

His Spirit and His Sufferings

Our Lenten theme at Grace Lutheran Church is "His Spirit and His Sufferings". As always during Lent we hear about the last days up to the crucifixion of Christ. And this year, we observe threads from the Passion Account to what Holy Scripture teaches about the Holy Spirit and what He does.

A little more than halfway through, we have a good idea as to where it is going. And, to tell the truth, it is not really that surprising: what the Holy Spirit does is that He brings the salvation our Lord Jesus has won for us sinners with His sufferings and death to completion for us and in us.

The Son of God suffered for the salvation of sinners. He bore the judgement of the goodness of God against sin. And this is the judgement of His own goodness, for the Son of God is God Himself from eternity. God is good, and whole and complete in His goodness. He hates evil. And sin is evil, as is all that goes against the goodness of God. And He who is Himself God took it upon Himself, out of His love for us, to bear His own hatred against our evil.

He has set His Church in the world to proclaim that it is done, and to promise full forgiveness for all sin to all sinners. For since it is all done, there is nothing more to do about it, other than for us sinners to have His salvation given to us.

The thing is, though, that we will not have it. For that is what it means that we are sinners: we will not have all things good given to us out of the goodness of God!

But by His Word of His love and what His love has done for us, the Son of God pours His love into our hearts. And the Holy Spirit is the love of God. He is the Spirit of God, His very innermost self. And God is love.

And when the love of God comes to us and makes His way into us, He drives back evil and ungodliness in us. The disobedience and defiance that makes us to reject and ignore His promise of salvation begins to die in us, and we begin to come alive to Him; we begin to believe in Him, and to love Him, and to long to be with Him and receive love from Him. This, and only this, is how we become Christian, and children of God in Christ.

This is about as far we have made it so far this year. Not all that surprising, really; it is but basic Biblical Christianity. But it is certainly worth being reminded of. God is that good, even to us sinners who would otherwise not know of Him!