

“He Has Chosen You”

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

This weekend, at Our Redeemer, we get to see God in action. This is nothing new. God is present and active each and every time we gather around His Word and Sacraments. However, this week has a different air about it. For the first time in our church’s history, we are welcoming some of our youth who have yet to confirm the faith of their Baptism to partake of the body and blood of Christ.

They are prepared for this. They are willing to examine themselves. They have received instruction. They confess and believe in the grace of God they have received in Baptism. They confess and believe Christ’s words, “This is My body . . . This is My blood.” But it is of great importance to remember that it is not by the power of their work, their action, their abilities that they have received and will receive the blessings God has to offer.

What they are doing, and what all of you are doing here today is demonstrating a basic truth about our relationship with God. Your primary purpose in life is having something done to you. God created you in order that He might have someone to

give to, to bless, to love, to nurture, to save. That is why you are here. He has chosen you.

He did not create you so that He could have thousands upon thousands of worshipers praising and “glorifying” Him. He is fully glorious in and of Himself. You are created to receive from Him – your Father who wants to give good gifts to you.

Life itself is a gift. Every breath is an undeserved gracious act from God. But as I said last week, life doesn’t really begin until Baptism. Our sinful life is like being in the depths of the sea. Separated from God we enter this world in the crushing blackness of the deep. And God says to you, “Breathe.” That is the grace of Baptism. Having drowned in the water, God gives you the breath of life.

Throughout their life in the church, the young men and women receiving Communion for the first time have come forth to the Lord’s Table and received the blessing reminding them of the grace received in their Baptism. Everything that happens here is God in action. Last week, as they came forth to receive the baptismal blessing: “The Lord bless you and keep you in your Baptismal grace both now and forever.” It hit me that this was the last time I would be saying this to these young men and women. Several of them told me that they were thinking the same thing. The faith of their Baptism is something that they cherish. The faith

of their Baptism received from God is what has defined their life in Christ's Church.

Now, coming to the Lord's Table to receive the body and blood of Christ does not change this. The faith of your Baptism is still what defines your life in Christ's Church. "He has chosen you," Paul says, "because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit."

Remember, your primary purpose in life is having something done to you. God created you in order that He might have someone to give to, to bless, to love, to nurture, to save. That's why you're here. He has chosen you.

I began by saying that we get to see God in action at Our Redeemer this weekend. At our 10:15 service, we are blessed to witness the Baptism of an infant. Kayzley EllaMae Brookhart born on September 25 will receive (received) the new birth in the water and the Word. Her Old Adam will drown and die. And God will breathe into her new life. And later, she will be brought to the Lord's Table as the others are receiving the body and blood of Christ, and I will place my hand on her head and say, "The Lord bless you and keep you in your Baptismal grace both now and forever."

God has chosen her, not only in the Word of the Gospel, but also in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with full conviction. Kayzley, upon receiving the new birth of Baptism, by the power of

the Holy Spirit, through His Word joined to that water, she has the fullness of faith, the full conviction that Christ has freed her from the guilt of her sin and washed her clean.

No, she cannot confess her faith in the words of the creed. No, she cannot examine herself and confess her sins, yet she is forgiven, she will continue to hear and receive the absolution, and she will continue to live as a forgiven child of God. Her primary purpose in life is having something done to her. God created her in order that He might have someone to give to, to bless, to love, to nurture, to save. That's why she's here.

And in the years to come, she will continue to hear the Gospel, hear the Word, remain filled with the Holy Spirit and with full conviction I will continue to remind her of the grace of her Baptism with the words: "The Lord bless you and keep you in your Baptismal grace both now and forever."

And Lord willing, there will come a day when I will say that to her for the last time, and she will join you in partaking of the body and blood of Christ. What we are seeing here at Our Redeemer is God in action. Again, your primary purpose in life is having something done to you. God created you in order that He might have someone to love, to nurture, to save. That is why you are here. He has chosen you.

The Lord bless you and keep you in your Baptismal grace both now and forever. Amen.