

## The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

**51** “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

<sup>4</sup> “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. <sup>5</sup> My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. <sup>6</sup> Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Is 51:1–6). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.<sup>2</sup>

In the Name of Jesus.

‘O Lord, now let Your servant/Depart in heav’nly peace,/For I have seen the glory/Of your redeeming grace:/A light to lead the Gentiles/Unto Your holy hill,/The glory of your people,/Your chosen Israel!’

Singing these words after we received Christ’s Body and Blood for the forgiveness of our sins, WE join in the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise through Isaiah, ‘joy and gladness will be found on God’s holy hill Zion, thanksgiving and the voice of song!’ For we are—ourselves!—a blessed part of those people drawn to the light of God’s New Justice: that the MAN Whom God has set as King on His Holy Hill will NOT be separated from sinners! Not by the fears of the sinners themselves; and certainly NOT by those who dream that they have mastered what’s wrong with all of us in any way!

The OLD Justice of God—Sinai, Ten Commandments, Life and Death placed in our hands—the OLD you could break. Isaiah sets the tune right by telling all nations that God’s ‘salvation is forever,’ and His ‘righteousness will never be dismayed!’

Translation!: HEAVEN—after the NEW LAW has come from heaven, Jesus, Son of Mary—HEAVEN—(you know, ‘UP

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 16:13–20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

THERE,' whatever 'up there' means!)—  
 HEAVEN...WILL...NEVER...AGAIN...CONSIDER...ITSELF  
 ...ABOVE...YOU!

'But wait, pastor! Heaven is UP and I am down here! God is holy and good; but I am not, not at all! Surely, God is Someone above Who needs to be REACHED, right?!

That's what the chattering of men gets us, the made-up religions of men in their fear-slash-fake-superiority! The ONLY thing that we've come up with on our own—from Adam gluing fig leaves on himself and pointing the accusing finger elsewhere—you can boil down EVERYTHING that MAN can come up with about our standing with God as: God is over there, or up there, and we are over here, down here, and now—for just \$19.95 (or whatever!), here's my magic course to bridge that gap!

The REAL God, the Living God, in the flesh, took the keys that bind and loose heaven itself, and placed them into the hands of the man who three times over—a biblical cementing!—called down curses on himself denying that he even KNEW this Jesus, Christ Pretender—much LESS had Peter ever LEARNED anything from Him; nor was Peter a supporter of Jesus' boasts!

Who better to receive the keys that—on earth!—  
 BIND...HEAVEN—BIND...GOD, to be OUR God, the God of those who simply do NOT have it in them to act like God before God, or to act like God to other men!

THAT is the Rock! The SONG, the FAITH of Christ's Church is built on the comfort and joy that Heaven will NOT

ONLY not ever ask US for an explanation and justification for the wreck that is us; how much MORE comfort and joy is there for US, to have heaven reveal that there is NO JUSTIFICATION, there is NO ANSWER to the question on which our Old Adam MUST INSIST: WHAT, inside God, inside Heaven, moves the Source of every blessing to SUBMIT Himself to those who can ONLY abuse Him?!

ALL that the Old Adam can do is say, ‘Well, we can give the next man a BREAK, now and then; but there is a LIMIT, right? Seven times a day? There must be SOME SHOW or MOVEMENT, a DESERVING of attachment, forbearance from heaven OR earth, before we commit, God or man?!’

Let’s just check what OUR Ruler—the One Who is only happy when WE boss Him around, insist on Him pardoning us—let’s check out what OUR Ruler has to say:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup>It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup>and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, <sup>28</sup>even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”<sup>3</sup>

So, dearly beloved, anything that we hear about our God and us—OTHER than that song of thanksgiving and joy, anything LESS, is for you and me and for all whom the Lord will call—distraction, temptation; I think I’m correct to call it all a ‘demotion’ of our Ruler, and a ‘demotion’ of ourselves as well! The Son of the

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 20:25–29). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Living God came among us—COMES among us today!—to reveal and preach and MAKE IT SO, the Blessedness of God now: that you and I and ALL the nations will ALWAYS and ONLY...FIND...GOD...WITH...MEN! Men, with all their warts and blemishes, weaknesses and faults and feet of clay.

The Son of God is well pleasing to the Unseen Father, LOVED by Him, BE-CAUSE He is ONLY pleased to refer to Himself as ‘the Son of Man,’: simply, ‘one-of-us-through-and-through-and-all-the-way!’

Anything LESS, dearly beloved of God, sucks the joyful comfort from poor sinners in desperate need of an underserved but kind word from heaven.

You and I have been baptized too, my dear ones; NOT as Jesus was, by John, with those looking FORWARD to pardon approaching. You and I have been baptized with the authority of the One Who has been GIVEN—as if He’s just one of US!—GIVEN all authority in heaven and on earth!

MEANING: we live, as surely as Christ has risen and lives with us to the End, when what the next poor man gets from us is OUR BINDING heaven on earth, ATTACHING the forgiving God above to the rebel with us on earth, loosing his chains, forgiving his sins, from the heart. Praying the prayer he taught us; and it goes like this—pay attention, so you can pray properly as we approach for His Holy Supper:

Dear Father, you are NOTHING if you are not OURS and all about US! THAT is your holiness, kingdom and will! You have good reason to sustain US, give us daily bread! In fact, WE are INDISPENSABLE to all your plans! So DO it! Sustain US, your Church! For there are those who sin against us, just as we sin against you. But watch US! And we INSIST: WITHOUT WAVERING, dish out to US what WE dish out to the next man; and as WE declare others from crimes to pardoned BE, by your indulgence, set US Free!’

There is one simple way to check in on our Christianity, our faith, our blessedness with God. Watch and listen to the poor sinners we approach, while we’re with them, and as we depart. Are they singing? Are they flooded with comfort? Do they radiate back joy?

If not this last week, perhaps they will the next! We are, after all, about to receive His Body and His Blood; to forgive even US! His CHURCH is the ONLY WAY the Holy Spirit has chosen to convince men that there is a God, and that He is all forgiving in the Name of Jesus! Amen!