

The Sixth Sunday of Easter (2021)

Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day.
 Let me see my Savior's face; let me all His beauties trace;
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
 Thee.
 Amen.

John 15:9–17 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”

In the Name of Jesus.

The Law came through Moses; Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ. That's from the Gospel according to Saint John, chapter one. WHICH...comes from our Psalm today, number 98! 'He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God!'

Steadfast Love and Faithfulness--Grace and Truth. The NEW SONG! NOT the Law! But the Good News of REAL God Who CANNOT get enough of REAL...YOU! Who cannot stand a 'pretend you.' Luther: 'God save me from a church full of holy people!'

Grace and Truth means—Oh!, that the God of Israel is SOOOO.... Predictable! Tell Him you will live without fail according to His will and He does not bust out laughing. Admit—some day!—that His will is the LAST thing you’re going to fulfill, admit it...again, Grace and Truth, Steadfast Love and Faithfulness—He’ll forgive you. Me too.

If we say we have no sin—no grace and truth in us; we’ve never HEARD of the steadfast love and faithfulness of Abraham’s God and Abraham’s Joy: Jesus! But as long as HE is SOOOO....predictable...a pushover...slow to take offence....then what’s the harm in admitting that we are not paper sinners, but as Doctor Martin Luther describes: ‘Good, hardboiled ones’?!

To love as He loved—one another; whom does that leave out? No one! The HEIGHTS to which our Baptism has raised you, me, the world! To attach to one another as HE is attached to the world, even to us, The Spirit of Jesus calls us through the Gospel; Saint John calls the Gospel ‘the Spirit, the Water and the Blood.’

—He calls, gathers and enlightens EVERY ONE of God’s offspring—Jesus, and YOU, and ME, and WHY NOT OVER THERE?!!! Calls us to receive a gift, to count on a gift, that no...man...can...count...on—Lord ‘a mercy on us! Because the Son of God is a gift that is NOT the Law, NOT OUR production, NOT dependent on OUR works, OUR sincerity, OUR running around, OUR scolding and finger-wagging; our glory.

OK. I’ve been urging y’all for years now to make sure you at least PENCIL in a five-ten minute slot this week to make sure you sin. Otherwise, poor Jesus is out of work; and forget about the poor Holy Spirit.

That’s the first of His so-called commands: to believe in the one the Father sent. If THIS KING has a kingdom, then even I AM IN!’

NOW... commandment number TWO! Ha! Ha!
‘Commandment!’ Yes. Nice try, Jesus. ALL that grabs our

attention is the empty powers and boasts of men. Soooo...you even call YOUR Words of Resurrection “commandments.” We’re on to you, Friend; Jesus, our Friend!’

Here’s ‘COMMANDMENT’ number TWO. (Moses had ten. Jesus only needs two.)

Squeeze in ANOTHER five-ten minute slot to throw yourself FULLY into the arms, the orbit, the oxygen, the tyranny of a real, hardboiled sinner!

(As I always remind you, if you cannot find such a sinner, a disappointment, someone you SHOULD be able to expect more from, but, alas, feet of clay, wobbly knees, fear....then YOU AND I need to spend MORE TIME together! I’m right here! Hard-boiled sinner and disappointment at your service! Shakespeare: ‘Being your slave, what should I do but tend upon the hours and times of your desire?’)

For THERE—where a man does not know his right hand from his left; or, much worse, deserving of a much more brutal beating on the Dreadful Day of Judgment, a man DOES know the difference between right and wrong and STILL will not perform...Lord, have mercy on us!—Know anyone like that, my lovelies?!

R...I...G...H...T T...H...E...R...E.....—with a REAL person, you cannot get more awash in the Father’s Love! The Father’s love for the Son, the Son’s love for the Father; and now, Real God—NOT THE god of OUR opinion and prejudice and yuck—

REAL God, in our real flesh, CANNOT be MORE...GLUED...to you—CANNOT BE MORE INNNNNN you, ENFOLDING you, LIVING in you—bringing you to life (me too!)—than when WE have been flooded with the Spirit, the Water and the Blood—and

thus The Holy Spirit will—PREDICATBLY, SHEEESH!, He NEVER changes His tune: Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, I ascend to My Father because He is your Father, to the One I CAN call God now, because He is YOUR God for certain!—

We share the oxygen of those who breathe in and out boast and threat, pride and fear—and pray mightily that The Holy Spirit will be Holy in us too. YOU, dear Son of God, Daughter of God; YOU Friend of Jesus, are ALL the God the next man needs, in his everyday ordinariness and sin. As YOU love. As YOU tell the next man—WHOEVER he is and WHATEVER he has done: ‘All is well, even though you, fellow sinner, worship your own opinion. You have me; so all is well.’

No better place to do that than at the Spirit’s gathering of the Baptized, who confess with Luther, ‘I need to keep hearing the Good News about God’s Son in the flesh—because I keep forgetting It!’

Enfold those who have something in them that puts you off.

Love those—M...E...A...N...I...N...G: S....T...I...C...K.... to those who DO NOT ‘GRAB’ you, ‘ATTRACT’ you, ‘SATISFY’ you.

Like Jesus has stuck Himself to us, and stuck His Father in, with and around us for certain; as He has loved us, breathed upon us THE Mystery of the Godhead: ‘HOWWWW...does the Almighty calm such storms with such a Gentle Breeze, such a common little bird: the Spirit of Jesus?’

Find SOME kind of sin in yourself this week. Then Jesus won’t be bored. Predictably, His brothers and sisters and ministers and church will forgive you, and then, that’s that. There ain’t a REAL GOD anymore Who is repelled by you.

T...H...E...N...

There is SOMEONE in the six billion of our brothers and sisters in the world, who will be glad to hear the trumpets sound out: The sea roars because of the Gospel! And so do WE! The rivers rush and bubble and spill their banks because their Maker is made of the same stuff as the rivers, and you, and me; and He uses the seas and rivers to give us water that He makes Holy!

The hills echo with joy; they ought to! The echo of ALL nations! Because ALL men should now shout for joy the New Song! NOT the song of Moses, the Law, but the steadfast love and faithfulness, the Grace and Truth that are ours, the world's, in the Name of Jesus.