

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 14:1-11
October 8th, 2017
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Who Humbles Himself Will Be Exalted

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

This is one of the stranger healing miracles that our Lord + Jesus Christ does. It is strange because very little is said about the person being healed. Usually when we have a text dealing with someone our Lord heals, the background and details of the person are explained. Not so in today's Gospel. The reading is really about this meal to which our Lord is invited. Very little is said about the man with dropsy. He suddenly appears in our reading, and just as quickly is ushered out of the scene. This another strange thing about this healing: from where does this man with dropsy come. He is clearly a plant by the Pharisees to see if our Lord would heal on the Sabbath.

But, our Lord is not falling for their ruse. Therefore, He asks, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Since, in their minds, healing was doing work, and one was not supposed to do work on the Sabbath, then the answer is, "No, it is not lawful to heal on the Sabbath." At least not for this man the Lord + Jesus to heal on the Sabbath. However, they remain silent, because even they realize that is a pretty horrible thing to say that this man with dropsy should come back some other time to be healed.

One wonders whether the answer in their minds would be different if the situation was an urgent one. What if healing this man was a life or death issue? Would that change their minds? Would healing on the Sabbath then be legal? That is, therefore, what our Lord + Jesus puts before them for their consideration. But before He does, "He took him and healed him, and let him go." The man with dropsy is in and out of our text without anything (but what needs healing) said about him. After this, our Lord goes back to work on the hard hearts of the Pharisees.

What if this man who needed healing immediately? What about the Pharisees? Would they rescue their donkey or ox from a pit on the Sabbath? They remain silent. They remain silent because the answer is "yes." They would rescue their donkey or ox from a pit on a Sabbath, because to not do so would just be cruel. "I'm sorry donkey it's the Sabbath so you have to remain in that pit until tomorrow." How ridiculous that sounds! How much more your fellowman? What if your brother, or neighbor, or friend fell into a pit? "I'm sorry Bob, you will have to wait until tomorrow for me to rescue you." Such a thing would be absurd! Of course we would rescue someone in trouble on a Sabbath.

And this is the point our Lord + Jesus is making: there is no bad time, or wrong day, to do good works for your fellowman.

To not do so would show the sinful pride in that person's heart. This sinful pride is further shown in how the ones invited all clamored and fought for the best place at the gathering. They all thought they were the most important person there. Such it is with people filled with pride. They believe that they are worthy of the best things and the best friends just because of who they are. They are the most important person in the room. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that that person is a jerk to everyone else. Proud people only get offended when you point out their pride, they are content to "work the room" as long as everyone else understands that they are the best person there. If someone else becomes the best person there, then the child of pride—jealously—rears its ugly head.

The Pharisees were jealous of our Lord. He is invited as an honored guest, but they certainly don't treat Him as such. Their jealousy and hatred grows even deeper when the Lord + Jesus trounces on their foolish behavior.

If you wish to exalt yourself, you will be humbled. For, there is someone else more important than you. And he is sure to come along rain on your parade. Even more so, when we exalt ourselves, we are showing the pride that is truly in our hearts. Pride manifests itself in reliance upon one's good works—upon one's keeping of the Law. The Pharisees believe that they kept the Law of God. They certainly didn't do any work on the Sabbath. They weren't going around healing people on the Sabbath. However, they had forgotten the most important tenet of the Law—to love God and your neighbor. We show our love for God when we love our neighbor. For, He created all mankind; we are all His creation, and just as He loves His creation, He demands that we also love His creation.

However, we must never think that we ever do enough good works to satisfy the requirements of the Law. The Pharisees would gladly honor God's creation and rescue an ox or donkey from a pit, but they have no sympathy for the man with dropsy. Mankind is God's greatest creation; therefore, He demands that we love our neighbor in the same way that we love ourselves. That is to say, in the same way we would never allow harm to intentionally happen to ourselves, we should never allow harm to come to our neighbor.

But, we should never rely on our works as a means of our salvation. Good works are a fruit of faith. They are proof that faith exists within our heart. But good works are never a means of salvation. That is why those who exalt their good works as a proof their salvation are in danger of being eternally humbled in Hell.

A heart filled with faith in the Lord + Jesus Christ as the One, True and Only Savior does not worry about what good works he is doing or not doing. A heart filled with such faith, readily does good for its neighbor. It does good for its neighbor even on a Sabbath. For a heart filled with faith is a heart clothed with the works and righteousness of Christ.

We inherit the works and righteousness of Christ through the waters of Holy Baptism. When we live in and remember our Holy Baptisms daily we daily drown the pride and sinful ambitions within us, and emerge as children of the heavenly Father seeking not our own good, but the good of our fellowman. We have this inheritance as children of the heavenly Father, because our dear Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ humbled Himself on the tree of the holy cross on the day before the Sabbath. He was lifted up on the cross, because He humbled Himself to undergo the suffering, pain and mockery of the proud and jealous Pharisees. He humbled Himself to death, and is now exalted on the right hand of our Father in Heaven.

Through His humility and death, we are now exalted out of power of sin, death and the devil. They no longer have any sway over us. We are healed of our sin. We are washed clean of any sin. And we are invited to eat bread with our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ at this altar to receive forgiveness

of our sins. He gives us His very own Body and Blood in, with and under bread and wine for us to eat and drink and receive the forgiveness and remission of our sins. In this meal He heals us.

We are gathered here on the Church's Sabbath, the Day of Rest, where we rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord + Jesus Christ, and rejoice that through His humiliation we are exalted out of sin. On account of our Holy Baptism we are invited to eat the very Body of our Lord in bread and drink His real and substantial Blood for the remission of our sins. Our Lord is still working for us on this Sabbath to heal us of all our spiritual infirmities. He does the greatest work anyone can do for us, He lays down His life for us, so that we might have life eternal. We have a home in Heaven waiting for us. This is why the Lord of All Creation has humbled Himself to become man and sacrifice Himself for us on the tree of the holy cross, so that He might exalt us to live with Him in Heaven for all eternity with all the saints. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.