

The Third Sunday after Pentecost (2020)

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.

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. ¹

In the Name of Jesus.

Heads: we win! Tails: we win!

Your poor pastor has learned to pray what we just prayed: only the Spirit Who landed on Jesus at His Baptism knows the Gospel. I am left begging. Luther died rejoicing to be a beggar. 'Let me see My Savior's face.'

Your Savior, my dear ones, is NOT a made up, painted up politician or celebrity or any other kind of meat for sale: price negotiable. If the Holy Spirit has shown your poor pastor anything, it is that the Law is one thing; and the LAW is as far away as possible from what my friend Jesus is all about. So, how do we take THESE words of our King, and not turn into crazed FANS of this Man--by the way, a Man NONE OF US has ever seen!? (Yayyy, JEE-zuss!...or ELSE!)

³² So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 10:21–33). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

*denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*²

He CANNOT be just ANOTHER CROWD-GATHER-ER;
NOT...AFTER...THIS:

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”³

We already have a DEADLY voice from heaven that demands that WE cast our vote for THE RIGHT HEAVEN and the RIGHT GOD and the RIGHT LIFE... 'OR ELSE!' That threat is called: the Law. MOSES set before the first people of God a clear choice; set it in their hands:

¹⁸ Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, ¹⁹ one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. ²⁰ The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. ²¹ And the LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. ²² And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick— ²³ the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah....’

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 10:21–33). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 3:13–15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Ugh! ENOUGH!

That are Moses.

That ARE NOT...THIS...MAN...:

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” ⁴

You, dear child of God, are PERFECT! You have been baptized in the Name of Jesus; you have been taught that your God remains for you to be taught all over every day to the end!

And....You DO AC-KNOWL-EDGE Jesus before men, when DESPITE EVERYTHING you bring to the table--just like your poor pastor!--the LAW obligates us to the neighbor; but the neighbor wants nothing good to come our way; so HE, the One Who teaches with authority, obligates us to the ENEMY.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 5:38–48). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The Last Day will show that you did offer a cup of cold water to neighbor, stranger, even enemy; or blessed despite his curses or prayed for him while he was down, though there were different impulses arising inside; 'inna our he-earts!'

The One Who was baptized and thus fulfilled what heaven demands---that MAN cries out from the throne: 'Dear Father! Now, THERE...IS...YOUR...CHILD! Clearly, I'm still there!'

'But, pastor! What happens when we DO NOT confess Him before men! What happens when WE pay the next man with the SAME CURRENCY that he pays us: strike for strike, burn for burn, malediction for malediction?'

Thank God that your poor pastor is a Lutheran and not a God-salesman! I never need write my own material! Nor SELL y'all JEE-zuss!

It happens, daily and much, that YOU are not that much better than I! And YOU return the evil--in some measure--that was measured out to you.

What happens in heaven then? Well, the WORD says, that the MAN on the throne says to His Father, 'Oh! Dear Father! That's not your child! Not anymore! That's just what he WAS, what I saved Him from, what YOU sent ME to raise up and cover over, all the way!'

That is what He acknowledges and what He denies before the Father; THIS FATHER:

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Who are His disciples? God's nation? Heaven's children? Nests of the Holy Spirit? Well, Saint Matthew must have believed

that you CAN'T find a DISCIPLE-ER guy thannnnnnnn...:

When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

²⁸ And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”⁵

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ I will 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.” ²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”⁶

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 14:23–34). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 16:15–24). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

the Galilean.”⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.”⁷¹ And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.”⁷² And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.”⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.”⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed.⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.⁷

Oh! The Spirit is HOLY! He answers MY prayer! He LOVES to show off! Show off the Son of God!

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”⁸

SOOOO.... when we deny Him by trusting so little in our Baptism and in His Word, He tells His Father, 'They're still your children. They're just not acting like it right now! THAT...IS...THEM! THEM does NOT determine what I AM: WITH THEM, to the end and always!' THAT is the very REAL part of our rough life of faith that involves tears and repentance and guilt and shame and the chiding of Our Lord, Who pledges-- HE PLEDGES where HE is going to be: with the baptized and those who need to be taught God all over every day.

Annnndddd...when the Lord's Word, Body and Blood lead even someone like me--and you!--to confess before men that no man's enmity can make me HIS enemy, the Son's boast is, 'Now THAT'S a disciple! You can tell that I am with them; and will be,

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 26:69–27:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 28:16–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

to the end of the age!'

Lest you think I am just playing with words here....There IS a denial of Christ before men that even Christ cannot abide. It happens when a man makes the LAW and VERDICTS the final word on himself or others, instead of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit.

To save us from THAT denial, the Spirit urged Jesus to teach us: 'Take a good look at the next bird roadkill you pass. And remember that YOU, dear child of God, are worth SEVERAL of those birds, dead on the side of the road.'

The denier and acknowledger who has the Father's ear...compares 'several sparrows fallen dead to earth,' to Him dead!

THAT MAN... is NOT going to let YOU, or ME--nor MOSES!--decide whether or not heaven makes Its home on earth with you or me or any man in the Name of Jesus.