

The 9th Sunday after Pentecost, July 30, 2023

Rev. Gerald Luck

Text: Romans 8:28-39

Theme: Hidden In a Field

Précis: Having been redeemed by the blood of Christ, our lives are protected to eternity (hidden by the cross) from Satan's deadly onslaughts. And yet, we are constantly being revealed to those around us.

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

Romans 8:28–39

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things? 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. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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)

We're hidden in Christ. Have you ever stopped and consider those words? Having been redeemed by the blood of Christ, we're hidden by His cross and protected from Satan's deadly onslaughts, right through to eternity. "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

In 12th chapter of the book of Revelation, that great book of comfort to all Christendom as recorded by the evangelist, John, the One whom Jesus loved, and the same one who gave us that blessed 4th gospel, these words come before us: "Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished..." (Rev 12:6) The woman, Israel, was about to give birth to a son, whom the red dragon sought to devour, but God prevented it. He took up the child up to Himself and granted the woman - the church, now blessed in Christ - His holy protection. That's how you're being

safeguarded even now. You're being safeguarded in Christ!

His holy hand is upon you. God's protection is over you. He's preventing you from being devoured by Satan, doubly - first, by assuring you of your salvation in Christ and then, by granting you His wisdom to walk according to His ways.

You've read His word. You can say with all confidence that you've been baptized into His death and made alive in His resurrection. You can sing,

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accursèd load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus
To wash my crimson stains
Clean in His blood most precious
Till not a spot remains. (LSB 606)

Not a spot! Your accuser can't get any traction on "not a spot." You might say that when it comes to his harvesting you, Satan's combine is stuck in a mud hole. Of course that doesn't mean Satan's incapable of attacking you, Christ's holy church, in other ways. Remember what we talked about last week?

Last week we talked about Matthew 13 - about that wheat and those tares - those weeds that the enemy sowed in and amongst that good crop. Satan will always seek out ways to interfere with the good things that God's done, but you're protected from that too. After all, Christ went into that wilderness ahead of you to show you the beauty of God's protection through the power of God's word. Remember the conversation?

Satan said, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

Satan said, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

Jesus told him: "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord Your God and serve Him only.'"

Satan said: "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you to guard you,' and, 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

And our Saviour told him: "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Your Redeemer laid His solid word not just upon Satan to thwart his temptations but also upon your heart to show you the power of God's holy scriptures. He empowers His word in your hearts by His Holy Spirit, and He is using that word, even now, to build you up as His beloved children so that you can bear a good crop - 30 fold, 60 fold - 100 fold - according to His intended plan to bring all who belong to Himself into His kingdom on the last day.

Temptation? The weeds Satan's sowed will grow up all around you until the day of Christ's return, but, by the strength of God's word, you'll stand strong in that field and face everything in Christ. Moreover Christ will face everything in you.

You might remember reading 1 Corinthians 10:13. There it says, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." God will provide that way of escape - Christ is that way of escape.

When it comes to your protection, Christ has already conquered anything that you'll ever encounter. A drinking problem? Christ defeated that so you don't actually need to take that drink. An addiction to drugs? The shadow of the cross falls right between you and that next hit. As a matter of fact that shadow lies between you and every one of Satan's temptations. It's that love which is pouring out over you steadily and freely to offer you release from everything that Satan lays in your path.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
And drives away our fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the heart's unrest;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul
And to the weary, rest. (LSB 524)

Now, this very same cross that's granted you salvation and that's cast a shadow of peace over you is being offered up, not just to you, but also to the world all around you. Jesus predestined you for His salvation, He called you into the certainty of the forgiveness of sins by His shed blood and granted you the certainty of His resurrection and is, even as I speak glorifying you by strengthening you in Himself that you can walk with Him in all things, and that

can't possibly go unnoticed.

In this world that's so enslaved by sin and so blind to sin's destructive forces, you who are in the WORD stand out like a sore thumb - or should I rather say, a healthy thumb?

"Would it were that the rest of the gangrenous hand would look like that thumb." So say those who are waking up to the reality of their sin. In that sense God does not hide you way from evil or prevent you from being seen. Rather in His lovingkindness, God puts you on display so that the One He gave into this world as the Firstborn of salvation, would be blessed to see an ever increasing number of brothers and sisters be included in His great harvest on the last day.

Be bold in everything that God's doing, here. Be bold to trust in His salvation. Be bold to step out into this world knowing that you're safeguarded from sin and from that temptation to sin and be bold to stand both in the shadow of the cross and in the radiance of your Lord to the glory of God.

There, God will protect you, bless you to be His children and grant you to be the testimony of His salvation...

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

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