or deeds. Do not let it be in charge. That I think, is something with which we should all agree. No one wants to be under the rule of sin.

The question however is not what we want, but what is. What is it like in your life? Do you control your sin, or does your sin control you? Take a look at your life. When we are hurt, what is our first reaction, to forgive or to hurt back? What are you more likely to do, hold a grudge, or let it go? Do you lose your temper and lash out at others? What about despair? Do the people, events and tragedies around us reveal a lack of faith and trust in our good and gracious God, by making us fretful? In all these ways we see the sin that lives in us, but the question remains, is it controlling us?

What about how we view sin, or how we react to it. That might reveal something. Do we consider sin dangerous? Certainly if someone were to come up to you and point a weapon at you, you would recognize the danger of the situation and you'd try to avoid it. How about when a car swerves into your lane while you are driving. You see the danger and try to avoid it. Do we see sin like that, as danger bearing down on us? Or have we lost our fear of sin? Do we think that when we sin are we just being a little naughty! Is sin controlling our minds and our thoughts?

St. Paul sees the danger. He calls it, not harmless or naughty, but slavery! Captivity! That's not a good thing. Yet don't we sometimes see sin as enjoyable, pleasurable, or even necessary? Enjoying ourselves as we destroy another person's reputation. Finding pleasure in lust or greed, or thinking we have to tell little lies, embellish our resume in order to survive? What do you think: do you control your sin, or does your sin control you?

The answer I'm going to give you may surprise you. It is neither. While it's true that you do not always control your sin, because you do sin, it is also true that your sin does not control you. It does not have dominion over you, as your king, as your lord. The evidence of that is the fact that you are here. You are here today under a different King, a different Lord. You are here to repent of your sin and live

under Him in His kingdom. You are here so that He would have dominion over you, by His Word and Spirit.

So you are doing exactly what Paul said to do:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies . . . but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

You are presenting yourself to God in repentance. Through His forgiveness He raises you to a new life. When you are here in repentance, sin does not have dominion over you. If sin were your lord and king you would not be here, but you are here:

... to live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.¹

You see the opposite of sinning, for the Christian, is not to not sin. That's what we think of first, but you know that's impossible. To live in His kingdom is not to live under the Law, relying on what I can do, relying on my strength, like The Little Engine That Could, telling ourselves I think I can, I think I can, I think, I can get over the mountain of my sin in my life. The problem is the mountain of sin in our lives is a mountain that has no end! While we may think we can, we can't. All of our effort to overcome sin will simply wear us out, and sooner or later crush us.

The opposite of sinning for the Christian is not to not sin. It is not to look to ourselves for the solution. The solution is to look to Jesus. For the Christian the opposite of sinning is repenting. That is to live under grace. That is to come before our King exactly as we are, and exactly as He wants us, as needy and undeserving, to receive His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. That is the highest worship of God. Not to offer Him our goodness but to receive His goodness.²

To come here in repentance and faith is to look to Jesus for the answer to your sin and to live as the baptized child of God that you are.³ For the Christian life begins here, and then goes out there. What you receive here is lived out there. It is your Baptism that sets you free. It is your Baptism that has raised you from a dead life of sin to a new life in Christ. Your Baptism has made you a child of God, a member of His family.

1 Small Catechism: Explanation to the Second Article of the Creed

2 Augsburg Confession. XXI.3; Apology IV.154, 310

3 1 John 3:1

That is what Paul talked about in the first eleven verses of Romans chapter 6, right before those we read today. That is the basis of the Christian life. By using that little, often overlooked word, “therefore.” Because of that reality: your Baptism, therefore this reality: a new life under a new King and Lord. A new life lived under grace. A new life which bears good fruit. Because you cannot bear good fruit until you have been grafted into the Good Tree.⁴ There’s only One. The Tree that grew from the stump of Jesse.⁵ The new Tree of Life named Jesus Christ.

So we deal with our sin not by trying to control it, but by having Christ kill it, by having it kill Him. His resurrection from the dead was the end of our sin, and the death of our death. To die and rise with Christ is the only way to deal with sin. To die and rise with Christ, living in our Baptism each and every day. To die and rise with Christ, living in His resurrecting forgiveness each and every day. To die and rise with Christ, eating and drinking His crucified and risen body and blood, not only living in Him but He in us. Christ living in us. and working in us and through us. Jesus reigning over us from the throne of the cross.

Then, from the life of Christ, will flow our life in the world, and the fruits of good works. The word Paul uses for that is sanctification, or in other words the holy life that we live because the holy One lives in us.

That confidence is what enabled Jeremiah to live and prophesy among such a sinful, rebellious, murderous world. He knew the Lord was with him, and that confidence is what enabled the disciples to go out into a world of such sinfulness and rebelliousness. Because the Lord was with them. That confidence is what enables us to go out into this sinful, rebellious, murderous world. The Lord is with us. We have what is most sure in this world: Jesus’ Name, Jesus’ Promise, and Jesus’ Spirit. Your Father knows every hair on your head. He knows every sparrow that falls to the ground, and you are worth much more than them. You were worth the death of His Son! So that you might live and not die. The wages of sin are paid, and you have the free gift of God, eternal life, in Christ Jesus your Lord. To live under His reign, no longer a slave to sin, but as a child of God.

Amen.

4 John 15:5

5 Isaiah 11



Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people