

“Thy Will Be Done”

Galatians 3:23—4:7

Last week, we read in our Gospel of the compassion which Christ had for the widow at Nain whose son had died. The Greek word for compassion literally means turning your body inside out, pouring out your heart, and exposing your own inner parts. Therefore true compassion comes at a cost. As Scripture says, simply saying to someone who is cold and hungry, “Be warm and well fed” (but doing nothing about it), does not exhibit compassion.

Last week, I mentioned how true repentance comes when the Law has exposed your sin, turned you inside out, exposed the deepest darkest parts of you, and leads you to the healing words of the Gospel. Simply saying, “I’m sorry,” because *you know you have to say that* does not exhibit true repentance.

The compassion of God and the repentance and healing which God brings to us require a completely new reality in this world. Where the light of the Gospel shines, the darkness of sin cannot remain.

When Jesus entered the world, the world had to change. Even

among the children of Israel, life was going to be very different. The segregation of Jew and Gentile would not last. Society's designation of slaves and freemen held no meaning. Our Father in heaven does not play favorites with His children – even to the point that sons and daughters have an equal share in God's inheritance – which, of course, they did not in that society.

This message turned ancient society inside out. The compassion of God and the joy of the Gospel compelled and inspired God's children not only to act differently, but to think differently than the unbelieving Jews or Gentiles.

Getting people to act differently is easy. You can always coerce people through the Law. Any brute or tyrant can do that. Getting someone to think differently, that is where real, fundamental change takes place. Part of your adoption by grace is that you now think differently than before.

However, we must remember that God has never changed His mind. As much as some would like to say that God and His Church need to keep up with times, the purpose of worship and prayer is not for us to change God's mind so that He thinks like us. We come to hear His Word so that our thoughts and our desires more closely correspond to His will. We pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Luther says, "The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this

petition that it may be done among us also.”

How fortunate are we that God’s will does not depend on the whim of society. There were many Jews who did not believe the Living God had any interest in saving the Gentiles (even though Moses and the prophets were fairly clear on this point. Then again, the clear message of Scripture is often ignored). Inclusion of all of mankind into the family of God was God’s desire all along. In the Book of Exodus, we read that the Israelites were to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” so as to draw others to the truth and the joy of salvation. We hear this morning from the prophet Isaiah that God had spread out His welcoming hands even for those “who eat pig’s flesh”, that is, the Gentiles – like us.

And we see early in Jesus’ ministry, that He went and sought out the demon-possessed, naked, violent, Gentile living out in the tombs. He is the unclean of unclean, yet he is sought after by God.

God’s compassion has no limits. As I said a couple weeks ago, there is no one who can rightly say, “My sins are too great.” Or say, “I am beyond forgiveness. It’s too late for me.” Or say, “God wouldn’t want a person like me.” You are all sought after by God.

And you have learned from your Father in heaven what true compassion is. We see the cost of His love in the sending of His Son. You have been brought to repentance. You have been turned inside out. Your

sins have been exposed, and you have been healed by the Gospel. The faith brought to you at Baptism completely changed you.

Paul writes that in Baptism, you have “put on Christ.” That is, you now wear His righteousness on you. Because of God’s compassionate act of sending His Son to suffer and die for the guilt of your sin, because His Holy Spirit has led you to truly repent and be changed, because you belong to Christ, as Paul says, “you are Abraham’s offspring and heirs according to the promise.”

The Kingdom of heaven is yours – you eater’s of pig’s flesh. How great is our God and Father that He extended the kingdom to include us Gentiles also? He could have been content with Abraham’s offspring. He could have been content with the angels who didn’t rebel who faithfully serve Him day and night. But He chose to send forth “His Son, born of woman, born under the Law to redeem those who were under the Law; so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

In the days of the apostles, the inheritance of the father belonged to the son. God our Father says to Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, “I call you My own and I freely give to you what rightfully belongs to My Son.” God’s eternal kingdom is ours. Amen.