

# “Now is the Day of Salvation”

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

The past couple of weeks, we have been talking about how the presence of the Holy Spirit and your connection to Christ and His church is not simply all about what happens to us after we die. Again, there is nothing more important than the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. It is the ultimate goal, and it is the reason Christ came into this world. As Paul says, “If there is no resurrection of the dead, then we are to be pitied above all men,” because we will have wasted our life.

And the world around us points its finger at you and especially at me and says, “Why are you wasting your life on a God you have never seen and a God who lets bad things happen?” When you suffer through Paul’s laundry list of trouble “afflictions, hardships, calamities, sleepless nights,” when you find yourself in the midst of these things because this sinful world is against you, this does not change the fact that, as Paul says, “now is the favorable time, now is the day of salvation.”

Now is the favorable time because, even when we have nothing (in the eyes of the world), we possess everything because of Christ. The reality is that the laundry list of “afflictions, hardships, calamities, etc.” is what we deserve. We deserve to die alone and unknown – and suffer an eternity in hell. But now is the favorable time. Now is the day of salvation.

We will still die as a result of the wrath of God justifiably punishing us for our sins. Present and eternal death is what we deserve. God has provided freedom from eternal death. For those who believe and trust in Christ’s death on the cross that swallowed up and defeated sin and death for all mankind, we have no reason to fear. The resurrection of the body and life everlasting is your future. Forgiveness of all of your sin and new life in Christ means the favorable time is now. The day of salvation is now. In the stead and by the command of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

You are alive in Christ now. However, our mortal bodies carry death with it wherever we go, because we carry our sinful nature with us. Many people today are like Job who was frustrated with God, among other things, because of the speed in which He carries out His judgment upon sinful man. No matter

how old a person is when they die, we believe that they die too fast, and we are frustrated that we can do nothing to defer or hold back death. As the Roman orator Cicero said: “No one is so old as not to hope that he will live yet another year” [LW 13:100].

Our human nature continually hopes for longer life. Cicero continues: “This is the reason why everyone organizes his plans and projects as though he were going to live forever” [LW 13:100]. People try to transform their earthly life into an eternal life, even though all the while death is our nearest neighbor.

I am sure we have all seen the humorous plaque that says, “In this life, God gives each of us a certain number of things to do. I am so far behind, I will probably never die.” As humorous as that thought may be, we know that this statement is not true. For God’s people, that is most fortunate. Why would we want eternal life in this sinful world when God has prepared a much better place for us?

It is most unfortunate that so many people are unaware of the frightful condition that God’s judgment upon their sin has limited their number of days. Somewhere in the world today, a person dies who yesterday had hoped to live another forty years or more. However, if that person had lived another 40 years, even then he would not abandon the desire for a still longer life.

What we need to do is to learn to view our life in the way that God does. Methuselah lived for nearly 1000 years. Many people would say: “God must have really liked him.” But St. Peter tells us that “with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day” [2 Pt. 3:8] The number of days that we live on this earth is not the indicator of how much God likes us. In fact, in many cases, God shows mercy to those He loves by decreasing their number of days on this earth.

Because of sin, Adam’s children are destined for a shortened, wretched life on earth followed by an eternity in Hell. Through the mercy and sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, our life on earth may still be short and wretched – filled with afflictions, hardships, calamities. However the death of this body will be our last taste of death. Through Christ, we will have life everlasting.

Our relationship with God is a matter of life and death. More specifically, it is a matter of life or death. God has set you on the road to life. Death no longer has mastery over you. Even though our days are limited on this earth, we look to God and say, “Thank You,” because living under the grace of our Baptism, living within the shelter of Christ’s church, hearing the words of absolution, participating in the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God, “now is the favorable time; now is the day of salvation. Amen.