

Sermon for the funeral of Bob William Schulz

Date: January 4, 2019

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

Old Testament: Isaiah 12:1-6

Epistle Reading: 1 Peter 2:20-25

Gospel Reading: Luke 12:22-32



Sermon Text: 1 Peter 2:20-25

Sermon Title: Standing Forgiven Before God

Hymns:

Borning Cry

LSB 752 – Be Still My Soul

LSB 363 – Silent Night (v.1)

LSB 662 – Onward Christian Soldiers



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Text: 1 Peter 2:20-25

What credit do you deserve if you endure a beating for doing something wrong? If you endure suffering for doing something good, God is pleased with you.

God called you to endure suffering because Christ suffered for you. He left you an example so that you could follow in his footsteps. Christ never committed any sin. He never spoke deceitfully. Christ never verbally abused those who verbally abused him. When he suffered, he didn't make any threats but left everything to the one who judges fairly.

Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross so that freed from our sins, we could live a life that has God's approval. His wounds have healed you. You were like lost sheep. Now you have come back to the shepherd and bishop of your lives.

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Grace, to you and peace in the name of Jesus, the Savior born in Bethlehem. Amen.

The Advent season of the Church Year is that time before Christmas that we use to prepare for, and anticipate, the birth of the Christ child. Advent, and the anticipation of Jesus' first arrival on this Earth is tied to His second coming, when He will return with power and might. The two are rarely separated. So as we are gathered here in this church just after Christmas we have two things to think about.

The first is the fact that Jesus was born. We just celebrated that wonderful event. It is wonderful because it is when Jesus came down to live like one of us. Without that single event in time there would be: no hope, no joy, no peace, no grace, no mercy for any of us. Without the birth of Jesus we would be living in nothing but despair, depression and sorrow. He came as the Prince of Peace to give peace to His people on Earth.¹ That is the true miracle of Christmas and the real reason for the season. The birth of that Holy Child who brought salvation to you.

He did that by taking every bad thing we have ever done, or will ever do, on Himself. He never held anything against us. When the people ridiculed Him, when the Roman soldiers mocked him, when the criminals were cursing Him, He said, "Father forgive them."²

So what happened to those Pharisees and Sadducees, those roman soldiers, and all those who mocked Jesus? What happened to them? The Bible does tell us that some of them changed their thinking and became believers, just like you and me.

The criminal on the cross next to Him heard Jesus say, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise."³ The roman soldier who watched Jesus die said, "Surely this was the Son of God."⁴ Scripture also records that even some of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to faith in time. Here you have people who spit on Him, lied about Him, beat Him, tortured Him, spent years trying to destroy Him, and for those who hearts were changed, who believed, what happened when they stood before the throne of God where Jesus sits in judgment? For those who repented and believed in Jesus, they heard the words, "Welcome home."⁵?

1 **Luke 2:14** – Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those who have his good will!

2 **Luke 23:34** – Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing."

3 **Luke 23:43** – Jesus said to him, "I can guarantee this truth: Today you will be with me in paradise."

4 **Matthew 27:54** – A centurion and those watching Jesus with him saw the earthquake and the other things happening. They were terrified and said, "Certainly, this was the Son of God!"

5 **Matthew 25:21** – His master replied, 'Well done! You are a good and faithful servant! You proved that you could be trusted with a small amount. I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and share your master's happiness.'

Which brings us to the second thing we have to think about today. The first was Jesus birth along with is death and resurrection, the second is that day when each of us must stand before His throne and give an answer.

Jesus came to this Earth because He was desperate to love us, and He desperately wanted to save everyone.⁶ He never hurt us but we hurt Him. The human race hurt Him, even hated Him, and executed Him, and He did nothing to deserve any of it. That is what we all do to Jesus. We push Him away. We hurt the One who came to love us. We cause God frustration, exasperation and disappointment, because we do not live our lives the way we should, and we fill our hearts with the poison of sin.

Yet for everyone the day of your own personal final judgment will come. How will God judge you? What is the standard, what is the bar we must reach so that we can be declared acceptable to God, loved by God, and welcomed home by God? How good do we have to be? Jesus said, if you miss one comma in the Law of God you are guilty of breaking all of it.⁷ So how do you make it right again with God?

The answer is you don't, you won't, you can't do anything to fix all that you have messed up between you and God. He has every right to throw you away and never think about you again. We've all done things that fail to show love for God. Yet He calls Himself our Heavenly Father, He sent us His only Son to die for us, and still we don't act they way we should, we still push our Heavenly Father away, we still push Jesus away. We still tax the Holy Spirit.⁸ God would be well within His rights to hate us but He won't. He doesn't. He forgives.

Jesus said, "If you don't forgive others, your Father in Heaven will not forgive you."⁹ In fact we pray that very thing each and every time we pray the Lord's Prayer. You know the words, we've all said them many times. "Forgive us our

6 **1 Timothy 2:3-4** – This is good and pleases God our Savior. 4 He wants all people to be saved and to learn the truth.

7 **Matthew 5:17-20** – Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true. I can guarantee this truth: Until the earth and the heavens disappear, neither a period nor a comma will disappear from the Scriptures before everything has come true. So whoever sets aside any command that seems unimportant and teaches others to do the same will be unimportant in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches what the commands say will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I can guarantee that unless you live a life that has God's approval and do it more faithfully than the experts in Moses' Teachings and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

8 **Galatians 5:19-21** – Now, the effects of the corrupt nature are obvious: illicit sex, perversion, promiscuity, idolatry, drug use, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, conflict, factions, envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and similar things. I've told you in the past and I'm telling you again that people who do these kinds of things will not inherit God's kingdom.

9 **Matthew 6:14-15** – If you forgive the failures of others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failures.

trespasses, as [*or like*] we forgive those who trespass against us.¹⁰” Those words mean, “Lord, forgive me the way I forgive others.” So then what is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is making a choice to *keep no record* of past wrongs. Scripture describes Heaven as having books that have in them a record of all that you have done.¹¹ They will be opened and read in front of everyone when you stand before God. How many look forward to that event? Yet for those who believe in Jesus blood covers all of their sins, because God forgives. He chooses to keep no record of the wrongs.

Forgiveness is *choosing not to punish* the wrongs that were done. We all deserve eternal punishment for the way we’ve lived our lives. Not one of us here can stand before God and say, “Look at me! Look at how perfect I am!” We deserve punishment for our sins, but God chooses not to punish us for the wrongs we’ve done.

Forgiveness is *freedom from bitterness*. Imagine what the heart of God would be like if He would dwell on every sin committed by humankind. Think about all mess in this world. If God chose to dwell on all of that, what would His heart be like? If you stood in His place, if you sat on God’s throne and saw all of that mess and sin, what would your heart be like? It would be filled with poison and bitterness. Yet God’s heart is filled with love for us. It is filled with love because God chooses to forgive.

When all of the mess in this world finally brought Him to the cross, when everything we had done had finally nailed Him to those posts, He said, “Father forgive them.” Even there He would not allow bitterness to fill His heart. For those who believe on Jesus Christ, for those who rely on Him to fix what we’ve have broken, no matter what we’ve have done, there is forgiveness.¹²

That is the real miracle of Christmas. After all we had done, and still do, Jesus came to us as an innocent Baby. A Baby who would grow up and save the world. When you look into that manger you see more than the sweet face of a baby. You see the face of God, and there is care, love, concern and forgiveness in His eyes. That is the reason for this season. That is the true miracle of Christmas.

10 **Matthew 6:12** – Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

11 **Revelation 20:11-12** – I saw a large, white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence, but no place was found for them. I saw the dead, both important and unimportant people, standing in front of the throne. Books were opened, including the Book of Life. The dead were judged on the basis of what they had done, as recorded in the books.

12 **Acts 10:42-43** – He ordered us to warn the people, ‘God has appointed Jesus to judge the living and the dead.’ In addition, all the prophets testify that people who believe in the one named Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins through him.

Bob Shultz believed in Jesus. He believed Jesus came to save him and forgive him. This past Christmas Eve was a hard one for this family. They were not sitting around the Christmas Tree, they were sitting around a bed. They weren't waiting for gifts in excitement, they were waiting for Bob to breath his last. Yet, in true Christmas form they, and Bob, were also waiting for Jesus. Waiting for Jesus to carry Bob safely home.

At Jesus' birth angel filled the skies to sing, "Glory to God in the highest..."¹³ As that event was remembered in heaven this past Christmas Eve, Bob was given the privileged of hearing that angel chorus himself.

God knows that life on this Earth can be hard. It is for that reason He took salvation out of our hands, and took care of it Himself.¹⁴ For those who call on Him and His name, and believe in Him and His salvation, there is forgiveness in the face of that little Babe of Bethlehem. The same forgiveness seen in that same face which you will see when you stand before the throne of Heaven. When you hear those words, "Welcome home." Just like Bob just did.

For those who believe on His name, He gave the power to be called children of God.¹⁵ No matter what we've done, no matter where we've come from, if we will call on Jesus, if we will believe in Him, salvation is ours.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

13 **Luke 2:14** – Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those who have his good will!

14 **Ephesians 2:8-9** – God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It's not the result of anything you've done, so no one can brag about it.

15 **John 1:12** – To all who receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God