

The Third Sunday in Lent

March 12, 2023

“Not only that...and much more then!” (Romans 5:6-11)

By Rev. Ed Weber

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 3rd Sunday in Lent is from our Epistle reading Romans 5:6-8 and the three verses 9-11 which follow.

“6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Here ends our text.

Does this text seem to you like Paul is super salesman? Like a salesperson at a car dealership who walks around the car pointing out all its features, opens the doors, lets you sit in it and highlights all the latest gadgetry? Look... you've got a 2.0 turbocharged engine. And not only that, you'll get 34 miles to the gallon on the highway. And more than that, look at this safety features...you've got a lane change alert and blind zone alert, rear cross traffic alert. This vehicle is going to give you peace of mind that if someone is getting to close, it will let you know! That comes in handy as we age and we don't see our blind spots as well as we used to. You notice I include myself in the “we”.

“Peace of mind”. That's what you want when you get into a vehicle and drive it from point A to point B, along with all the other creature comforts of a heated this or duel zone cooled that...

In a much more important and profound sense, Paul is laying out for all people what is the vehicle that gives the ultimate peace of mind. What is the vehicle that

will get you from point A – without strength, an ungodly, to point B – reconciled, saved, freed from God’s wrath, and rejoicing in Him!

What is that vehicle? Or better said... Who is this vehicle that will take you from condemnation to eternal glory in heaven? Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There is none other who can do this. As Pastor Goetz explained so well last Wednesday, there is only one High Priest who can enter the holy of holies behind the veil without first making a sacrifice for Himself. He doesn’t need to, because Jesus alone is the righteous One. And He Himself is the sacrifice who spilled His blood on the altar of the cross, on the mercy seat. For His blood plead for our mercy and accomplished this once and for all, for all people!

Basically, all the modern-day car manufacturers offer you the same thing standard things. Of course, there are difference in bells and whistles, reliability and so on. And that’s what a salesperson’s job is to do, isn’t it? Tell you why this car is better than the others you might be considering, and, of course, find the best way for you to pay for it.

Well, when it comes to spiritual matters, there is only one water that gives life. Only one water quenches your thirst so that you will never thirst again. There is only One person who can give you access to the Father. There is only one Door that is opened for you to heaven. Listen to the first two verses of our epistle again:

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

“Through our Lord Jesus Christ”. He is the only way to have access into this grace in which we stand. We stand. There is no cowering. We stand at peace with God through Jesus. We stand by grace and rejoice in hope of God’s glory which He promises to give to us!

Your faith, my faith, the faith of every believer, is God’s gift to you to receive what God has accomplished for every ungodly human being – our justification. The vehicle which takes you to heaven, with all the bells and whistles has been manufactured, for all people. Listen how Paul closes chapter 4 again which we heard last week:

“23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up

Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

Last week, we heard Paul spend a lot of time speaking of Abraham, the father of all believers. What was imputed to him? Christ's work who was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification. Abraham believed that the coming Messiah would be from his offspring though he and Sarah were physically unable to have children because of their old age, their deadness as Scripture says.

But, there is life in Jesus! Abraham's justification, our justification, the world's justification took place when Jesus was raised from the dead!

Listen to how Dr. Paul Kretzmann in his popular commentary tells of this glorious news.

“through Christ's sufferings on the cross, the atonement of death, have been sealed by the resurrection of Christ; for it is a declaration before all the world that the object of Christ's death has been gained, that God has accepted the reconciliation, that the victory of Jesus is a formal and solemn absolution which God has pronounced upon sinful mankind.”

Ah, as we go through this Lenten season, we see how this vehicle to heaven was built, through the perfect life of Jesus, the righteous man, who dared to die for us while we were still sinners. There was nothing appealing about us that He should give His life on the cross. In fact, the opposite is true. He knew all that we have done... all the evil that we have done in our lives. He knows it all.

He knew all that the woman at the well had done in her life. That amazed her. That knowing her sins, He would come to her, talk to her and offer her the water of life. And that is because, Jesus justified all people by His death on the cross. It's done and accomplished. His resurrection that we look forward to celebrating is the pronouncement by God that it is so. Jesus died for all people – Jews and Gentiles as we heard last week in chapter 4 – circumcised and uncircumcised, Samaritans, Americans, Mexicans, Canadians, Russians – all people's sins have been pardoned.

God has justified all the ungodly. And that includes you and me! The vehicle to heaven, Jesus atoning work, has been built. And God simply says, get in and drive! It's been paid for by the blood of the Lamb. It's yours – title and all!

Get in and drive. Experience the ride by faith that you have been graciously given! And, oh what a ride it is! By faith, you receive what God has accomplished for all people, your justification. You are justified – “just as if I’d never sinned”. Because the Righteous Man, Jesus, has died for us. Verse 9 tells us this good news!

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

For this vehicle’s GPS is programmed to drive straight to heaven. It cannot make a wrong turn and take you to the condemnation of hell for there is no longer any wrath against you. It was all placed upon Jesus at the cross!

This is the good news that the Samaritan village in John chapter 4 rejoiced in. For after the woman at the well spoke with Jesus, she went back to her village and told them about the One who knew everything about her and offered her water that quenches her thirst to everlasting life. Is this not the Christ? She challenged the other people. And they went and heard for themselves. Lift up your eyes, Jesus told His disciples and look at the white harvest that is approaching. For God loves all people and wants all people to be saved.

Lift up your eyes and see those around you who also are looking to quench their eternal thirst and tell them about Jesus, the Savior of the world. That’s what the woman at the well did.

“39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word.

42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

We believe. Yes, they were enjoying the ride in their new turbo charged vehicle to heaven.

So, in these few verse of Romans chapter 5, Paul shows off all the features of this beautiful vehicle of salvation, Jesus Christ – justification, reconciliation with God, peace with God, saved from wrath, saved by His life, the hope of glory. As we admire what God has given to us, Paul keeps telling us, “and not only that”, and

more than that”. He points us to our destination of heaven to which we are travelling, but more than that, Paul says that the ride there that we are travelling even now is beautiful. Listen to verse three and four again:

“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

God turns all our tests and tribulations into triumphs. He turns them to our good. For He builds us up in the ways that He knows are best for us so that we hold even more firmly to our hope in Jesus. Yes, we even glory, rejoice in our tribulations!

For through them God pours out His love through the Holy Spirit.

“5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

There’s no buyer’s remorse ever. For your salvation has been bought by the blood of Jesus. And He pours out this love to you daily. He pours out for you the water of life that quenches your thirst by the Holy Spirit. God’s love overflows in our hearts so that Paul can conclude by saying in verse 11:

“And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

“No question is left unanswered. No problem is left unsolved. No sorrow is left for us to bear alone. No enmity, be it of hell or among men, can touch us.” We simply rejoice in God, who always rides right along with us in our vehicle of salvation, Jesus’ death and resurrection...all the way to heaven! Amen

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)