

The Fifth Sunday of Easter 2020
John 14

Holy Spirit, Light Divine/Shine upon this heart of mine
Chase the shades of night away/Turn my darkness into day.
Let me see my Savior's face/Let me all His beauties trace.
Show that Gospel truth to me/Which is only known to Thee. Amen.

14 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”
⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”
⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. ^[1]

^[1] [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 14:1–14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

In the Name of Jesus.

Well, then! WHAT to ASK FOR?! He doubles down, the Way, the Truth, the Life: ‘I will do it! I will do it! Ask anything!’

We’ve all learned long ago that when the genie in the lamp grants you three wishes, you ask for 1000 more wishes! But what of the One Who lives? Who has given His Flesh—just like ours—into death, for the Life of the World. 1000. 10,000. 10,000 times 10,000! Soon, we ALL run out of fingers to count on, and toes. What to ask for: if it’s ANYthing?

The Lutheran is—of course, y’all know this—the Lutheran is at peace when the Word answer questions the Word brings up. Ask for....?

Dear saints, we cannot hear these words with TOO MUCH adoration:

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. [*That’s Pastor Stephen*] But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Well, that's ANYthing! TWO THINGS: the greater works—Yea! says the Spirit!—TOWERING...OVER...THE...WORKS...of the Only Begotten of the Father in our Flesh---

Oh! He keeps His Word! 'THAT MAN WILL...DO...GREATER...WORKS...

That's the WHOLE POINT of MY 'going to the Father.'

Stephen ASKS for the gift that will SWEEP any...other...thing...clear: 'Receive MY spirit! Jesus! YOU have pledged yourself to be there, wherever God does what He does for His people. And you have pledged to be there: even for me.'

'Go! Tell my brothers: I ascend to MY Father and to Y'ALL'S Father; if He is MY God, then whatever GOD there is—can ONLY think of Himself in...TERMS...OF...YOU!'

And what does Pastor Stephen BELIEVE—if the Lord Jesus will receive HIS spirit?! Ah! Whaddawee know about Stephen?! He's a beggar! This is true! First martyr; first Lutheran; first poor, miserable sinner!

And HERE is where poor Stephen—meaning, SAINT Stephen!—ol' Steve's got the Spirit of Jesus on the hook! And that Fish can't wiggle free!

IF.....IF...YOU, Jesus, have really and for-true nailed-down answered prayer—‘It is finished!—

And IF.....If this REIGNING YOU are doing at the right hand of the Father can do ANYTHING!...

And IF..... If the Spirit you have placed on a man like me, like Stephen, makes ME holier than heaven itself....!

And if.... No! SINCE you live ONLY to hear the sinner pray and befriend THAT MAN...

Since I, unworthy Stephen, now OWN your kingdom: then YOU...WILL...NOT...HOLD...AGAINST...THESE...MEN.....

A...N...Y...T...H...I...N...G.....!

LEAST OF ALL, that they threw some rocks at me today.

Then, as the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther teaches:

‘At the close of the day, make the sign of the cross and ascend to heaven by virtue of your Baptism! Boast of God revealed IN YOU: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—who IDENTIFY Himself by His Baptized! Call on God as YOUR FAHTER—and He CANNOT wiggle out of THAT! (As if He’d ever want to, now that His Son has made us all God’s children!) And then:....’

One son giggled himself to sleep nearly every night, asking mom and day: ‘Does the Catechism really tell us to fall asleep AT ONCE and in good cheer?! That’s funny!’

Yeah, it’s funny. It’s also called the Gospel.

Or, Where Jesus went: to prepare a place for us.

Falling asleep PARDONED...and if PARDONED, then NO ONE’S GOING TO THE FLAMES BECAUSE OF THIS MAN!....

This is the Truth He came to make Live in...in just WHOEVER.

Whoever—just anyone!—can take it to heart that ALL THINGS are run now and brought to life and carried through death—by the One Who Ascended with Those Wounds: Calvary Wounds. And if ANYone, then you too! Even me! Oh! There are LOTS of everlasting dwelling places in the Father’s house! For He has LOTS of children! How many?

Well, my dear ones: Let not your hearts be troubled! Believe in God; believe also in God’s Son!

How many rooms in the Life Eternal YOU will rise to, soon; soon?!

A favorite picture of my sweetheart-darling is from very young. Showing her off one day in the picture, a loving man replied, ‘She has sort of a mischievous smile there, doesn’t she?!’ (That’s in your arsenal, my dear!)

SURELY you have seen this LONG before this lousy pastor now sees! Jesus has SO laid Himself at OUR SERVICE, He is egging us ON!

‘OK, Lord. Lots of rooms in that blessed land. And, the time is short? Well, let’s see if you can get ready...THIS MANY ROOMS!’

And...we’re off!

Those blessed hours, seconds...when the Spirit springs up even in us, my dear ones! After the reception of His Body and His Blood? After a day begun right boasting of our God-Servant? Our Baptism?

Those times of refreshing...when NO MAN, when NO SIN...could move us from brother Stephen’s faith and hope and love:

‘Asking for the BIG ONE here, Heaven-Slave: Accept ME! Just the way ME is!’

‘And then comes the EASY prayer for a man like me! If I AM held blameless, DESPITE the way I am—and that’s something Y’ALL inside of God cajigger and work out...’

Make room in heaven for.....

To finish that prayer means—Saints! Believers!—to pray continuously, mischievously FORCING Almighty-Slave to keep adding on rooms, and rooms, and rooms...

Start with your Baptism. He has washed you. And if you are clean already, you live in a world where you step in nastiness and need your feet washed. Again, He's DOWN with that; DOWN there. Give Him your feet!

Whom do you want to AVOID...here?! FORBID the Lord Jesus to hold anything against them, just because YOU aren't that solid a believer.

Who is on your list—of people—FOR...WHOM...JESUS...LAID down His Life!—

A dear saint once confessed to me 'I will NOT be buried in the same cemetery as THAT person! I am NOT spending eternity next to THAT ONE!'

Praise the Lord! The best and simplest saints CONFESS what religious phonies and pastors desperately try to hide!

'Y'know; I wouldn't be all that UPSET if so-and-so wasn't hanging around me for eternity...!'

Confess. Then believe.

‘Jesus, I insist you HARNESS ME to the people my ORIGINAL self wants farthest away.’

Thomas was right on: WE cannot figure out how you get to life through death, to heaven through hell, to God’s kingdom THROUGH the devil’s! How does LOVE work with those I DON’T LOVE—and how CLEARLY DO NOT BEAR WITH ME?!

This is NOT a path WE know how to walk! NONE of us have a GOAL that comes AFTER death of ME and LIFE FOR THE WORLD!

Happily, Jesus consoles: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. I AM all that Y’all cannot imagine being. I am a Way you cannot walk; I AM what each man can trust—in a world where you can trust no man; I Live...BY...DYING; and thus I raise all the dead!’

Nice to have something solid to pray for, isn’t it, my dear ones. Rather than more ‘things.’ We grab hold of—in faith, in prayer—we grab not THINGS, but the THING-ER Himself!

Yes, ask for good things He has created. But the Creator first! He is PRAISED with ‘Maker’ and ‘Creator;’ He PREFERS; He LOVES: ‘Father’!

And that great swathe of the day that we used to spend—before the Gospel, before our Baptism, before the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther!—

The time and words and breath we USED TO waste on MOANING over the bruises given us by others; is now, in answer to our prayer, time and words and breath brought to Life by the Spirit given us; the Way that leads from Jesus to Jesus; and...

Look....now I'm going to say one of my things that I I'm sure is right with the Gospel, but sounds quite blasphemous. But I don't know why else I am here.

HE said we will do greater works than He has done.

HE says that He ascends to the Father—so He MUST BE Our Father.

He says that God defines Himself by us, despite our everyday, mounting sinfulness.

And, He said to Philip: If you have seen ME, you have seen the Father.

Here we go.

Make this your prayer, children of the Heavenly Father: ‘Show that Gospel Truth to Me, My Spirit; Only You know the Gospel! So that, no matter how much the next man sins in my orbit, he can look at ME—ME!—and hear...FROM ME!: Let not YOUR heart be troubled! If you have seen ME, you have seen the FATHER!’

Children: pray that tonight, daily and much, continuously. And then fall asleep in your bed, or your grave, at once and in good cheer in the Name of Jesus.