

IN NOMINE JESU

PART OF THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD

Hear again the Word of God for this third Sunday after the Holy Trinity:

*To Him be the dominion into the aeons; Amen!*¹

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

The Epistle reading for the Feast of the Holy Trinity ended with these words:

*Because, out of Him, and through Him, and into Him (are) all things;
to Him (is) the glory into the aeons. Amen!*²

The Epistle reading for the first Sunday after Trinity ended with these words:

*And this is the commandment we continue to have from Him: the one continually
unconditionally loving God may continue to unconditionally love his brother also.*³

The Epistle reading for the second Sunday after Trinity (last week) ended with these words:

*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*⁴

Today's Epistle reading ends with these words:

*To Him be the dominion into the aeons; Amen!*⁵

Those who have been here all four Sundays of the Trinity season have heard the Word of God in the inspired letters of the New Testament proclaim a framework for the community of Christ. The frame is as it was just read: An ascription of glory; two encouragements into unconditional love of our brothers (and sisters) in Christ; and an ascription of praise.

Those among us who have not been here for the Word of the Lord each of the

¹ 1 Peter 5:11.

² Romans 11:36.

³ 1 John 4:21.

⁴ 1 John 3:18, ESV.

⁵ 1 Peter 5:11.

past Sundays of this season that celebrates new life and growth in Christ in the Church, are now **not** at a disadvantage in their hearing of the end of all those readings. The reality that you are here today is witness to the truth that God has called you here to give you His gifts, the ability to make those ascriptions of praise, and to love one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Perhaps you thought you had come into this place at this time for other reasons? What might those have been?

1. To witness the resurrection of the dead? That you certainly have experienced today, as God, through these mortal hands and from these often unclean lips, cause little Kayla to die with Christ and rise to new life in Him.
2. To remember your baptism? That you certainly did as you renounced again, in a very public manner the devil and all his works and all his ways.
3. To confess your sins that you might receive God's forgiveness? That you most assuredly have done, and continue to do, as the Word of God moves you to repent -that is turn- from your sin and walk in newness of life.
4. To sing hymns you like? Well, that might have happened. But even if not, you have sung, and will continue to sing, hymns that speak God's truth in little sermons that convict you of your sin and show you the only remedy for that trespass - Christ Jesus and Him crucified!
5. To learn tips for godly living? Well, I pray that we never fall into that trap! Here the tips for Christian living, daily turning from sin and receiving God's forgiveness, are found in the words about the Lord,

*Who forgives all your iniquity, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, Who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*⁶

6. To reinforce the belief that it is you and Jesus against the world, sin, death and the devil? Let it not be so! This week's text declares:

*For the God of all grace, the One having called all of you into His aeon glory in Christ [Jesus], (a) little while all of you have been suffering, (yet) He will put in order; He will mend; He will strengthen; He will make a foundation.*⁷

The Lord has called you here today, through whatever worldly means that might have caused you to be sitting here now, so that you might hear that you are not alone, that is true. But it is not just you and Jesus against all your enemies. Rather, it is you and Jesus' brothers and sisters, the only children of the Heavenly Father, bought and paid for by Christ's holy, sinless bloody and death who are even now facing down the old evil foe and all his minions. Of this the Word of God speaks, when it says,

*Your legal adversary, the slanderer, continues to walk about as (a) roaring lion, seeking someone to swallow down.*⁸

The scriptures do not lie, the Word of God is true. And, as you have heard today, you who are in Christ are faced with a mortal enemy, the devil. That is why days occur when we rejoice that God has chosen another to be rescued by from the jaws of mankind's enemy from the beginning, that we take the opportunity to renounce that evil one, not as individuals, but as the family of God, the Body of

⁶ Psalm 103:2-5, ESV.

⁷ 1 Peter 5:10.

⁸ 1 Peter 5:9.

Christ in this place. United with our Head, our brother Jesus, who is the Lion of Judah, we have defeated the false lion, the devil.

Jesus, who won this victory over the accuser of mankind, does not need to be reminded of this reality. He still, in His glorified body, bears the marks of that victory – the place of the nails and the spear. Jesus as the true Lion of God, who desires that His victory enlarge the members of His pride, the lions, lionesses and cubs of the faith, knows that He has beaten the lion of this world.

So, in that sense, the fact that you are here today, with this little cub who is now viewed by God as part of His pride in this den, is not because Jesus, the Son, or the Father, or the Holy Spirit, needs you to worship Him on account of His victory. That is real and eternal even if people don't believe.

God has brought you here today that you might receive reminders, through His Word and Sacraments, the hymns and prayers of the Church, that you are part of the whole family of God, the pride of Christ-crucified! *To Him be the dominion into the aeons; Amen!*⁹

With the knowledge and belief that all that has been spoken here is truth, you are now free to grasp the meaning of this week's letter, and Gospel, and Psalms, and Old Testament, in your little paws, and chew on them for a while. What this means is that you are able, as part of Jesus' pride, under the protection of the Great Lion of God, to

⁹ 1 Peter 5:11.

*Empty yourselves under the mighty Hand of God, in order that He might exalt you all in season.*¹⁰

This is the Lion's command to His pride – place worldly pride far from you. You who are His pride, and joy, He will lift up in the proper season. Here is a call to place yourself, as a cub in the Great Lion's den, under His mighty protection. It is a command, a divine encouragement, to place your own standing in life, in the Church, as a servant of servants.

This is not easy for we humans to do at times. Nor, is it a call to not exercise God-given offices – pastor/teacher, parent, council members of the Church, and so on. Rather, it is the Lord's desire that all Christian leadership be performed under the guiding Hand of the Lord. Where is that to be discovered?

In the Word of God. There, as you regularly hear the Word as part of the pride of Christ, the Word will give you what you need to do your daily callings in God-pleasing ways inside and outside the confines of the den of the Lord which we call “the Church.” Mothers humble themselves under the Mighty Hand of God when they, daily, teach their little ones to pray. Fathers humble themselves under God when they, daily, lead their families into the Word of the Lord. Grandparents humble themselves under the mighty power of the Great Lion of Judah when they encourage and support their families in returning to the community where the Word is proclaimed, and the forgiveness of God is poured forth, not for the holy, but for sinners. The examples can be endless.

¹⁰ *1 Peter 5:6.*

How have you been doing as part of the family of God? Have you kept the reality that you are part of a larger pride, and returned regularly to the place where you are truly safe – in the den of the Church?

If not, then, turn, and walk in newness of life. Your sins are forgiven (That is the theme of this week's readings, is it not)? Come, again, as you can make time in your busy lives – and they are hectic, of that there is no doubt – and recline as often as you are able, in the protection of the Lion who has conquered the worldly lion who, though defeated, still prowls about trying in a vainglorious attempt to devour those who belong – by the virtue of Christ – in the Church.

Peter's words, written first in an era where to become one of Christ's cubs was to entertain sure and certain worldly loss – unto death for many, are a call to remember Whose you are. That also means you are being called to remember to whom you have been united in Christ – that is the Church. It is here, above all places, where you are given the true Lion of God's might to, *stand against [the devil] by the faith, knowing that these things of the suffering are being laid upon your brotherhood in the cosmos.*¹¹

What this means is, as has been said, you are not alone as you suffer under the wiles and works and ways of the devil. That one, who once stood before God accusing mankind, individuals, of their sins before the Holy One, has been thrown out of the court. There is legal language going on in this week's texts. It is combined with an image of power, the roaring lion, so that the elect of God, you who remain in Christ, are

¹¹ I Peter 5:9.

reminded to whose pride you belong, and who is on your side.

The devil, roar though he might in this fallen world, cannot stand before God to accuse you of your sins. Someone has taken his place. That someone is the mighty One who took away the adversary from before the eternal Judge. He is the Lion of Judah, the Son of God, Jesus the Christ. Where the imitator once stood now stands the genuine Man. He is there, interceding for you day and night. His words over you, even as you heard them today in the baptism of little Kayla, mean that you may, as you remain in Him, in His Word, and in His Church, *throw your anxieties upon Him, because He continues to care for all of you.*¹² Jesus' shoulders are broad enough, and He watches over you.

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

Holy Trinity III (*LSB* One-year series)

Micah 7:18-20; I Peter 5:6-11; Luke 15:1-10

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¹² I Peter 5:7.