

Sermon notes for Laetare 2010

Isaiah 54, 7-10

John 12:20-26

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.”

Grace, Mercy and Peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Isaiah – the Unfailing Love of God

His unfailing love for us will never cease. He will not be angry with us again. Not so angry that He hides himself from us, that we are abandoned. Such is the greatness of our Lord God.

God's anger is easily seen in the Bible, from Adam and Eve, to Moses, to Jesus being beaten and crucified by the people to whom He had come to bring the message of Salvation through faith. God has and still has so many reasons to be angry with us, we give Him reason every day for being angry, but this promise holds even for us, that those who believe in Him can know for sure that they are never alone, but that He will not abandon us, not turn from us forever.

God's love is unfailing because He does not give up on us, no matter what we might do or where we might be. His love toward those who put their trust in Him, who try even if they fail is unfailing. His forgiveness for those who come to Him again and again battling with their sin, is also unfailing.

As we heard the last weeks, there is no sin God cannot forgive, no

sin that is repented.

“Though the mountains be removed” words echoed by (King David?) The author of Psalm 46, though the world might come to an end, our unfailing love and trust in God shall always be there.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”- Psalm 46:1

Though we might fear God's anger toward us, we will trust also in His unfailing love and His patience, we will not run from Him, but turn to Him and remind Him and ourselves that He is our refuge and strength.

John – Give up your Life to Gain Life

To want to keep your life for yourself means to die a selfish person, but to give your life to living for Jesus means saving many lives, **“Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”** (James 5:19-20) and bearing much fruit.

To live for God is life, to live for yourself is just death. To live life for yourself is to be an idolater, (Galatians 5:5) it is to put yourself before God. As we come to Communion today, we are reminded that it is only with Christ that we can find forgiveness, and so to we can only serve one God and sit at one table, either with God, with all of His blessings or with Mammon and forego the blessings of the Lord our God.(1 Cor 10:20-21)

Last year we spoke about the roles of man and woman in a marriage being skewed,

“There is no way in hell I will submit to my husband, and I will not serve him, I am not his slave.”

“And there is no way in hell I will lead devotions or prayers, or teach the children their confirmation work, that is a woman's job” - fine let me know how hell works out for you!

That is what is left for us if we want to do things our way, when we

want to be selfish.

Jesus speaks about knowing that the hour has come for Him to be betrayed, to be beaten and to die, but He calls it “**glorified**”^{v23} and not injustice or cruelty. In His death He saw the Glory of God being revealed, in His suffering the unfailing love of God (Isaiah 54) towards us His people. In His death He did not complain about how unfair life is, but gladly died for us.

John 12: 25 The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

One life was given up so that many might have life, so too when we give up our life for Christ many more can be given life, but to cling to your life is only death. (1 Tim 4:16; James 5:19-20; Galatians 6:7-8 and Galatians 5:5)

2 Cor 1 – The Overflow into the World

5 “For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.”

Is it comfort of suffering that we seek? Comfort, but where, in Christ or in the world? If suffering, why? Christ did not ask us to seek out suffering, but said that we would suffer rejection, be ridiculed and persecuted as He was, suffering will be part of faith, but for that so will the comfort and the joy of the Gospel also. How often do you feel that God is comforting you in your troubles, and how often do you believe that God is the author of your troubles? We often believe that God has allowed or even sent us our troubles, and that it was and is not fair. But rarely do we feel that He has given us comfort in our troubles.

So then the question arises, how can I comfort someone else with a comfort that I myself have not experienced from God?

The truth is that many have been comforted by God, but they did not know it was Him, many were offered comfort and they turned from Him and said, “**No thank you!**”

God's comfort is always at hand, through Word and Sacrament the

Comfort of the Gospel is declared and explained to us each Sunday. As we partake in Communion, we take the comfort of His forgiveness into ourselves. But the comfort only means something to those who believe, who have put their trust in the Lord, and who have put their lives in His hands.

Comfort is given to those who come to the Lord, not just in times of suffering but also in times of joy. Comfort is given to those who live their lives guarding and watching against the world, the devil and our sinful natures.

1 Tim 4:16 “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

Comfort is found when Christ is praised for everything and given credit for everything. Comfort is found when there is an overflow of love and joy because of Christ in ones life.

Without Him we are nothing, in our own strength we cannot do much, actually nothing that could save us or make us worthy of salvation, but in Him and through Him who died for us on the Cross our purpose is completed, and we have salvation through our faith and righteous serving of Him.

And this overflow is what Paul talks about today, as it flowed from Christ to us, and is more than we need, so it overflows from us to those who also need comfort, strength, hope, love.

Amen

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