

In Nomine Jesu

The Reconciliation of Mankind

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

Last week, we heard about Jesus, the Light of Life in this fallen Creation. We heard about how He shines in the darkness. For just a little while, it appeared that the darkness had won and that the world had lost its Light and Life. However, we also heard about how Jesus turned that apparent victory of the darkness, into the shining light of salvation that it is.

Today, we are going to talk about what that act accomplished. When Jesus died on the cross, He reconciled, or made one, all of Creation and God. In that act, He justified you, or declared you righteous, on account of His taking your guilt onto Himself. Our Gospel reading for today comes from the night before Jesus died on the cross at the conclusion of the upper room discourse. With these words, Jesus prayed to the Father:

But not concerning these ones only do I ask, but also concerning those believing in Me though their word,¹

Did you notice who Jesus is praying for here? It's you. You are the ones that He is praying for. You are the ones who believe in Jesus through the word of the apostles. You are joined by the vast majority of Christians who never saw Jesus while He was on earth. On the night when He was betrayed, Jesus took time to pray for you. Let's see what He asks of the Father. He says,

In order that all may be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You, in order also that they may be in Us, in order that the world might believe You sent Me.²

He prays in order that all may be one; In order that they may be in Us; In order that the world believe You sent Me. This is reconciliation: to be made one

¹ John 17:20

² John 17:21

again. Jesus died for this purpose: He died in order that all may become one; In order that you may be in the Trinity; In order that you believe that the Father sent the Son.

That is what Jesus accomplished on the Cross. He successfully brought all of you up from the darkness, brought you all into Himself, and therefore into the Father. I almost feel like I could stop right there, and be finished. But Jesus isn't done praying yet. He has more to say:

And I give to them the glory that You gave to Me, in order that they might be one just as We are One,³

Here Jesus explains to us how this works. How can the unworthy be made worthy? How can the unrighteous be made righteous? How can the sinner be one with God?

The answer: by Jesus giving you His glory. Now, the question which must follow that answer is this: what is His glory? You know the answer. We've been talking about it all night. The cross is the glory of the Son. He gives us His cross. He gives us His sacrifice in our place. By choosing to die for you, and by applying the forgiveness that was bought on the cross to you, He has made you into one. One with God, one with each other. Jesus continues explaining:

I am in them, and You are in Me, in order that you might be completed into one, in order that they know that You sent Me and that You sacrificially love them just as You sacrificially love Me.⁴

How does Jesus go about making you one? He had to bring you into Himself. You were corrupted. You were sinful. That is what all people are before Jesus comes to them in the Word. The Son however, is God. And God is so pure

³ John 17:22

⁴ John 17:23

that anything which is impure cannot be in His presence. Therefore, His solution to your impurity, was to bring you into Himself.

This might seem somewhat illogical. After all, I just said that the impure cannot be in the presence of the One who is Holy. And we in ourselves could not do that. So Jesus came down to us. Not only did He come down to us though, He became one of us.

Here we behold the miracle of the Incarnation, that which we are preparing for now in the season of Advent. In order for God's plan of reconciliation to work, He needed a pure Man. But man had fallen. We were no longer able to be pure in ourselves. So the Son became Man, and brought all of us into Himself, in order that we might become complete or perfected into one.

He does this so that you might know who God is. Jesus does this to show you that just as The Father sacrificially loves the Son, so also does He sacrificially love you. What does Jesus ask of the Father on the night before this great sacrifice that He is going to make?

Father, who gives to Me, I desire that where I am they also might be with Me, in order that they might behold the glory, the glory which is mine which You gave to Me, since You loved Me from the foundations of the world.⁵

What is Jesus' desire? What could the Son, who is God and therefore could have anything He wanted, possibly desire? You. The Son wants you. You are the Son's most prized possession. He wants you to be with Him. But why? Why does He want you? Does He want you to be His servants? Does He want you so that He can rule over you? Does He want to rub what He did for you in your face for all eternity?

⁵ John 17:24

No, of course not. He wants you in order that you might behold His glory, but remember that it is the glory which the Father gave Him. This glory was given to Him, since the Father loved Him from the foundations of the World.

He wants us, because He wants us to know the Father. To put it in an easily understandable way, and hear this rightly; He wants us know how awesome His Dad is.

But why? What's so awesome about the Father? Well Jesus tells us:

*Father You are righteous, and the world does not know You, but I know You, and those knowing that You sent me, and I made known to them your Name and I will make It known, in order that the sacrificial love with which You sacrificially loved Me might be in them and I in them.*⁶

Why is the Father awesome? It's really quite simple. The Father is awesome because He loves you. He loves you deeper, wider, higher, and longer, than we can possibly fathom. He loves you so much, that He sent His Son to become one of you, to die for you.

This is what Jesus wants you to understand. Jesus wants you to grasp that the Father loves you so much that He was willing to sacrifice His very own Son for you. Through that sacrifice, Jesus reconciled you to the Father. Because of what Jesus willingly did for you, you now, by knowing the Son in the Word, are able to get to know the Father. The Father created you. The Father sent His Son to you. The Father loves you.

Jesus did everything that He did in order to save us, and complete us, so that we could know the Father. Jesus came in order to make you and the Father one, in order for you to know the Father. However, you, as were His first hearers, were dead in your sin. Dead bodies can't know anything. But Jesus had a solution for that. He knew that you were dead, but He also knew that He could re-create. He

⁶ John 17:25-26

could make you alive again, so that He could grasp onto you, and make you one with God. But you are free to come back next week to hear Deacon talk about that.

Now, may the peace which passes all understanding, and which comes from your reconciliation to God, guard your hearts and your minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Advent Wednesday Series 2, 2-14
Psalm 50; Jeremiah 32:38-41; Romans 8:1-4; John 17:20-26

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Vicar Christopher M. Craig

Soli Deo Gloria