

20th Sunday after Pentecost  
October 23, 2022  
“To God be all glory for His Wondrous Salvation”  
(2 Timothy 4:8,18)  
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, today’s text for this 20th Sunday after Pentecost is from 2 Timothy 4:8 and 18 as we look closely at another sola of the Reformation today, “soli Deo gloria” - to God alone be the glory.

**“8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

**18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”**

Here ends our text.

In the world of sports entertainment, for that is what it is, entertainment, it has become more commonplace, even expected that there is some kind of celebratory dance or gesture after an accomplishment. It’s a spotlight moment that the athlete and the fans relish and expect that cries out “Look how great I am!”. Whether it be a fist pump in golf or tennis, or a touchdown dance in football, the athlete takes a moment and poses for the crowd and basks in self-glory.

In one of the recent baseball playoff games, one of the announcers was a little confused at what one gesture meant after he had hit a home run. As he was taking his victory trot around the bases, this player made a motion with his hands as if he was rocking a baby in his arms. The announcer was a bit confused and wondered if his wife had just had a baby.

It was quickly explained to him that he was telling the opposing team that he was their daddy and that they were his sons. They had to respect him. “Who’s your daddy?” was the implied meaning. You’re looking at him was the answer as he haughtily rounded the bases.

Well, these kind of things irritate the opposing players and fans and are not quickly forgotten. Again, it's all about entertainment and having fun. So, in the next game when this same player continually made an out, the fans in the stadium all made the rocking the baby motion back to him.

To be sure, there are also plenty of examples of humility, for example, when a pitcher strikes out the side, and takes off his cap and points to the sky. The degree of showmanship and self-glorifying is a debated topic in sports. But, always in one's relationship to God, there is no debate about self-glorifying before Him. It's never appropriate and in fact, is sinful. If there is no humble repentance of the heart before God, He will humble that soul with eternal condemnation.

God deserves all glory for He alone has graciously provided us and all people the greatest of gifts which all people need – salvation through Jesus Christ. His Son Jesus hit the home run of salvation by offering Himself on the cross for the sins of the world and won for the world the victory over the enemies of sin, death and the devil. To God alone belongs all the glory for His most wonderful and gracious gift of salvation. And in faith, one gladly and joyfully prays to God as one's dear Daddy who has provided for our salvation, keeps in the the faith and has given us the eternal life, the crown of righteousness.

#### I. Sinful man's self-glorifying results only in his eternally humbling

In our Gospel reading from Luke 18, Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.

**“Two men went to the temple to pray one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’**

In his own estimation, he was the only man that was good on earth. “Who's your daddy?” He said to the rest of the world. “I am.” Look at all my good deeds! But all his self- glorifying didn't please the one who is the true judge and daddy of all mankind, God Himself. For this pharisee went home unjustified in the eyes of God.

Where deeds are done without faith, there is only condemnation. So, we heard in the Old Testament reading from Genesis 4 that Cain's offering to God was not

respected. It was not good in God's sight because as we hear from Hebrews 11 that it was not offered with faith.

**“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous,”** So two verses later, we also hear:

**“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

So Cain as 1 John 3:12 tells **“was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.”**

Back to Jesus' parable of the pharisee and the tax collector...

**13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

The tax collector admitted that his works were sinful, and that he could not stand before God upon them. He couldn't even raise his eyes to heaven, but beating his breast, he could only utter a plea for mercy. **‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’**

And he went home justified, right with God, forgiven, saved, victorious for trusting in the mercy of God. God exalted him. Only through the mercy shown to us by believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ, can one receive forgiveness.

II. Sinful man's repentance and belief in Jesus results in his eternal exaltation

So we heard David say in our introit in Psalm 56:

**“In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?** Why would David and Paul and all Christians trust in God? David gives the answer.

**“For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?”**

God alone has the power to deliver our souls from death and did so by the sending of His Son Jesus, who paid for all our unrighteousness with His perfect holy sacrifice. Jesus conquered death and rose again so that David too could trust that he would walk in the light of the living in heaven!

So too Paul, as he nears his departure from this world, knowing his time is short, places all his trust in the One who appeared as a True Man, being born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died, rose and will be our righteous Judge.

**“8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”**

Jesus can judge us with His righteousness because He has graciously given us His righteousness through faith in Him. All who have loved His appearing have been given faith and the crown of righteousness! It is sealed to us in our baptism!

Yes, not only to Paul but to all who love Jesus, all of you who are gathered this morning to give all glory to God for the salvation He has given to you! We too can have such confidence in Jesus at our moment of departure from this world.

Paul says in our epistle reading from 2 Timothy 4, **“7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

He personalizes it. Paul was human, a sinner just like each of us. And he can say through faith in Jesus that he has fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Was this self-glorying? Of course not! For Paul quickly says,

**“18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”**

Paul takes off his cap, bows his head, and points to the Lord. He gives all glory to the Lord for his salvation.

Again, Paul said most clearly in Galatians chapter 2:

**“19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**

Our righteousness cannot come through the law but only through the grace of God given and imputed to us through faith in Jesus who did not die in vain.

And so with Paul and all believers in Jesus we give God all the glory for giving us life, preserving our life and bringing us into eternal life.

With the beautiful doxology written by the apostle Jude we lift our praises to God as we round the bases of life and touch the home plate of heaven!

**“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,  
And to present you faultless  
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,  
25 To God our Savior,  
Who alone is wise,  
Be glory and majesty,  
Dominion and power,  
Both now and forever.  
Amen.**

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