

Sermon for The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

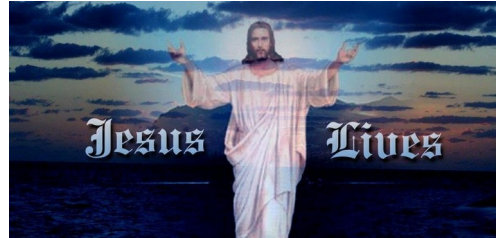
Date: July 8, 2018

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

Old Testament: Isaiah 53:1-12

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 1:3-12

Gospel Reading: John 1:1-14



Sermon Title: Good News: Jesus Saves

Introit: Psalm 2:7-11; Antiphon: Psalm 2:12

Hymns:

LSB 524 – How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

LSB 525 – Crown Him with Many Crowns

LSB 781 – We Give Thee but Thine Own (v.1-2)

LSB 537 – Beautiful Savior

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p. 184



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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

This is the third message in a series of ten sermons that we're having this summer. This third message is called: Good News: Jesus Saves. Last week we heard that the Bible has two basic messages. First you are a sinner. Second God saved you from your sins. How did He save you? By sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is full of prophecies about who the Messiah would be, and how people would recognize Him. These prophecies were written hundreds and even thousands of years before Jesus' birth. They were written so that people would know what to look for, and how to recognize the real Messiah when He came.

For example:

Micah 5:2 You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, are too small to be included among Judah's cities. Yet, from you Israel's future ruler will come for me. His origins go back to the distant past, to days long ago.

Isaiah 7:14 So the Lord himself will give you this sign: A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel [which means: God Is With Us].

Isaiah 9:6-7 A child will be born for us. A son will be given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. He will be named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and peace will have unlimited growth. He will establish David's throne and kingdom. He will uphold it with justice and righteousness now and forever. The Lord of Armies is determined to do this!

Isaiah 53:2-5 He grew up in his presence like a young tree, like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that would make us look at him. He had nothing in his appearance that would make us desire him. He was despised and rejected by people. He was a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. He was despised like one from whom people turn their faces, and we didn't consider him to be worth anything. He certainly has taken upon himself our suffering and carried our sorrows, but we thought that God had wounded him, beat him, and punished him. He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace, and we received healing from his wounds.

And of course the very first promise of the Messiah:

Genesis 3:15 I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants and her Descendant hostile toward each other. He will crush your head, and you will bruise His heel."

From Genesis chapter 3 on to the end of the Old Testament there is a single common thread woven into the tapestry of God's plan for His people that would one day bring the Holy Messiah of God to save us. That thread includes over 300 specific prophecies about the Messiah, and hundreds and hundreds of other examples and images, that people would recognize in the Messiah when He came.

His name in the Old Testament is Immanuel which in English means: "God is With Us." His name in the New Testament is Jesus which in English means "God Saves." Christ is the title given to Him. It means "The Anointed One."

This Jesus was born miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit through Mary His mother. He was born the very Son of God. Fully and truly God, and fully and truly human, now and into eternity.

Jesus had to be true God because only God could be perfect enough, only God could keep God's Law perfectly enough, to please God. He had to be true man because God is not under the Law we are. It is one of us that must make restitution for all sins committed by all people. Jesus stands as both true God and true man, and as both paid for our sins with His life.

How did Jesus die for our sins? It is too often assumed that the betrayal, arrest, and execution of Jesus just happened, and Jesus took advantage of it. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is important to know that Jesus planned, and controlled, each and every step that lead to His death on the cross.

Jesus said:

John 10:17-18 The Father loves me because I give my life in order to take it back again. No one takes my life from me. I give my life of my own free will. I have the authority to give my life, and I have the authority to take my life back again. This is what my Father ordered me to do.

Jesus was not ambushed.

Matthew 26:51-54 Suddenly, one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of the chief priest's servant. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword away! All who use a sword will be killed by a sword. *Don't you think that I could call on my Father to send more than twelve legions of angels to help me now?* But how then are the Scriptures to be fulfilled that say this must happen?"

To Pilate Jesus said:

John 19:10-11 Pilate said to Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer me? Don't you know that I have the authority to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered Pilate, "You wouldn't have any authority over me if it hadn't been given to you from above."

For the final point, to Jesus absolute control, you need a little history lesson. When Jesus walked the Earth everyday at 3:00pm a lamb would be sacrificed for the sins of the people.

Scripture records:

Matthew 27:45 At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

John 19:30 [*Then Jesus said,*] "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head, and gave up His spirit.

Jesus died at the time of His choosing. At the time of the daily sacrifice. Not as just another sacrifice of many, but as the one time perfect sacrifice for all sin, for all time, for all people. How did Jesus die? He died the way He planned to die. The way He planned to die even before Adam

and Eve were given the promise. From before the creation of the world.¹ This was God's plan to show us how deeply and desperately He loves us.

So Jesus died for your sins. Other people have died for noble causes. A little over a month ago we celebrated Memorial Day remembering the thousands of people who have given their lives for our freedom. This week we remembered them again as we celebrated our freedom bought at the cost of their lives. Jesus' death did pay the full price. Your salvation was accomplished on that Good Friday. Which is why we call the day Jesus died, 'good.' However that is not all that He did. Jesus was engaged in a holy war. In war the winners don't die.

Jesus descended into Hell, not to suffer but to proclaim His victory.² Jesus defeated sin, and the devil, but one enemy remained. We were created to live forever. We are, and will always be eternal beings, having no end. The problem is death has come.³ Death that made us eternally separated from God. Jesus had to defeat Death the final and greatest enemy.⁴ The enemy that kept us away from God.

On that first Easter Sunday, sin was defeated, the devil's plans for you were destroyed, Jesus had crushed his head.⁵ Then Jesus rose from the dead. He is called the first born of the dead.⁶ Not because He was the first person to come back to life, because even He raised people back to life. He was the first to come back from eternal separation from God – eternal death, to eternal life with God.

What has all of this accomplished for you? The day Adam and Eve ate from that forbidden tree they died to God. They were separated from God for all eternity. So are all of their descendants, including you. On the day Jesus died the work to fix that was finished, save one thing. Death must still be defeated. Death, that thing that pulled you away from God's loving arms; Death that thing that condemned you to eternity away from God; Death, that vile and abominable thing that brings us pain and grief in this world, had to be put down, had to be defeated once and for all.

On Easter Sunday Jesus rose from the dead and walked out of that tomb alive. He defeated that final enemy once and for all. For all people, for all time, forever. He did that for all people. He did that for the angry atheist who despises Him. He did that for the enemies of the Church within and without. He did that for governments that persecute His followers even today. He even did that for you. So now the final question is what did you do to contribute to all of that work? Of course the correct answer is nothing.

It is because of Christ's victory that you have been given victory. So has everyone who ever has, or ever will, live. No one, and nothing, can take that away from you.

Lucifer, who's name means "Son of the Dawn" is most perhaps the most powerful being God ever created. Powerful enough to think he could thwart God and take His throne. Powerful enough to command a third of all the army of Heaven. Powerful enough to want to take God's worship and praise for himself. Not even he can take your victory from you. Not even he, with all of his power and might, enkindled with all of his hatred and rage, can muster the power required to strip you of your salvation.

1 Ephesians 1:4

2 1 Peter 3:19

3 Genesis 2:17

4 1 Corinthians 15:26

5 Genesis 3:15

6 Colossians 1:18

Compared to him we are feeble, weak, and insignificant. We do not have such power, and even the most bitter among us could never gather up sufficient rage to match his unlimited contempt for God and all that God has made. Compared to him we are infirm and puny, yet he has no power over us. Only you can take your salvation from you. Only you. Only your unbelief. Only your unrepentance. Only you have the power and authority to remove you from God's eternal care and love. Only you.

God did everything to save you. You need only to repent of your sins. That means apologize and believe in Jesus for your salvation. Now there are only two things that can keep you out of Heaven. They are unbelief and unrepentance. Nothing else can take you away from God's free gift of salvation.⁷

Do you struggle with doubts, fears, and concerns about your salvation, your faith, and your freedom under the Gospel? When that filthy worm called Satan and the devil attacks you with such things pray like the man who asked Jesus to heal his son. "I believe! Help my unbelief!!" Then say, "Amen!" A Hebrew word that means, "It will be so." Know that God hears your prayers, and knows your needs,⁸ and will give you faith. Faith that saves.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

7 John 10:28-29

8 Matthew 6:8