

THE LORD COUNSELS THAT ALL WOULD ENTER INTO REPENTANCE

Hear again the Word of the Lord for this second-last Sunday of the Church Year:

The Lord is not slow concerning the promise, as some count slowness, but long-suffering for us, not counseling anyone to perish but for all to enter into repentance.¹

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

Our theme for this day when we find comfort that God has won the ultimate victory over death and the Satan is:

The Lord counsels that all would enter into repentance.

That of course, is not speaking of universal salvation. It does declare that God wills that His Word that convicts, condemns, and kills is to be proclaimed to show sinners their failures to keep His Word. It is to move them to wish to turn from their sins. It shows them Christ's death in their sins.

The them also declares God's counsel that His Word of atonement, acquittal, and enlivenment be fully proclaimed. That is done to show sinners that He has kept His Word for them. It is to move them to new life in this fallen world. It does so by declaring that which little Joy Neva received today: death to sin thorough Jesus' death, and life in the risen, ascended, and coming Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord counsels that all, all of you, would continually enter into repentance that He might continue to save you from sin, death, and hell. This He counsels us to declare regularly, that you might have hope. Such hope you confess when you speak the

¹ II Peter 3:9.

Words of the ancient creeds.

Today, in the Baptismal rite, we spoke words that cast Satan again, as it were, like lightning from the heavens. As Joy Neva is kept in the Faith of Jesus, the Satan will not be able to accuse her before our Father in heaven. As she learns in the home – both her Church home and that of her parents – of the meanings of the words of the Creeds she will learn to take comfort in the promises given therein.

The texts of this day bring to memory here the realities of the Second Article. As you were baptized, (Third Article reality), you received the fullness of the Christ Whom the Church confesses. Over all the colors, movement, and joy, you confessed boldly the basic truths of the Word of God. You held forth the Word – Jesus the Christ – that which ever casts out the devil. In renouncing the devil, all his works and ways, in the following ancient creedal statements you declared that you believed that Jesus bought you back from sin and takes vengeance on the devil for you. Behind the words you declared, is the truth that Jesus delivered you from the Satan's accusations, sins' firm hold, and the yawning chasm of death. You voiced the eternal reality, which, in part, continues to declare that the Lord counsels that all would enter into repentance, that those who are moved to do so would not be destroyed, but ever live in His life and light.

That message is ever important in this fallen world. It is beneficial this day. Some malcontents, uncomfortable with the rule of Law that has governed this great nation since the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, are using that which is designed, and has normally been (save for the 1860's) used for a peaceful transition of power. They

are bringing struggle where there need be none. Some are using this past week's elections to act on their bent to destroy their own neighborhoods. Lord, have mercy!

Those protests, civil strife, and not so peaceful struggles you are able to witness through the reports of the media in all forms. They are the visible struggles of those who trust in government over God to bring to them all the benefits and happiness they desire for this life. While their work is masked under the thin veil of civil protest and civil disobedience, it belies the greater struggle that is taking place on this fallen planet.

We, dear Christians, should never forget who is the prince of this world. He Whom Christ and the angels casts forth from heaven roams about this earth. He looks to devour those who are in his Enemy's camp. He wills to deceive you who are of the Faith of Jesus the Christ - from the newly baptized unto the eldest mortal saint here today - the devil wills to deceive you into believing that anything, anyone, any "right government" is able to save you, to provide for you, to protect you, to nurture you, to comfort and console you far better than the God Who may be, until the Last Day, beheld only under means - Word and Sacraments.

Make no mistake, we Christians are being assaulted by forces unseen. That is why we continue to need reminders that the Lord is not slow to fulfill His promises. Yes, in our timing, He delays. But His seeming procrastination is due to His mercy - for sinners - for you, and for the little ones such as Joy Neva Miller to whom He wills to give life eternal in this life. Remember, when the events of this world press in on you, *the Lord*

counsels that all would enter into repentance.

At times, this world appears to us to be so calm and peaceful. This morning, a bit before 6:00 AM, the Catalina Mountain tops were outlined by the approach of sunrise. In that Beginning Morning Nautical Twilight, the sky was a deep blue, the mountains were edged with a glow. The stars were in the sky. The Little Dipper (Ursa Minor) was clearly distinguishable in the northeast. Orion was stretched out over the west. The air was crisp, cool (some 47 degrees). A few roosters were crowing. A dog barked. The wheels of commerce beginning could be heard drifting up the draws. All seemed very peaceful.

Yet, a great and mighty battle continued to rage. It was not heard in the protesters in the streets (most of them were likely abed, a few perhaps satiated in their own self-righteousness). While unseen to the fellow on the bicycle or the man walking his dog, malevolent forces were continuing to thrust themselves against the forces of light.

Here, they were preparing a stand to keep a little one out of the kingdom of light. Yet, on this foothill, the morning advanced. The light continued to overcome the darkness. The sun appeared above the mountains, and the world was flooded with light.

In that light, a little one was won, by God, through His means of grace, won back from the powers of darkness. She, as we all were, was conceived a child of Adam. She was fully afflicted by his sin. She deserved that which all humans deserve – sin, death, and eternal hell.

Yet, by God's grace, through His Word spoken – and sung in the Miller household for sure, she has been torn from the devil's grasp. God has worked great violence to the principdom of the evil one here this day. The King, again, has put the bound prince of this fallen world in his place – under his feet, and therefore, under her tiny little soles.

The Lord was not slow in doing that, though to our senses, it has been almost 2,000 years since He delivered her from those terrible foes. This day, you have beheld God enact His promises once again. He has shown His good counsel in our midst. Isn't it wonderful that He chose such a day to do this, a day when His Word declares:

The Lord is not slow concerning the promise, as some count slowness, but long-suffering for us, not counseling anyone to perish but for all to enter into repentance?²

Dear fellow redeemed, you should know that today's readings have clearly revealed the will of God. To you who are distressed by the events of this past week, or who are otherwise suffering mightily in these Last Days, God declares His proclamation of repentance and Good News over all people. This is a day to again hear and make, from that hearing, the good confession of the Faith. The Scripturally illumined confessions declare:

God's revealed will involves both items: first, that he would receive into grace all who repent and believe in Christ; second, that he would punish those who deliberately turn away from the holy commandment and involve themselves again in the filth of this world, prepare their hearts for Satan, and outrage the Holy Spirit, and that he would harden, blind, and for ever damn them if they continue therein... God does not will sin and has no pleasure in sin, so he also does not will the death of a

² II Peter 3:9.

sinner and has no pleasure in his damnation. ³

Just as God has shown mercy to an infant girl among us today, so He continues to pour out His mercy upon you. God is patient with you. Just so, He has always shown grace in waiting for the saints of old to turn from their sins.

The same God Who called Adam to repentance in the Garden, and forgave him his sins in the declaration of the Promise. That is not forcing the text, for this day, the God-inspired Apostle wrote of the things of the Creation when he was moved to write of the hope we have in God's eternal counsel. He reminds the faithful that He is the same God who created the earth, covered with waters to wash away its sin in the time of Noah.

He calls out to give you hope when you behold the selfishness of entitled people demanding from their neighbors that which is theirs to steward. Christ is using the reality of the Flood which washed away sins, to point you to the coming reality of the holy fire which will purify you, and the Creation, forever. His reminders for the faithful have been declared into your ears.

You have heard that you are free to continue to call upon God in the day of trouble. You shall know that He will deliver you. The vision of Daniel was read into your ears concerning the final Day of deliverance, that you might have hope. The words of Jesus reveal the position of honor, the right of the King, is for people who cling to Him

³Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church.* Fortress Press: Philadelphia

by faith, through grace. That faith is lived out in the good works He has prepared for you to do. These are summarized by Peter as he continues to say:

for we, according to His promise, continue to await new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.⁴

Today, a little sinner has received her entrance into sainthood. She will struggle with that tension until her last day, or the Last Day, should it come upon all of us sooner rather than later. She like you, now, has no need to fear these words,

But the now heavens and the earth by the Word of Him remain treasured up for fire, kept into day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly men.⁵

She, like you, has been removed from the camp of those who continue to scoff at Christ's final coming. She, like you, has been freed to live under the promise. She, like you, has been freed to stewardship of all things that God has placed into our stewardship.

You, in Christ have already been cleansed by the purifying fire of the Spirit in the Word. Therefore you are free to care for this world, and all its resources, for the benefit of your neighbors. You are liberated to care for those who are aching because their will for a god of government has apparently been cast down. You may speak to them of God's promise:

The Lord is not slow concerning the promise, as some count slowness, but long-suffering for us, not counseling anyone to perish but for all to enter into repentance.⁶

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

⁴ II Peter 3:13.

⁵ II Peter 3:7.

⁶ II Peter 3:9.

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Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

Soli Deo Gloria

II Peter 3:3-14

τούτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαίκεται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι καὶ λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως.

λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ, δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπόλετο·

οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λαιθανέτω ὑμᾶς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία.

οὐ βραδύνει κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἠγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενός τις ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι.

Ἦξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἣ οἱ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.

τούτων οὕτως πάντων λυομένων ποταποὺς δεῖ ὑπάρχειν [ὑμᾶς] ἐν ἀγίαις ἀναστροφαῖς καὶ εὐσεβείαις, προσδοκῶντας καὶ σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρας δι' ἣν οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται.

καινοὺς δὲ οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν κατὰ τὸ ἐπάγγελμα αὐτοῦ προσδοκῶμεν, ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ.

Διό, ἀγαπητοί, ταῦτα προσδοκῶντες σπουδάσατε ἄσπιλοι καὶ ἀμώμητοι αὐτῷ εὐρεθῆναι ἐν εἰρήνῃ ⁷

BOOK OF CONCORD

Daniel 7:14 601.55

The statement is, of course, correct and true that Christ's human nature in and by itself possesses all the created gifts which have been given to it. But these do not measure up to the majesty which the Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers on the basis of Scriptures, ascribe to the assumed human nature in Christ. ⁵⁵ For to give life, to execute all judgment, to have all authority in heaven and on earth, to have all things given into his hands, to have all things under his feet, to cleanse from sin, and so forth are not created gifts but divine and infinite qualities. Yet according to the statement of the Scriptures these properties have been given and communicated to the man Christ (John 5:21, 27; 6:39, 40; Matt. 28:18; Dan. 7:14; John 3:31, 35; 13:3; Matt. 11:27; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:27; John 1:3, 10).⁸

II Peter 3:9 621.28

Hence if we want to consider our eternal election to salvation profitably, we must by all means cling rigidly and firmly to the fact that as the proclamation of repentance extends over all men (Luke 24:47), so also does the promise of the Gospel. Therefore Christ has commanded to preach "repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name among all nations." For God "loved the world" and gave to it his only begotten Son (John 3:16). Christ has taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29); he has given his flesh "for the life of the world" (John 6:51); his blood is "the propitiation for the whole world's" sin (1 John 1:7; 2:2). Christ declares, "Come unto me, all who are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "God has included all men under disobedience so that he might have mercy on all" (Rom. 11:32). "The Lord is not wishing that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "He is simultaneously one Lord of all, rich toward all who call upon him" (Rom. 10:12). Righteousness "comes through faith in Christ to all and on all who believe" (Rom. 3:22). "This is the will of the Father, that all who believe on Christ should have eternal life" (tr-1073) (John 6:40).⁹

621.32

Thus the Spirit of God gives "witness" to the elect "that they are the children of God," and when they "do not know how to pray as we ought," he intercedes for them "with inexpressible groanings" (Rom. 8:16-26).³² In the same vein Holy Scripture also assures us that God who has called us will be so faithful that after "he has begun

⁷Aland, B., Aland, K., Black, M., Martini, C. M., Metzger, B. M., & Wikgren, A. 1993, c1979. *The Greek New Testament* (4th ed.) . United Bible Societies: Federal Republic of Germany

⁸Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia

⁹Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia

the good work in us” he will also continue it to the end and complete it, if we ourselves do not turn away from him but “hold fast until the end the substance which has been begun” in us. For such constancy he has promised his grace (1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6ff.; 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 3:14).¹⁰

629.82

And as God does not will sin and has no pleasure in sin, so he also does not will the death of a sinner and has no pleasure in his damnation. He does not will that “any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). It is written in Ezekiel, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezek. 18:23; 33:11).⁸² And St. Paul testifies with clear words that God’s power and operation can transform the vessels of dishonor into vessels of honor when he writes, “If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). He who is to purify himself must beforehand have been impure^(tr-1091) and therefore a vessel of dishonor. Concerning “the vessels of mercy” he says specifically that the Lord himself “has prepared them unto glory.”⁸ He does not say this of the damned, whom God has not prepared but who have prepared themselves to be vessels of damnation.¹¹

630.84

It is to be considered diligently that God punishes sin with sin, that is, because of their subsequent impurity, impenitence, and deliberate sins God punishes with obduracy and blindness those who have been converted. This must not be misconstrued as if it had never been God’s gracious will that such people should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. God’s revealed will involves both items: First, that he would receive into grace all who repent and believe in Christ; second, that he would punish those who deliberately turn away from the holy commandment⁹ and involve themselves again in the filth of this world (2 Pet. 2:20), prepare their hearts for Satan (Luke 11:24, 25), and outrage the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10:29), and that he would harden, blind, and for ever damn them if they continue therein.⁸⁴ Hence Pharaoh (of whom we read, “For this purpose have I let you live to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth”)¹ did not perish because God did not want to grant him salvation or because it was God’s good pleasure that he should be damned and lost. For God “is not wishing that any should perish,” nor has he any “pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”²¹²

¹⁰Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia

8 Rom. 9:23.

¹¹Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia

⁹ Most manuscript copies and the German printed text of 1580 read *Gebet* (prayer), but this is an obvious slip for *Gebot* (commandment), the reading of the Latin version (*mandato*).

1 Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17.

2 2 Pet. 3:9; Ezek. 33:11.

¹²Tappert, T. G. 2000, c1959. *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church*. Fortress Press: Philadelphia