**When His Glory Is Revealed!**

**1 Peter 4:7-14**

Our text for meditation this morning is the Epistle lesson read earlier as recorded by the Apostle Peter.

We pray Luther's Prayer before the sermon: Eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give us Your Holy Spirit who writes the preached Word into our hearts. May we receive and believe it and be cheered and comforted by it in eternity. Glorify Your Word in our hearts and make it so bright and warm that we may find pleasure in it, through Your Holy Spirit think what is right, and by Your power, fulfill the Word, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord. Amen.

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

Thursday was the Ascension of our Lord. Before He ascended to heaven, He commissioned His disciples to take the message of His life and work of salvation to all people. This is no easy task! Before His Ascension, He appeared to His disciples and gave them a task, a task which many people do not like God's people to undertake, to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

In Luke, that event is recorded for us in this way:

*He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”*  (Luke 24:44-50)

Of which sins should we repent? You want me to simplify it for you? How about this, if I were to simplify it, people might say, “Pastor, that’s just your interpretation.” So, I won’t I will simply read a portion of our text again.

*The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self‑controlled and sober‑minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

So, have you figured out which things you ought to repent of?

Are you self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers? This is a two-part issue. First, are you so self-controlled that your calendar puts your pray life first? Do you make sure that you calendar revolves around time in God’s Word and prayer? If not, repent!

The second part of that is, do you keep yourself sober? By the way, remaining sober is different than saying you cannot drink anything with alcohol. Jesus made wine for the wedding, not grape juice. But, we are to be sober, not drunk. It is amazing the number of conversations I have had with people who regret their actions, and who start their explanation of what happened with the words, “I was having a few drinks, when… I guess I had too many!” If sobriety is an issue, repent!

Do you love all people earnestly? That is, do you love all people with fervor and passion? Loving people is caring for them, thinking of them – and their well-being, especially their eternal well-being – even before caring for self. If not, repent.

This may mean calling sin in the lives of loved one exactly that, leading them to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. If you are afraid to call others to repentance out of love for them eternally, repent!

It means worrying more about people than about decorations and such. If you are more concerned about the outward appearance of things than the eternal well-being of souls, repent!

In other words, in all this, if you do not love all people earnestly, repent.

Do you show hospitality to one another without grumbling? Did you entertain the in-laws and put on a smile in front of them, but gripe behind their back about wishing they’d leave? If so, Repent!

Hospitality in the Scriptures is a willingness to give of your earthly possessions to those who have a need. If you see a need around you and you turn your back to it, repent!

You have all be given gifts of God’s grace which are to be used for the building up of the body of Christ, and to give glory to God. If you are not, repent!

In calling people to repentance, Christians undergo persecution. Consider John the Baptist, beheaded for calling Herod to repentance. Of the original 11 disciples remaining at His Ascension, only the Evangelist St. John died of old age, the others were killed for the message they preached. Paul too, died a martyrs death after he had been persecuted for the message He preached of salvation in Christ.

Jesus warned this would happen. In fact He warned them of this earlier in His ministry as He walked with them and taught them. He had sent the twelve out to preach, teach, and do miracles. Even while He was walking the earth, He warned them about how people would treat them.

*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.* (Matthew 10:16-22)

In our Epistle lesson we read similar words. Peter promises that believers will suffer for the name of Christ. Because you are Christians, you will suffer. But be careful lest you get confused about your suffering.

You have suffered for the name of Christ, but it isnt always a suffering you receive at the hands of people. One way of suffering that you may receive for your faith, is at the hands of men. You may suffer ridicule or be laughed at. You may even be hated for what you believe. When you take a stand upon the clear Word of God, when you speak words which are really a loving call to repentance and forgiveness of sins, many will say that you are being judgmental – or that you are pushing your morality upon them. This is why some people won’t talk about their faith, they know that it will cause a rift with a friend, a neighbor, or a family member, that there might be some suffering involved. So, they keep their mouths shut.

But Christ said we are to call people to repentance. When there is a violation of Gods law in the life of someone you know, how loving is it to be silent as they quietly slip into the gates of hell, thinking that what they have done and God calls sin, doesn’t need any repentance. After all, they already know that the rest of the world says it is, OK.

So, when you call people to repent, know that you will suffer at the hands of people, you are to consider yourself blessed. This is not a bad thing, Peter records that God will called you blessed for this suffering. Remember what happened to the apostles in the book of Acts, they were brought before the Jewish Council, and *after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them to speak no more in the name of Jesus, and then released them.* (Listen to what they did next) *So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.* (Acts 6:40-41) Did you hear that? They were flogged, the skin was ripped from their flesh with a cat-o-nine-tails – and they rejoiced about it.

Sometimes though, it is hard to know that you are suffering for the name of Christ. You are believer, you see your neighbor who never goes to church. You are struggling to make ends meet, your neighbor is doing well. Why, Lord? If you love me Lord, and I love you, why does my neighbor have it so good, and I am struggling?

Your suffering was foretold, it is here in our text, the first two verses. Peter tells you, *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.* (vv. 12-13)

You might be thinking, but this suffering and trial in my life isnt because I am a Christian? I am not suffering because I have boldly proclaimed the name of Christ? Later in our text, Peter tells you, *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.* (1 Peter 5:8-9)

If the truth be known, this is the most common type of suffering of the Christian. You see, Satan is at work. He is causing the suffering in your life, because you are a believer. Beware, He is deceitful and tricky, he may not send unbelievers at you to try and lead you astray. He may use your everyday life.

Too often, everyday life is seen apart from the spiritual life of the Christian. You and I may forget that we are always in Christ. You were baptized into Christ, His Spirit is with you always. And what is more, since you bear the mark of Christ, made upon your forehead and upon your heart, you are a target for Satan at all times.

Satan sees who you are and whose you are, even when you are not at church or at prayer or doing something that is an obvious exercise of your faith. Even at work, at play, at sleep, and at all times, Satan knows you are claimed by Christ. What is more, he hates that. He hates that you are Christ’s and will do whatever is in his power to lead you away from God.

His attacks come in many forms, but there is only one purpose to all his varied attacks, Satan wants your immortal soul. Satan wants you to curse God and die – eternally. What better form of attack than to get you when you are unaware. So Satan may use illness, a job loss, problems at work, problems with a neighbor, financial loss or whatever he can to get you to turn away from God.

I knew a young man whose mother was gravely ill. She was a woman of great faith, yet she was wracked daily with pain - an invalid who could not even sit up without the assistance of others. This young man was angry with God for allowing a woman who loved Him so much, to suffer so greatly. That anger he had against God almost ate him up.

It was also in his suffering that God worked to strengthen this young mans faith. His mother pointed him to that place where God would restore him and make him strong. She pointed him to where the work of Christ upon the cross, would be bestowed upon him. She wanted her son where Christ Himself would forgive his sinful lack of faith and restore him to a right relationship with God and strengthen him to stand strong, firm and steadfast.

When we look at the Scripture, we see many stories of people who suffered because they were believers. Some suffered directly because they confessed Christ, for speaking of Him and proclaiming His Word, as did those who suffered a martyr’s death. Others, like Job, Joseph, Paul and others suffered a thorn in the flesh, they suffered in the physical realm for their faith.

In all this, God would use this suffering in the life of the Christian for a purpose, to point you to Christ. Christ answered Pauls prayer to remove the thorn in his flesh by saying, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness.” Paul, I am strength, not yourself, keep your eyes fixed upon me.

And as Christ overcomes suffering in you, your suffering points those around you to Christ. Look at the witness of all those who suffered in the Scriptures, a living testimony of faith, pointing to their perfection in Christ. The faith of the Biblical saints is still a vibrant witness of the hope given them by God. Yes, their victory in Christ is still being proclaimed to every generation, and Christ sends His Spirit to those who hear that Word, and His Spirit works.

As you have heard of the suffering and victory of Christs saints, you have, through them, been pointed to Christ, your faith has been strengthened. You are a living testimony to your victory in Christ, the victory which is your though His marvelous gifts to you - victory to overcome all suffering which Satan throws at you - and finally to give you the eternal reward of all His faithful saints.

Here, in this place, Christ bestows upon you His wonderful gifts. Here He makes of you a faithful saint, one who is perfected and holy. For it is here that Christ speaks to you His forgiveness and calls you to His eternal glory. Here He feeds you His own body and blood, food which nourishes you and strengthens you for your daily battle against suffering. He blesses you, keeping you as His own dear child so that the enemy prowling around is unable to devour you.

So dear friends, rejoice as you share Christ’s suffering, for it is a mark that you are in Christ and Chris in you. Then, cast all your anxiety upon Him because He cares for you. Hear the Word – eat and drink of Christ – be filled with Him, for He will see you through your Christian suffering and give unto you eternal glory. Amen.