**From Him, Through Him, and To Him**

**Romans 11:33-36**

Holy Trinity – 06.12.22

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

Do you pay attention to public commentary on things regarding the Christian faith? You should, it is rather interesting what people who are either nominal Christians, or who claim they have no desire to be Christians, have to say about Christianity.

There is a trend with those who are nominal Christians, and with those who love to bash Christianity, to blame God for evil in the world. Some blame God for the evil, the majority claim that if God really exists, and if He really cares, then He’d get rid of all evil in the world. This is of course their reason for claiming that God does not exist. They will not listen to reason that there is a correlation between evil people in the world and the role of sinfulness. They dismiss this and continue to blame God.

They do not like the idea of a sinful mankind. It would mean they are answerable to something greater than themselves.

So, many people question God. They question His motives, why things go as they do, and they like to claim that it is God’s fault – He should fix more things. All these boil down to excuses as to why they do not believe in God. It all hearkens back to the first temptation when Satan, disguised as a serpent asked Eve, “Did God really say?” People want to be their own god, not having to answer to anyone but themselves.

All we need to do is look around, and it is plainly evident that God exists. Simply contemplate the complexity of our universe, our world, trees, birds, animals, even down to simple one-cell organisms. Look at the complexity of the human body – even as it develops in the womb. The uniqueness of mankind from all the other creatures shows that we are created in the image of God. But those who want to disbelieve in God, will.

Those who really want to try and disprove God’s existence, will grasp at any straws, including the incredibly unprovable theory of evolution, to claim that there is no God. To think that all animal life came about by a chance process of evolution? Really? It is impossible for certain things to cross-breed, even more impossible to go from one class to another – from fish to amphibian to bird to mammal. Yet legion are those who would rather believe something so irrational than believe in a Creator God.

Why is this? God is too complex for us to understand by our own reason. When God speaks we tremble at His word because He brought everything into existence by His Word, there was nothing before He spoke it into being. He also rules over all that He brought into existence by His holy will. *He is not accountable to us. We are accountable to Him. He does not answer to us. We answer to Him. We don’t advise Him, counsel Him, command Him, or instruct Him. He is God and we are not.* (Rev. Rolf Preus – Sermon for Trinity Sunday, 2005)

In our Gospel lesson, Jesus tells Nicodemus that if you are not born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus is confused. Many of those who claim to be Christians today also have a hard time with this. Many claiming the name Christian believe their being born again is something they do. They may claim that ***they*** made a decision to follow Jesus… Or that God only reaches out to you, it is you who must take His hand in order to walk with Him and receive what He offers – it is your choice and work… You must do this or that, and faith becomes the work of people.

Do you notice who is completing the work? Do you notice who the focus is upon? Man, your works; your decision, your taking of Jesus’ hand, your work of faith… Your work!!!

When Christians give any glory to anybody other than God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the glory is given to the wrong person. When you were born, did you choose to do it, was it your decision? When you were conceived, did you grab your mother’s or even your father’s hand and ask to have it happen?

Dear friends, you had nothing to do with your birth! You did not choose or decide anything about it. It was not your thought or anything else that brought you into existence. So it is with being born again. It is not your work, it is the work of God.

Your coming to church today – was that your choice? Or did God move that within you? Outside beckoned, yet you are here. The pillow called out to you, yet you are here. Things needing to be done, golf to play, laundry to do, a meal to cook, the panfish are on their spawning beds, all these siren voices tempting us to be elsewhere today. Still you are here. Why?

Because of God’s work.

There is a simple way to look at the work of God. Paul puts it simply in our Epistle lesson, “for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.”

God the Father sent the Son, through whom God purchased forgiveness and life, and by the Holy Spirit He works faith in us to believe this. By the Holy Spirit we believe that we have salvation through Jesus Christ, giving all thanks and praise to the Father. It is cyclical, and it is all God’s work - from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

In our sinfulness, we cling selfishly to our stubborn beliefs about what God should do, but He works in His own way – without consulting us or considering our wishes. In our sinfulness, we cling selfishly to the stubborn belief that there is something we must do our part to get right with God. Remember Paul – *for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*

Dearly beloved of God, the highest form of worship is to receive with joy the gracious gifts God desires to give you. There is no way you can repay Him for the precious blood of Christ that was shed to purchase the gift of your forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation. But God desires to ***GIVE*** it all to you. And for your part, He desires that you simply receive it.

How do you repay God for His gift to you? You do not. You simply and joyfully receive the great gifts He desires to give to you. These are gifts far beyond any value that we could imagine. These are priceless gifts purchased by the innocent suffering and death of the Sinless One, Jesus Christ. Risen from the grave, His work having been completed upon the cross, His Word frees you from sin and the meal of His flesh and blood grants you God’s grace.

Today my friends, from Him and through Him and to Him you confess the one holy, apostolic, catholic – that is, universal – faith. By the work of the Holy Spirit, you trust and believe in the great gifts that God desires to give you. Do not try to repay Him. Do not try to give Him anything for His gracious work for you, to you and through you. Show your thanks to Him by coming often to receive these gifts, it is what God desires of you.

How many of you do not like to receive gifts? In the same way, which of you could honestly claim that you do not try and repay others for those gifts.

But to be fair, we do all love expensive gifts. So, come often to receive the most precious gifts of life in this flesh, God’s gifts of His grace, purchased with the precious, holy, and innocent blood of Jesus Christ. And know that so doing, in simply receiving, you give Him glory.

Dearly beloved of God – you are God’s own – through Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From him and through him and to him are all things. Today and every day, to Him be all glory forever. Amen.