

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

[Jesus said:] “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”

One of the mysteries about the Holy Trinity, let alone that God is one God in Three Persons, is the communication between the persons. In theology we talk about the “economy” of the Trinity, which is how all Three Persons interact even as God is one God. There are internal and external dimensions to this as the Bible teaches us. The external things are the works attributed to the different persons such as creation with the Father and redemption with the Son and sanctification with the Holy Spirit all the while maintaining the oneness to his very essence as God.

It all starts to get very deep, and you begin to scratch your head at times because at the end of the day, the Holy Trinity is a mystery that is confessed and not necessarily understood. In the Gospel reading today there is some of this revealed as Jesus speaks about himself, the Holy Spirit, and the Father. Yet there’s a purpose in all this Jesus said. He’s not simply giving a theological lecture rather he’s proclaiming great comfort to the disciples and to you.

Listen again to what Jesus said. Jesus said, “But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”

Jesus went to the Father as he was offered up on the cross for your salvation. The disciples didn’t ask Jesus, “Where are you going?” here in this instance because they knew the answer. Jesus told them many times and had to rebuke them for not wanting him to go and do what must be done. Jesus though reiterates what must happen and why. The Hymn of the Day for this Sunday of the Church Year, “Dear Christians One and All Rejoice” proclaims what Jesus said in this Gospel reading. Martin Luther wrote this hymn and in stanzas five and six we sang, “God said to His beloved Son: “It’s time to have compassion. Then go, bright jewel of My crown, And bring to all salvation. From sin and sorrow set them free; Slay bitter death for them that they May live with You forever. The Son obeyed His Father’s will, Was born of virgin mother; And God’s good pleasure to fulfill, He came to be my brother. His royal pow’r disguised He bore; A servant’s form, like mine, He wore To lead the devil captive.”

The Son of God was sent by the Father for the very purpose of being obedient to the Father in his life and death. He was sent to do this and went back to the Father having accomplished what he was sent to do. His perfectly obedient, sinless, life was to be sacrificed in place of you. Jesus told his disciples here that he goes back to the Father and he goes back through the cross. His path passes through death. Is it to your advantage that Jesus did this? Absolutely it is, for without the Word becoming flesh, fulfilling God’s law, and suffering God’s wrath against sin you would be lost forever. As we heard last week, and will continue to hear in the weeks ahead, Jesus also points you to his ascension to the right hand of the Father where he rules and reigns in all glory even as he is still present bodily and here with you now as he is fully God and fully man.

We’ve arrived around the half way point of the Easter season where the focus of the Gospel readings prepare you for Pentecost and Ascension. Salvation is accomplished in and through Jesus. He goes away to suffering and death so that you are forgiven and have eternal life. He is raised for your justification and now, all things being fulfilled and complete, Jesus see to it that salvation is distributed or given out to you. The ascension of Jesus promises you the Lord is present and ruling over his church. He has gone to right hand of the Father and sends is still with you always to the end of the age. This is all for your advantage right here and now.

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The advantage you have is that the Holy Spirit is working because he has been sent by the Son. The Holy Spirit, who is fully God just as much as the Father and the Son because God is one, is doing mighty things in the world and in your midst, in your life. The world stands without excuse as it is convicted before God in its sin. When you look around you and see the state of affairs and the sinful state of the world you are revealed by the Holy Spirit through the word of God that unbelief is all around you. Likewise, there is only one who is truly righteous and only one in which righteousness is found, it's Jesus who went to the Father on your behalf. Seeking righteousness in any other way or form is not only impossible but mocks Christ, the righteous one. With all of this too the ruler of this world, the devil is judged. He has already been judged and so to turn away from Christ, his word, and his church is to stand under the same judgment as the devil.

The Holy Spirit proclaims this all to you as you have God's word in your midst. He convicts and convinces through this word as the Greek word has both of those meanings of convict and convince in it. There is a pronouncement and also a content to be heard and learned in what he says. God's warning for the Christian Church, for you, is to pay attention to the Holy Spirit. God's voice is speaking in this world, don't neglect it. In the Epistle reading God says through St. James, "Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

The comfort in all of this is what Jesus tells you. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." The Holy Spirit listens and then proclaims it all to you, he gives it to you. The Greek word here Jesus uses for what the Holy Spirit does is the same word for "declare" is connected to the word for angel "angel." Now, obviously Jesus isn't saying the Holy Spirit is angel, the Holy Spirit is God. Jesus is teaching you that the Holy Spirit has a message and content to his message that is handed over to you. He doesn't simply zap faith, "saying faith!" No, the Holy Spirit preaches God's word as himself works through that same word. The Holy Spirit is a preacher. This is one of the reasons why we as Lutherans rightly stress the proper work of the Holy Spirit. Anytime you think about the Holy Spirit and what he does you should automatically think "means of grace, word and sacraments." There are certainty and comfort in what Jesus says. You aren't left guessing if God is at work in your life and you aren't left searching where God is to be found.

Jesus promises you the Holy Spirit is your Helper, Comforter, Counselor, and all these things as he has been sent to deliver Jesus and his work to you through the means of grace. Is the Holy Spirit at work right now? Yes he is and he is saying to you right now, "your sin is forgiven, you are an heir of eternal life." You see there is certainty then for you and the Christian church, God is at work and he is declaring all of these things to you.

Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice this day. Sing to the Lord and call upon this day. Salvation is accomplished. Christ's work is finished and you know what is yours. All of it. All of Jesus and his perfect life, atoning death, resurrection from the dead, and eternal life it's all yours. The Holy Spirit himself gives it to you. The Holy Spirit himself gives it to you. Think about that for a second. I started off by talking about the Holy Trinity all that he is and does. Jesus used the apostles and some others to write the Holy Scriptures after his ascension and Jesus tells you, sitting here this very instant, that "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." In all that is the mystery of God and all that he has, the Holy Spirit

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hands it over through the word of God to you. God himself, the Holy Spirit, takes what belongs to the Son and declares it to you. It's yours freely and fully solely out of God's mercy and grace to you in Christ.

So here it all it dear saints, here's Christ. You are baptized into him, he gives you his Scriptures and he preaches to you, you eat and drink his body and blood given and shed for you. Jesus is for you and this glorifies Jesus that he gives himself to you and you have eternal life. Jesus is crucified for you dear people of God. The Holy Spirit is delivering this to you right now even as he has called you to faith in Christ and gathered you together into the Christian Church. So what does Jesus say to you? You just sang it, "To me He said: "Stay close to Me, I am your rock and castle. Your ransom I Myself will be; For you I strive and wrestle. For I am yours, and you are Mine, And where I am you may remain; The foe shall not divide us. Though he will shed My precious blood, Me of My life bereaving, All this I suffer for your good; Be steadfast and believing. Life will from death the vict'ry win; My innocence shall bear your sin, And you are blest forever."

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.