

Midweek Lenten Vespers 6
St. Matthew 10:32-42
April 5th, 2017
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Did Not Come to Bring Peace

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.

The Word of God is a two-edged sword which divides those who believe from those who do not believe. It divides the penitent sinner from the impenitent sinner. Our Lord + Jesus came to fulfill the Word of God. He came to bring this sword to the whole world through the preaching of the Apostles. But, there are many who do not believe; many who refuse to believe. The devil deceives many with his lies. The world draws people away from the Church through its false comforts. Many peoples' sinful natures lead them away from the Church on account of their desire to do whatever their corrupt nature desires them to do. Therefore, on account of the enemies of the Church, the peace that our Lord and Savior would have for all mankind does not occur.

However, our Lord + Jesus has a mission to fulfill. He has come to lead mankind out of death into life. Those who believe on His Name are justified—they are made right with God. Those who are justified have peace with God. This peace is not an earthly peace. It is not the type of peace where two, or more, people or groups are no longer fighting each other. This type of peace is not about the absence of war. It is not an external peace. It is an internal peace. It is a peace that exists in one's soul. It is a peace that comes only from faith in our Lord and Savior and His promises. For it is a peace which finds comfort in Him and Him alone. It is a peace that knows that whatever the enemies in this life taunt us with in this life, that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ has won the victory and takes care of all of our needs, wants and desires.

It is the type of peace which rests secure knowing that our home is in Heaven, because our Lord + Jesus has fulfilled the Law perfectly for us, and suffered our punishment so that He might gift us with the forgiveness of our sins. It is the type of peace that knows Who our redeemer is—Who has bought us back from sin, death and the power of the devil. We have peace with God, because we believe that He has called us out of darkness and death into light and life with Him for all eternity with all the angels, archangels, and all the saints of Heaven who have gone before us. We have this faith, because we have heard and listened to the promises of our heavenly Father which He taught us in His Holy Word.

However, there are many in this life who do not believe the Word of God; who even refuse to hear or listen to the Word of God. The Word to them is a sharp sword, which condemns them. And, because they are condemned, whether they realize they are condemned or not, they make themselves the enemy of God, and on account of their enmity against us and the Church, they make themselves

our enemy. It is for these who are outside of the peace of God—these enemies of ours—for whom we pray daily.

The Church prays for her enemies. This is what our Lord + Jesus instructed us to do. But, what is our prayer for our enemies supposed to be? In the General Prayer every Sunday we pray for our enemies. What is the prayer? That our enemies and adversaries might cease their enmity and be inclined to walk with us in meekness and in peace. In other words, our prayer for our enemies is always a prayer that they would stop being our enemy. How do they stop being our enemy? They stop being our enemy by their repentance—by their coming to the realization that they sin against God, become sorrowful for that sin, and come to believe that salvation is not found in themselves, but in the Lord + Jesus Christ and His works.

The prayer for our enemy is the same in our Litany which we pray on Wednesday evenings. To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts. In other words, we pray that they might no longer be our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, because they are realized their error and now cling to the Lord + Jesus in faith.

This is our great task as the Church on Earth in this locale. It is to continue to preach and teach the Word of God in its truth and purity to all those who come to this place of worship. We are tasked with leading all those with whom we are neighbors with in this life to this place of worship to hear God's Word and be taught what great things the Lord has done for them. It is our parish's task to continue to administer the Sacraments rightly, according to Christ's institution, so that all those who come to this place of worship to hear God's Word, might be led to participate in the right and pure use of the means of grace, so that they might cease their enmity against the Church with their unbelief, and learn to walk with us in meekness and peace; the way that only those who have learned the love and God, and have learned to love one another through our Lord God's love, can.

Our Lord + Jesus was born into our flesh to bring the sword of His Holy Word, so that sin, death and the power of the devil might be killed within us, and all who hear and listen to His Holy Word. Our Lord + Jesus came to defeat once and for all our enemies in this life—the devil, the world and our sinful flesh—so that they might no longer deceive us, but that we might hear His Word, and cling to Him in faith, and receive the rewards of the cross—forgiveness, life and salvation.

Bear that sword—the Word of God—with you daily, that you might fend off the taunts and temptation of your enemy, and you might attack them and their deceptions, so that you might find the peace of the soul—the comfort that our Lord + Jesus would have you possess because you know and believe that your sins are forgiven and you will inherit eternal life. 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.