

God Perfects Praise out of the Mouths of Babes

Matthew 21:10-16, Palm Sunday (Lent VI)

March 24, 2013

Beloved of the Lord.....Nothing makes us mature and grow up more quickly, than the gift from God of a child. Suddenly our life is not about ME, it is about my child, and our world rightly revolves around him. When we hold that little miracle in our arms, our own soul cannot but thank God and say "I've done nothing good to deserve such a precious gift.Lord please help me to be a good parent for Jesus' sake". While there is almost an immeasurable joy which comes with being a parent, sooner or later there is also fear. One fear is this child totally depends upon us, father and mother. We must feed him and cloth him and love him and protect him and defend him from all the evil in this world. That is hard enough. But our child has not only a body, but also a soul, and Jesus earnestly shed His blood on the cross to save this little soul from sin. By far, the greatest desire of every truly Christian father or mother is that their child will not fall from grace, but stay true to Jesus to the end so when they die they will enter heaven. We are fearful then because we know the devil, world, and our flesh, all work together against our child's salvation. On top of all that God Himself holds us accountable for their soul, for Jesus said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea." We should never then do anything to injure or hurt the faith of a little child.

It is the Lord alone who comforts us in the midst of our fears, and this comfort comes primarily through Baptism, our own and that of our child. What is Baptism? Baptism is a Means of Grace. This means the forgiveness of Jesus earned by His blood for all men upon the cross, is given to our child, even placed into their heart by the Holy Spirit so our child believes. Baptism is PURE Gospel, namely God's gracious operation of the Spirit giving salvation, and the pastor who says the words is nothing more than an instrument in God's hands. When these two little boys were therefore baptized today, it was the Holy Spirit Himself communicating to them forgiveness of sins, spiritual life and salvation, so now by the gift of faith they believe Jesus is their Lord, their Savior, and their King. All this is because "Baptism works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare." How true then it is said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise!"

I. A House of Prayer or a Den of Thieves? After that great and triumphant entry of our blessed Lord into Jerusalem, we find the whole city is moved. Some know Christ to be that great prophet from Nazareth and some know Him to be King, and some know Him not at all saying "Who is this?" Knowing Christ to be our True Prophet, we can thank Him day and night we know Him as He is, "My Lord and My

God, my Savior and my King. Especially today we remember He is the Savior of our baptized children, for it is "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;....Baptism doth also now save us." If then we were baptized long ago, let us daily remember the Lord still works through our Baptism today, for the Spirit given then still lives within, and it is even He who through our Baptism causes us to repent of our sins and believe. This is the meaning behind Romans six which says, "We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Our baptism connects us to the burial of Christ and also His resurrection. It causes us to repent of our sins, so that the Old Adam in us drowns and dies, and the new man comes forth in faith. We break forth from the tomb of sin and death, "being born again not of corruptible sin, but incorruptible by the Word of God." God's Spirit now working within us, we daily overcome sin and live in true godliness by faith in Christ Jesus.

This entry now of Christ into the Temple actually happened Monday, following Palm Sunday. We know this in part because Jesus would not spend the night in Jerusalem, but in the evenings He would go to Bethany. The reason is Jesus would not allow His enemies to secretly murder Him at night. His murder, His crucifixion, His sacrifice, would be very public and open because Jesus wants all the world to know He died "not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world". Galatians 1:4 says Jesus, "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." When we are baptized we are truly delivered from evil by this blood of Jesus Christ, and such causes us to renounce all evil. This is why when a little baby is baptized we hear the words, "Doest Thou renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?" and the answer given is "I do". Believers do renounce evil and they confess their sins but unbelievers don't. Throughout your life then dear believer, do not let Satan turn your eyes and your heart away from that only sacrifice which saves you and I from sin, the very blood of the Son of God. Don't break your promise to God given at baptism by giving yourself over to evil.

Speaking now of the Temple, first within its sacred walls was the Court of the Gentiles. Gathered here were all kinds of merchants and moneychangers, to gain the coin from the Jewish Pilgrims attending the Passover from around the world. Mixing business with worship, the merchants sold doves, sheep, oil, wine, and other things necessary. And since the Jews had to pay a temple tax in Jewish coin, foreign currency would be exchanged for the Jewish coin. When Christ therefore saw such an abuse of His Father's house, a divine and holy wrath filled his heart. In a pure and sinless anger, he overthrew the tables of the moneychangers casting out all merchant. They fled without a fight before this divine face which must have shined, and their guilty conscience caused them to run. This agrees

perfectly with Psalm 28:1, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." As Jesus was bold as a lion on that day, so through our Baptism He daily guards and defends us like a lion, against the devil, the world, and even our own flesh. By our Baptism His powerful hand holds tightly to us though we stray, and His Holy Spirit within causes us to cast out our sins from the temple of our body knowing, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

Jesus now says, "My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." Today we will connect these words to baptism and our children. Once they are baptized, our spiritual duties toward them do not in any way stop. "Feed My Lambs" Jesus said, and parents are to feed their children the Word of God, the Bread of Life throughout their life. Why should we be so diligent? Because "the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom He may devour." We don't want Satan to devour the new faith of our precious child, for we remember our world is a "Den of thieves." Just as a thief then breaks into a house and steals something, the devil seeks to break into the heart of our child and steal away their faith in Jesus. Not all who are baptized stay and remain in God's grace. Some fall in love with the world and the things of the world, and doing so they fall out of love with Jesus. This is why we should pray daily for our children, and often in this House of Prayer. We might pray like this: Dearest Lord, keep and preserve my child in the truth faith of Jesus Christ. Keep my child from sin, help him to confess sin and not deny it. And Lord, for Thy name's sake, give me wisdom from above that I may be a good parent. Help me to love Thy Word and teach Thy Word to my child, that he may know Thy good commandment and glorify Thee all his life. Help me also Lord to daily teach my child that Jesus is their blessed Savior, and Jesus loves the little children for they are precious in His sight, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

II. Baptism heals us and our children. Such a faith and love and trust in Jesus is instilled in our children by Holy Baptism....and just as Jesus healed the blind and the lame who came to Him in the Temple, so Baptism heals us parents and our children. When we are parents, the last person we want to sin against is our own dear child - and when we do that wound goes very deep. But just as Jesus healed the blind and lame by His Word, so His Word of Grace given us in Baptism forgives us our sins against our own children. Parents who are healed by Christ become better parents more and more through Christ. When the lame miraculously walk, picture yourself as a lame parent who is healed. To walk in the faith is to keep God's commandments toward your children by grace through faith. God will surely then give you the strength and be your strength as you exercise your duties as father or mother. If you believe the Lord will help you to be a good parent for Jesus sake, the Lord will indeed help you to be a good parent for Jesus sake, and so it is written, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me", and "it is God

which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." Remember also by baptism God has put His holy Spirit in the heart of your child, and the same Spirit lives in you.

In our last portion of Scripture today, let us consider the children joyfully singing "Hosannas" to Jesus in the Temple. They knew this Jesus by faith. They knew Him to be their Lord, their Savior, and their King, and on top of that all they witness Jesus healing the blind and the lame by His powerful word! How could they be more joyful? And notice the incredible contrast of words in verse 15, for even the priests and scribes see "the wonderful things that Jesus did" and they hear the children singing with joy for Jesus, but "THEY WERE SORE DISPLEASED!" What sons of Satan these were! What doctrines of devils possessed their heart so they could see and not see and hear and not hear! Despising the Word in their heart they said to Jesus, "DON'T YOU HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SINGING?" By these words they are truly putting a millstone about their own neck!...and HOW does Jesus answer? With the same divine and holy zeal for His Father's house, Jesus upholds and defends these little children saying (and I will paraphrase here), "Yes indeed I hear the joyful songs of these children, and I love it, and I love them and they love me, for these are my own dear children, my little lambs of my heavenly kingdom! Haven't you ever read Psalm 8:2, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise?"

O how the mighty fell with these words, and these proud devils were put in their right place, a place of dishonor and shame, for they could not honor Christ by faith. They could not nor would not believe. Thanks be to God on this blessed Palm Sunday, we believe, not by our works, but by our Baptism, God's Work, God's way, God's Means of Grace, and so do our believing baptized children.

Baptism then is by far a greater miracle than childbirth, for by such it is the Holy Spirit Himself who gives birth to our faith, so we are born again, born from above, by the power of the Word, the Holy Spirit. By the mighty power of God's Word these two little boys then do even now believe and know Him who loved them first. This is also the miracle whereby our own little children sang for us this morning, and so they also believe. The seed of faith has been planted in their heart and will continue to grow, the Holy Spirit working within. As long as they stay and remain true to God who is faithful, they will one day shout for joy in heaven, and sing praises far louder than anytime here on earth. God grant it so for all our children, for Jesus' sake, in Jesus' name, and to Jesus glory. Amen.