

Advent 4 2018

Luke 7: The Lord our Peace

Luke 1:39–45 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord—in other words: In the Name of Jesus.

In His Name—at His authority—by the pleading of the Holy Spirit of Jesus: my dear Lutherans, what a glorious morning to stop and smell the roses—the LUTHERAN roses! In other words, the Rose of Sharon, the Rose that is Mary’s Boy, the Rose of the Gospel!

Brother Joe brought from his storeroom treasures old and new when he told us recently of Luther’s comment on the conception of Jesus! That by that very word of the angel Gabriel—the SPOKEN...WORD...GOING...IN...TO...MARY’S...EAR...-- Christ was conceived! (Martin Luther was one of my very best catechumens!)

SAME Gospel-ly things springing to life when those two little mothers bearing life got together to chat with the awe-filled majesty that only mothers will know: one too young to carry a child; one, everyone thought, too old. And yet, each, from the Word—the Spoken...Word...of...the Pledge of Heaven for certain...--each bearing INSIDE what was pledged and guaranteed OUTSIDE—like our faith!

One baby is leaping in the womb as his mother is inspired to praise the Lord and make Him great! While the Mother of Our Lord is in the happiest of all possible places—the place for which ALL Y’ALL dear women have been prepared by your God: to be at the receiving end of ALL Heaven’s gifts; the Lord Who has surrendered in our struggle! The war is over. For He has surrendered Himself to the greatest danger we know, the womb.

Your poor preacher is NOT trying to be a wet blanket on the whole thing. On the contrary! Just trying to shine the Gospel in the darkness we men covet, spread, love.

No matter that our people, our land, our entire system of government is hell-bent on making a woman’s womb more dangerous rather than less—and nothing has changed since Pharaoh and Herod, und so weiter—yet the two women are greeting and rejoicing and praying and praising and singing and magnifying the L...O...R...D—

Luther—again! ‘He is MY Lord! Mean...ing: HE...HAS...REDEEMED...ME! A lost and condemned creature. Purchased! Won! Won even ME! From sin! From death! From the power of the devil! NOT with man’s focus—silver and gold—but with God’s focused God-ness: His Holy Precious Blood, that coursed also through Mary; shared by Elizabeth, the genetic counselors among us inform us!’

Your poor pastor can give you no happier Christmas Present, than to call you back, call you onward, to what is Luther-an about you; meaning, what is nothing but the Gospel given and the Gospel received!

Luther is certain the Lord is conceived in Mary when the spoken Word of heaven enters Mary’s ears. John—future Baptizer—leaps in agreement! Johnny’s mom joins the choir—and now Joy belongs to the WORLD! The...Lord...is...come!

No doubt you are WAY beyond your pastor here!

We are now FREED from finding out what's inside each one of us...while at the same time we are FREED from all externals: sin, death, devil, temptation, accusation; the wrath of God.

And so—my dear Lutherans!!!!!---

We, children of God, baptized because of what HE has said to us, surely saved so that even WE can trust the Good News...

We may be CERTAIN about what's inside each child of God: The Good News, of sins forgiven, peace with heaven, prayer unceasing acceptable to the God we cannot see, and works of love beginning to spring to life!

If there is any DOUBT—as un-Christmas-y Word as there ever was....!—

If YOU ever doubt the next man's utter living from the promise of the Incarnation of Christ in Mary—cross-date fixed even then—

The solution spills over the rim of those two expectant mothers and their sweet hour of prayer together, their worship and praise and faith and love:

Put the Gospel inside the next man you doubt! Put it in from the outside! Then let the Spirit take over making what's inside leap and rejoice and everything else.

Brother Charlie has counseled your pastor for years that I can tend to make the Gospel too difficult. The doctors have part of the explanation we now know. But there simply remains a curvature toward doubt that I must repent of as well!

So...as simple as I can make it. Meaning, as Gospel-stuffed!

Life from heaven is joy and peace and acceptance of all men, keeping our boundaries where they are needed.

Doubt tries to war against Life. But it is no match for the Christ Child, for His Body and Blood given us, His Gospel now sung around the world at Christmas, even if the world does not know it! Doubt cannot get on the battlefield against our Faith and Life and Hope and Love...

Unless the EXTERNAL Word is replaced by...anything! The next man's weaknesses, habits, track-record; our own ruts and tracks, OUR final...conclusions...about anyone...

The answer to what's wrong inside us, my dear ones, is the Gospel OUTSIDE us. God...has pledged, that ALL...OF...HIM...(WONDER! PRAISE! LIFE!)

ALL...OF...GOD...is now, and for good, a DISTINCT, SEPARATE, INDIVIDUAL...ONE/OF/US!

Not Good News for the puny powers that would lump all men together and raise doubts. Not Good News for the puny powers that would set one man over against the next, and spread darkness and doubt and death.

But Happy News for those who are individually what they are, with all that they are—to hear that God has lined Himself up with all of us and each of us...

So that Heaven calls each, calls all, to rejoice, to believe, to love, to live—and at Christmas-time, to SING—with E...V...E...R...Y...T...H...I...N...G we have in us—ALL because of the Good News that comes from Outside of us: The Father, His Son, Their Holy Spirit, for...all; for us!

And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord—in other words: In the Name of Jesus! Amen!