

IN NOMINE JESU

A REVERSAL OF SIN'S EFFECTS

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Again this Sunday the Church bears witness to God's reversing sin's effects in the world. From Psalm to Gospel reading, God is declared to be the Holy One who takes the brokenness of man's sin and restores him with the fullness of God's forgiveness. From general healing to specific miracles, God works in His fallen creation to bring about a reversal of sin's effects. The Old Testament prophecy shows that with its opening words:

Is it not yet (a) very little while and Lebanon will be turned into (a) fruitful field, and the fruitful field will be regarded (as a) forest?¹

To the faithful people in ancient Israel, who were feeling and knowing a great falling away from the faith in their land, God speaks of restoration. They have heard of the woes God will bring upon their nation, and hence the Church of the Old Covenant – the two at that time were humanly viewed as inseparable – on account of their apostasy – falling from the Faith. Through the prophet, God uses images of barren land blossoming into humanly useful production to describe the way He, in His time, will make all things new for a believing remnant in the Church.

Such words of comfort for those distressed by the fall of the Church in various places are still needed today. Major so-called Christian denominations continue to reject the scripture's teaching regarding its verbal, God-breathed, inspiration. They then construct doctrines based upon American cultural dynamics, using majority votes!

Yet God's Word for today remains fresh, living, and brings hope to those who are troubled by these things in the Church. The same comfort God gave to the ancient faithful - that He would reverse sin and its effects for them - is given for you today.

In other words, for you who actually believe that Scripture means what it clearly says as it identifies God's teaching as scripture interprets scripture there is hope. Even when the so-called mainline churches, and their pastors and congregations, are falling from the biblical faith in droves, God promises deliverance to a faithful remnant. What this means is that those whom you may know, or be related to, who are at this time trying to worship God in fallen churches, can still find hope, forgiveness and life through the means that God provides - His purely preached Word and rightly administered Sacraments. They are here and in congregations like ours, where God has kept a remnant firm in His commitment to call sinners to repentance and to forgive them.

The comfort and consolation God gave to his ancient faithful, who would be driven from their homes, their land, their Temple is the same for all believers at all times. That is, God who once made all things and declared them to be "good," will, in His time, remove all the evil from this fallen Creation. This work He has done in sending the Man, Jesus, His only-begotten Son, in order to take sin's burdens, including yours, and carry them into the grave. Jesus, in coming into the world, arrived according to the Father's timetable, and began the restoration promised some seven centuries before. The faithful

¹ *Isaiah 29:17.*

remnant out of the nation of Israel heard and believed God's promises through Isaiah, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit beheld them completed in Christ Jesus.

Today's account of the Lord's miraculous healing of the deaf man with confused speech is just one narrative of Jesus' work. It is recorded and declared that you may believe that the promises uttered so long ago found fulfillment in Jesus. Hear again that which Isaiah promised to the believers of old:

And deaf men will hear in that day words of (a) scroll, and out of gloom and darkness (the) eyes of blind men will see.²

From the image of barren land made fertile, comes the reality of the great Day of the Lord when He will begin His great reversal of sin's effects. This prophecy was given that the faithful remnant in the Church of Old and New Testaments might behold, in the Christ, the actual beginning of re-creation. The Christian in you knows, believes and confesses that the prophecy's fulfillment came when Jesus opened the ears of the deaf, and the words of the scroll – Isaiah's prophecy – were heard by them.

You have heard such a testimony today in the Gospel reading. There, the Lord of Creation is given public testimony from credible eye and ear-witnesses that His is the Day when the deaf will hear. From the restoration of sound and clear speech to a man who was encumbered physically with the results of Adam's fall into sin, the True Church gains insight. Such comes forth as the prophecy continues:

And meek men shall add fresh joy in YHWH, and (the) poor among men will exult in the Holy One of Israel.³

² *Isaiah 29:18.*

³ *Isaiah 29:19.*

The completion of that promise is declared in the Gospel reading for today. When Jesus had performed the miraculous healing of hearing and speaking for the man, new joy went forth on account of God's work among them. Perhaps you noted that the people's response to Jesus' work that day was to say, "He has done all things well!" (The word we translate "well," is even better rendered "good." That is God in Christ Jesus makes all He wills "good." In other words, He restores the fallen to His divinely intended purposes).

What the texts indicate is that when God works His will among people, to turn them from their fallen state, He frees them to respond with His good Word. The deaf man, with ears now clear, may speak freely of that which God has done, and continues to do. His voice rings out with thanks to God, and others join in the hymn of praise. (There is your tie to the Psalm for today).

They declare of Jesus: "He does all things good!" As only God is truly good, such a proclamation is that Jesus is God doing good to those who believe and yet suffer on account of sin. Those whom the world considers meek, lowly and poor in worldly gifts begin to sing out God's praises for that which He is doing for them.

Look around you today. There aren't any U.S. Presidents among us. There are no Popes, nor Ayatollahs. No one here is one of the world's elite power brokers or multi-billionaires. Around you are the ones, yourself included, who are not the super-stars of stage or screen, pop-icons, media celebrities. In terms of worldly calculation, you

are the meek and the poor. You publicly confessed yourself to be so at the beginning of this day's Divine Service.

And yet you are the ones God has called into His Real Presence that He might free you from sin and its effects. God is calling you to look to Him, to hear Him where He has promised to speak, and to speak with Him with lips He has opened to declare His Good News. That is, when God opens your lips, His Words by which you can declare His praise flow forth from them. By that I mean that you praise God by living your life in Christ. Your holy vocation – whatever you have been called to do in this life – is God's means to declare what He has done, and continues to do. What He does for you in delivering you from sin and the apostasy of the churches of our day, He desires to do for those around you! Take heart, the words of Isaiah are as living and active for you as for those who first heard them:

For (the) ruthless man will come to nothing, and (the) scoffer will cease, and all men watching for evil will be cut off; they who cause to make out to be (an) offender (a) man in (his) word, and who lay (a) snare for him who cares to reprove in (the) gate, and they turn aside (the) righteous man in their empty plea. ⁴

The sins against those who follow God in faith are still with us. Three are named in this text. In Christ, for Christ, you will, if you have not, suffer one or more of the stings of those who have rejected God and His Christ. The first named is the “one watching for evil,” that is the false witness. This is the person who brings a lie against you, to defame you on account of your testimony in life, word and deed in the faith. The second is the person who attempts to bring you to ruin on account of your sacrificially

loving someone enough to call public sin what it is – sin. The third is the individual who denies to you the protection of the law on account of your confession of the Faith.

All three persecutions are in the Church catholic at this time. You who are labeled “conservative” Christians hear your words twisted to give them meanings you do not intend. The humanology, as opposed to theology, of our culture is to weigh all utterances of believers against the standards of political correctness, and “give no offense, ever!” If God has given you the gift of eloquence, you may perhaps avoid those charges. But the scoffers who continue to reject God’s clearly revealed truths have two other means to attempt to deny you credibility.

They may attempt to trap you in your own words. The ruthless unrepentant sinners in the Church have become adept at twisting confessing Christians’ words to mean things that are not intended, and are simply not so. Yet the spinning of meanings is enough to bring public shame and humiliation upon you.

Others may try to use the court of public opinion in their attempt to shame you out of the clear confession of Christ-crucified for the sins of the whole world. They may accuse you of being judgmental (which is a judgment in itself, is it not?) These shameless sinners in the Church attempt to remove you from the protection that you have in the fulfilled Law of God in Christ Jesus. They desire to place you under the Law of human good works, self-righteousness, and so forth. In all these things, those who

⁴ *Isaiah* 29:20-21.

reject the clear Word of God in the Church attempt to bring down the faithful from the pure, clear, and godly-loving confession of Christ, down to their own images of God.

Take heart. You are living in the time of the prophecy's fulfillment. Those who attempt to defame, discredit and dismiss you on account of the good confession of the Faith cannot win. This the prophecy for the week makes clear, as

Therefore thus says YHWH to (the) house of Jacob, He Who redeemed Abraham: "No more will Jacob be ashamed; and no more shall his face grow pale. But when seeing his children, (the) work of My Hands in his midst, they will cause to sanctify My Name, and they will cause to sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and the Elohe of Israel they will stand in awe of. And the erring ones will come to know in spirit, understanding, and those who are murmuring will learn instruction." 5

God declares His promises fulfilled in believers in the Church. In the centuries before the Day of the Lord, receiving the persecution of the lawless in their church, they waited in Faith for God's restoration of sinners. They could take heart throughout the years of trial and tribulation from the faithful among them. That is, when the Church experienced evil in her midst, believers drew comfort from one another in the Good News that God was making all things new, in His time, in His Christ-to-come.

You are living in that time. Yes, there is conflict and chaos in the visible assemblies who claim Christ. Yet, there are believers there and God gives them to one another, to you, that you may know that His Word is true. How?

When you witness some of those who were erring in doctrine and practice turning to the clear, pure, right confession of Christ-crucified for sinners! You may take heart when some who are in fallen churches, who may have led them into apostasy, turn

from their sins and walk in the Gospel. God's call to repentance remains for those who are straying from His truths in the Church. His means to effect that turning are here – in the declaration that God Himself has taken away their sins. Then forgiveness flows to them, as it does to you, and their voices will join yours as God opens their ears, and lips and lives to declare His praise. Christ has died – sin and death are defeated! Christ is risen from the dead – and you are declared right with the Father! Christ will come again – and we believers will reign with Him forever! Praise the Lord!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Trinity XII (LSB One-year series)

Isaiah 29:17-24; II Corinthians 3:4-11; Mark 7:31-37

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Pastor Michael H. Morehouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT

Is it not yet (a) very little while and will be turned, Lebanon, into (a) fruitful field, and the fruitful field for (a) forest will be regarded?⁶

And they will hear in day, that the, deaf men words of (a) scroll, and from gloom and from darkness eyes of blind men will see.⁷

And they shall add, meek men, in YHWH fresh joy, and poor among men in Holy One of Israel they will exult.⁸

⁵ *Isaiah 29:22-24.*

⁶ *Isaiah 29:17.*

⁷ *Isaiah 29:18.*

⁸ *Isaiah 29:19.*

For will come to nothing, ruthless man, and cease (the) scoffer, and they will be cut off all men watching evil.⁹

Who cause to make out to be (an) offender (a) man in word, and to him who cares to reprove in (the) gate will lay (a) snare, and they turn aside in their empty plea (the) righteous man.¹⁰

Therefore thus says YHWH to (the) house of Jacob which redeemed the Abraham, "No more will be ashamed, Jacob, and no more their face shall grow pale."¹¹

If in seeing his children (the) work of My Hands in his midst, they will cause to sanctify My Name, and they will cause to sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and the Elohe of Israel they will stand in awe of.¹²

And they will come to know the erring ones, in spirit, understanding, and those who are murmuring will learn instruction."¹³

⁹ *Isaiah 29:20.*

¹⁰ *Isaiah 29:21.*

¹¹ *Isaiah 29:22.*

¹² *Isaiah 29:23.*

¹³ *Isaiah 29:24.*