**Behold, The Lord Is My Salvation**

**Isaiah 12:1-6**

Today is Cantate Sunday, it’s meaning reflected in the Introit you heard earlier, “sing to the Lord.” Dear friends, today is a great day for us to “Sing to the Lord,” of course, every day is a great day to sing to the Lord.

It is still the Easter season – sing to the Lord a new song. He is risen! (He is risen indeed!)

Too many are bound up in the old song, bound up in the Law of God. If left with nothing but the law – the old song – we would be lost eternally for we are nothing but poor, miserable, sinners who cannot, despite our best efforts, do what the holy Law of God demands. But behold, the Lord is our salvation!

We know that God gave to us Jesus. We confess He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mar. God’s own Son lived the sinless life all mankind, corrupted by sin, is unable to live. As the wages of sin is death, He joyfully and willingly, took our sins and death into Himself. He then allowed Himself to endure the shame and humiliation of the most degrading form of capital punishment, crucifixion for our sake. He did this to purchase forgiveness for all. Three days later, the glory of the Father raised our Lord Christ from death to life. Forgiveness was sealed, eternal life was obtained, and salvation was secured.

Today, the gifts Christ purchased come to you when you hear the words of the Absolution, when you listen to the Gospel proclaimed in the sermon and in our liturgy, and whenever you eat Christ’s body and drink of His precious blood in the Lord’s Supper. In these means of God’s grace, you receive forgiveness and eternal life. You are blessed so that you might proclaim, “Behold, God is my salvation.” It has been accomplished and delivered to you.

But, do you make such proclamation? Do you sing praises to the Lord, for His glorious gifts to you? Have you let this all to be made known in all the earth?

What do you talk about with your friends? You had a great meal at Lake Aire, and you let everybody know about for the next week. Your friends all know your thoughts about your new pick-up – sweet! Since you switched to the new hair salon, at least five of your friends have also switched – at your recommendation. And although you also believe you shouldn’t talk politics, you cannot help but state your opinion on the new Governor.

But, for some reason, you cannot bring yourself to invite your unchurched friends to join you in hearing the Gospel. You find all kinds of excuses to avoid speaking about the sermon from Sunday, or the Scripture reading you studied that day in the morning – that, assuming you even opened your Bible that morning.

So how does that compare? That meal at Lake Aire held you over till breakfast. Your vehicle will get, maybe, 250 thousand miles (if you don’t trade it in before then). It already looks like you could use another haircut. And love him or hate him, the Governor is only elected for four years.

But…Your salvation is eternal! Believers will enjoy the glories of heaven: no more sadness, no more pain, nor more sorrow, no bodily aches or pains, and all of this for eternity. Why is it that the things which wear out, and which may even drive us to disappointment or anger, like when the meal is not the best, when the car breaks down, or the hair color is wrong, or the governor keeps his promises. Those things will make up a part of our conversations! So, why don’t you mention Christ and His work and love for you? What will happen to your friends who do not know of salvation in Christ?

Can you tell me why we have such a hard time speaking of those things which might bring eternal salvation and an eternal place in heaven to our friends who may be lost in sin and caught up in the temptations of this world?

Why is it that we can be all religious on Sunday morning (or Wednesday evening), but the rest of the week – or even as we walk out of this building – when we’re out in public, our faith is something we hide away in our pocket?

Why do you join in the conversations which are using vulgar worldly language, when you are at work or out with many of your friends, than ask them to tone it down a bit and watch their language in your presence?

Why is it that your favorite sitcom never gets missed? If you know you are going to miss it, you record it – or know you will find it online later and watch it? Consider that against how much time you spend each day meditating on God’s Word. Why does time in the Scriptures, which reveal God’s joyous and eternal plan for you, always seem to get put on the back burner? Consider that question as you consider some of that which passes for entertainment on you TV. How much of the what comes across the screen on your TV consumes more your time, especially considering how much of it is truly vile and reprehensible to anybody who truly takes their Christian faith seriously?

Every day you and I are witnesses to the brief flicker of time that is human life. Our mortality stares us in the face, for daily we hear of those whose lives have ended after only all too brief a time. We do walk in the valley of the shadow of death, but we, as believers, do it singing a new song. We know the truth of our existence because of God’s Christ – our Lord and Savior.

Our silence about our faith often happens because of the sinfulness that still clings to us as long as we live in our flesh. We are in love with the world and the things of the world. Our own security in the face of our friends is a thin veneer, and our faith is compromised because of our sinful insecurity. Our unwillingness to speak with others about the things of our faith happens because we love of worldly things more than God. What we fail to confess before others is evidence of our idolatry, putting worldly things before God.

Thanks be to God that Christ loved you and me. Christ cared more about His task of purchasing our forgiveness, than He did about friendship with the world. He boldly went about His task, proclaiming the message of salvation, even when it was unpopular with His closest friends. Remember the time He told His closest friends that He would suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, that He would be crucified, and on the third day rise? Peter rebuked Him, saying such things would never happen, for He did not want Jesus to suffer and die. Jesus boldly proclaimed God’s plan.

It came about exactly as He proclaimed. Although He could have, at any time, called down legions of angels to protect Him…although He could have destroyed those who arrested Him and nailed Him to the cross, He did not. By His own choice, He took up His life, only to lay it down on the cross for you and for me. He died to be our salvation!

This is what Katelyn confesses for herself today, confirming this faith which was confessed for her at her baptism. Her confirmation verse is from Romans, chapter 1, verse 6. It says, I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Fifteen years ago, on April 29th, very early in the morning, I was called to St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay. I picked up Sherri Flanagan at about 2:00 in the morning so that we could ride together, so that I could baptize her grand-daughter born pre-maturely at twenty-three weeks. At a whopping one pound six ounces, Sheri and I left her home not sure if this child would even be alive when we got there. I held her in my hand, literally, in one hand, as I spoke the Word of God and applied sterilized water upon her head from an eye-dropper.

Katelyn Jean Rudzinski was made a child of God that day, united to Christ’s death and resurrection, cleansed of all sin, and robed in Christ’s righteousness.

As I drove back to Embarrass in the wee hours of the morning I prayed two things: that she might bring joy to her parents, growing to enjoy life in this mortal flesh; and that I would get home without falling asleep.

Prayers were answered in the affirmative as I stand before you today. And even more importantly, Katelyn joins us today as one who, now taught the faith, confesses the faith. She joins us in receiving all the gifts that Christ purchased upon the cross, even joining us at the table Christ sets before us. And today, she confesses for herself the faith into which she was baptized.

Behold, God is my salvation – He is yours as well.

Behold, God is my salvation – He is the Word of forgiveness delivered into our ears.

Behold, God is my salvation – He gives us His flesh to eat, and His holy blood to drink. And in the eating and drinking, He delivers what He purchased on the cross, forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation.

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." With joy I will draw water from the wells of salvation. And will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. "Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." Amen.