

The 3rd Sunday after Pentecost, June 18, 2023.

Rev. Gerald Luck

Text: Romans 5:6–11

Theme: Carried by God

Précis: God sent Jesus into the world to carry us to Himself. Saved by Christ's life, we are now freed and blessed to live without fear.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God or Heavenly Father through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 1:2)

Romans 5:6–11

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

God sent Jesus into the world to carry us to Himself. Saved by Christ's life - that

is to say, saved by the life our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, which was laid down and then picked up again for our sake, we are now freed and blessed to live our lives without fear. That freedom separates us from the rest of this world, which is still held in Satan's chains.

Remember those chains? At one time they tied us down, too. All of us.

That's how we enter into this world and how we used to live. There's no such thing as two classes of humanity - the those who are "pretty good" and the rest, who are not. There is only one class of people. All are ungodly as we enter into this life and ruined, living without hope.

Remember how Jesus spoke to the pharisees last week when they grumbled about how He ate with sinners and tax collectors? He said, it very plainly, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick [do]." He was the only one who was well. All the others, whatever their circumstance, were not. Even those who thought themselves the "most healthy" - the pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and the like. They were all sick to the point of death. They were just as dead as the sinners and tax collectors about whom they were complaining.

They all needed Christ's help. And so it is with us. "As it is written in Romans 3:10, "None is righteous, no, not one.'"

We all miss the mark. We all act in unrighteous and ungodly ways. And that sinfulness earns us the same title as those who are utterly hostile toward God. Our sinfulness makes us "enemies" of God. But even so, there is redemption. Each one of us is blessed to be redeemed.

All of us, including the vilest offenders, have been bought with a price. God's

blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. And that redemption happened while we were still helpless; while we were still sinful. "For from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace." (John 1:16)

We've all received grace upon grace. What John said in there in that 16th verse of the opening chapter of His Gospel was a powerful word to us. It is the gift of grace.

That's the best reason we have for lowering our weapons. We don't have to be enemies of God. He declared the war over! It's a good reason for us acknowledge that we are absolutely unable to fight against the law. It's a good reason to lay down our weapons so that we can discover the joy of finally being uplifted by the gospel.

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are blessed to receive deliverance from sin, freedom from the law, life in the Spirit, and assurance in the midst of tribulation. In the Gospel we find peace.

Those belonging to the world, on the other hand - those who still brandish their swords - receive no such peace. They fight against God daily, thinking that their sin-sick hearts will somehow win the battle over life and death. They fight to get their own way, claiming that their striving will somehow earn them happiness, or freedom, or peace, or riches, or glory... but that's all to no avail.

The reward for their striving, if they ever obtain any it at all, is only temporal. Their gain is forfeit the moment they are plunged into death, and it's there that they have to face the consequences for their unbelief. They'll have to face God's wrath, and separation from His glory for all time. They'll also have to face Satan in the torment of hell.

You'll never face any such torment because you belong to Jesus. You'll never face any such torment because you've been justified by His blood. You'll never face any such thing because you've been saved by His life.

If Satan tries to lay claim upon you by snaring you in some sort of sin, you can tell him, flat out, of your redemption. Even if he hauls out the Bible and says, "Look here! God's word is against you!" You can say, "Yes, the law which condemns to death still stands, but I live under a new law which raises to life." You can say, "Sin died upon that cross where you hung my Lord and, by His resurrection, death no longer has dominion over me!"

Jesus, Himself, has given us that confession when He sent us His Spirit, and that same Spirit is with us forever, even if the earth gives way, the mountains be moved to the sea and its waters roar and foam. Even in times of persecution, we can still hold fast, because you are being upheld by God.

Having been justified by Christ's blood, *much more* shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God and *much more* shall we be saved by His life.

You who believe in Christ have received so much more. You who once were enemies, have now been declared "One with God" and have been made co-heirs to the kingdom of heaven. You've been born again "to a living hope... to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who, by God's power, are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5)

You are borne by God's power, now and forever...

"What then shall we say to these things?" As the apostle Paul asks in Roman 8.

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.” (Romans 8:31-33)

It is God who justifies. It is God who saves. He sent Jesus into the world to carry us to Himself. Saved by Christ's life we are now freed and blessed to live our lives...

In Jesus' name

May the peace of God which passes all human understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen (Philippians 4:7)