

The Fourth Sunday in Lent  
 Year of the Lord 2019  
 Luke 15

**“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!”**

**Isaiah 12:1–6** You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. **“Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”**

**2 Corinthians 5:16–21** From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, **in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,** and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32** Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable:

And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he

squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’” And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

In the Name of Jesus:

1Blessèd is the one whose transgression is for- | given,\*  
whose sin is | covered.

2Blessèd is the man against whom the LORD counts no in- |  
iquity,\*  
and in whose spirit there is | no deceit.

When Israel of old was baptized into Moses, into the Law, at the crossing of the Red Sea, the people sang words that echo in the Isaiah 12 lesson today. Exodus 15:

**15** Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

“I will sing to the LORD, ***for he has triumphed gloriously;***  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father’s God, and I will exalt him. <sup>1</sup>

Today, Isaiah 12:

**“Sing praises to the LORD, *for he has done gloriously;* let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”**

Isaiah made it clear in his preaching that a new Exodus was coming. The first time, out of Egypt; the second time, out of this world, from all the places to which the Lord had scattered His people of old. Scattered, the prophet said, so that ALL the earth, ALL the nations, would shout and sing for joy WITH the children of Abraham.

Saint Paul revealed that this Exodus is going on now; and you and I, dear ones, are now swept up into this too; **TODAY IS THE DAY OF SALVATION!**

Not baptized into Moses and the Law, two paths—obedience and life and disobedience and death—but baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection. Second Corinthians: **“in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,** and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

Like the words, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth’—to those who gave us ALL birth—these words of the apostle are no

<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ex 15:1–2). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

more a command and threat than the word will be when your Savior raises you from here to Him, ‘Come out!’

BE reconciled to God! The sun is shining—be warm! The rain is falling—rejoice! The air is clear—breathe!

No warming ourselves makes the sun shine; no rejoicing makes the heavens gush; no breathing creates air. And N...O...T...H...I...N...G on our part, FROM us TO our Father in heaven, BEGINS or ENDS or SUSTAINS the New Exodus, that the Son of God has started, has accomplished, on the cross. ‘ALL that I have has ALWAYS BEEN YOURS!!!!!’

Hear the story of these two sons that way, my dear ones! One foot of Jesus still stuck among a people DEFINED by the Law; one foot pointed already to the place where the LAW would be nailed up and de-fanged; every bark of threatening re-tuned into music to lift up our hearts, to the Lord.

Since my classes at LSU are often now filled with rage-filled ‘social justice warriors,’ to protect myself I must warn them that we are going to read about the Greeks and the Romans. And the Greeks and the Romans did things—millennia ago!—that Dr Anderson has no power to change; and THEM PEOPLES are NOT my fault! Rage all you want about the treatment of women and slaves and so on by the ancients; I am just the messenger. To make it as clear as I can, I repeat to my warriors: ‘Dr Anderson GOOD! ROMANS...BADDDD!’

My lovelies: Pharisees: GOOD! Tax collectors: BAD! ‘SINNER’ was NEVER a signal of virtue. It was a sign and admission that even the ‘SINNERS’ would admit among the old Jews. The ‘sinner’ is the man who knew full-well the demands of the Law; and, yet, made the admission that, daily and much, his heart and mind and hands and feet were IN LOVE with...being bad.

So when Jesus opened Himself to the charge--“This man receives sinners and eats with them”—Jesus

was...siding...with...the...bad. He left no choice for the good:  
HE had to die.

He did more; UTTERLY more, UTTERLY new! He made Himself  
a people, the Lord's things, the Church.

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in  
him we might become the righteousness of God.”

JESUS...the Holy Son...my dear ones: Jesus is your sin. Jesus is  
the ONLY THING wrong with you; and so, with the world.  
Mary's Boy is the ONLY problem the God we have never seen is  
EVER going to have with us! ‘Got a problem with ME, Moses,  
Law, Heaven, Goddd?! Take it up with the Crucified One!’

And PART...mind you, PART of our righteousness—now GIVEN  
to us!—is to spray a bit of air-freshener on our living, sponge off a  
few stains, line up some crooked things—

All the while singing with joy that bursts hearts—ours, and all  
hearts!—that ANY...GOOD that miraculously appears in OUR  
LIVES is a gift from the Spirit of Jesus. THAT is stanza TWO of  
our glad song.

Stanza ONE of our hymn of faith is following where HE has led  
us: to welcome those who show, daily and much, that they really  
WANT to be bad! To welcome them and to eat with them.

A good start is the hearts lifted to the Lord, and eating and drinking  
of our sin, ALL that heaven will ever take issue with: the Body  
and the Blood of the One Who was MADE sin, though He KNEW  
none.

So that when the Spirit drives us from our baptized group, to the  
world, our prayer may be: ‘Keep me this day from sin and all evil,  
that all my doings and life may please you! As I live with and  
welcome and eat with people that admit—BOAST!—that pleasing  
Heaven is NOT the focus of their daily doings!’

The angels of heaven rejoice over us too, when we do that. For there is no greater repentance, no finer sinner in the Name of Jesus.