

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity/Confirmation: July 12, 2020
“Mindfully United”

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text this morning is our Epistle reading, especially these words, ***“All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”***¹

Who would have thought this day would ever come? You worked and stressed and studied and waited, only to have to wait some more. Sophia and Ellie, brothers and sisters in Christ, confirmation day is here. St. Peter says we are to have unity of mind, and really, that is what this day is all about.

It is interesting how your confirmation verses line up today, because they cover the gamut of the Christian life. Sophia, Titus 3:5, ***“He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”***² This is quoted in what part of the catechism? The Third part of baptism. It is in baptism that your life as a Child of God began. You were washed in the blood of the Lamb. You received the sign of the cross to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. You were born into God’s family. You received the promise of God, ***“The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”***³

As you began this life, you had enemies. The devil prowls around seeking someone to devour. The world seeks to entice you away into different kingdoms. Your own sinful flesh tempts you to seek its own desires, and forget what God says. The life of a Christian is not an easy one. It is full of toil and trouble and temptation and mockery and scorn and hatred. Ellie, Matthew 10:22, ***“You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”***⁴ Jesus knows what your life will look like. He knows the dangers and traps and struggles you will face simply because of His name; so He speaks of endurance. It is an ongoing, life-long thing. In a few moments, you will be invited to come to the altar rail and

¹ 1 Peter 3:8

² Titus 3:5

³ Psalm 121:7–8

⁴ Matthew 10:22

before God, and those assembled here, you will be asked to make a public confession of what you believe.

As you have been baptized, taught Christ's word, you will be asked to guard and keep watch over all the things that Christ has taught. I know you don't want to hear this, but you're not done. This does not mark the end of your learning. It doesn't complete baptism or give you any extra special grace. The Rite of Confirmation gives you an opportunity to make the public confession made for you at your baptism, and the Church confirms that you now know how to examine yourself. A great responsibility is placed upon you today. You know how to examine your life according to the Ten Commandments, and you are able to discern what is on the altar. As God's child, the table is open to you now, and you know exactly what happens here –Jesus' very body and blood are given and shed for you to eat and to drink for your forgiveness.

It is from the font to the grave, for your endurance, that St. Peter writes, "***All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.***"⁵ Unity of mind. This is not based on your thoughts, or mine, you know some the crazy things my mind comes up with. When you make this public confession, you are confessing your unity with Christ. Baptism places you in the body of Christ. He is your head. Where is the mind located? Not in the arm or the knee. It is in the head. For the sake of the body, the mind speaks words, and God, who is the giver of life, speaks to you through His Holy Word.

For this reason, you are asked not only if you believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, you are also asked if you believe all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God. Do you believe that God's Word is God's Word; that it comes from Him and is without error? From those words we get unity of mind.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles and they spoke clearly the Words of God; and those words had effect, "***Those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the***

⁵ 1 Peter 3:8

breaking of bread and the prayers.”⁶ The word of God finds itself expressed in a very specific set of teachings. The apostles teaching, which comes from God, is what drives the fellowship of the saints. It is only then that they break bread together. In this unity of mind, you are asked today, do you confess this doctrine as you have learned from the small catechism to be faithful and true? What you are confessing is your unity with the teaching of the apostles, and if so, you are welcome to eat at the table, here, with us.

The last three questions are aimed at your endurance in this grace of God. For your benefit, do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord’s Supper faithfully? Do you intend to live according to the Word of God and remain true even to death? Do you intend to continue steadfast, and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away?

Unity of mind. Not ours, but Christ’s. On our own, we fall short of these noble aspirations. Life becomes complicated. There are more things to do, other words to hear, other meals to eat. The world harps and badgers with twisted, wicked language, “That’s your truth, not mine.” Falling away becomes easier and easier when there are not good Christian parents, living in your house with you, reading the Scriptures with you, bringing you to church and Bible study. You have lived much life from the font to this day. By God’s grace, you will live many more days from this day until you are called to your heavenly home. Endurance is needed.

While we all have our own ideas of how to endure, how to make it to the end; there is buty One True way for all people. Jesus says, “***I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***”⁷ Jesus is united with the Father, they are of the same divine essence. Jesus is also united with all humanity. He shares in flesh and blood, as He was born of the Virgin Mary. God and man are personally united in the person of Jesus.

Through this unity all that is yours is His. Your sin, your death, your sadness, your joy, your anger, pain and frustration, all are His. He bore those things to the cross where He was made one with the cross, affixed by nails, suffering the agony of hell

⁶ Acts 2:41–42

⁷ John 14:6

on your behalf. He endured the scorn and shame, the mockery and the lies. He endured to the end and declared, ***“It is finished.”***

Finished, done, completed. Sin and death are destroyed. The gates of heaven are opened to all believers. This endurance is yours through baptism. When you are untied with Christ, all that is His is yours. Forgiveness of sins is yours. Eternal life is yours. Salvation is yours.

Even His Holy Spirit is yours. The Holy Spirit doesn't just come to you, He abides with you, as Paul writes, ***“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”***⁸

Regenerated, renewed life is not only given by God in baptism, Sophia, it is sustained by God so you can endure, Ellie. Baptism is the unifying sacrament as it brings you into the family of God. In this family, God the Holy Spirit calls by the Gospel, enlightens with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps you. As you get ready to speak your confirmation vows, I share with St. Paul and ***“urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”***⁹

Whether it is temporal life or eternal life, both are gifts of God. Around His Word and Sacraments we gather, and we get life and hope and peace and joy. The regenerated and renewed, those who are hated by the world, are here loved by God. Here you receive salvation by His Name, as our help is in the Name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Here love is shown on the cross, poured on your head,

⁸ Romans 8:9-11

⁹ Ephesians 4:1-6

proclaimed in your ears, and poured in your mouth. Here, through Word and Sacrament, God breaks forth in unity for you.

Ellie and Sophia, as you kneel here and receive the body and blood of Christ for your forgiveness, look and see. Through the death of Christ, you are united with angels, and arch-angels and the whole company of heaven. God has given you His Son for eternal life, and He has given you brothers and sisters in Christ for life in this world. The greatest of brotherly love is displayed on the cross for you, and here through His own appointed means, it is given to you.

“If thou but trust in God to guide thee
And hope in Him through all thy ways,
He’ll give thee strength, whate’er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God’s unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move.”¹⁰

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the day is here. Sophia and Ellie, the table stands open for you. May the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

¹⁰ If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee LSB 750:1

**Prayer of the Church
Fifth Sunday after Trinity
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Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. Almighty and eternal God, worthy to be held in reverence by all people everywhere, we give You humble and sincere thanks for the innumerable blessings You have bestowed on us without any merit or worthiness on our part. We praise You especially for preserving for us Your saving Word and the Holy Sacraments. Grant and preserve to Your Holy Church throughout the world purity of doctrine, and provide faithful pastors to preach Your Word with power. Help all who hear the Word rightly to understand and truly to believe it. Send laborers into Your harvest, and open the door of faith to those who do not know You. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, in mercy bring to repentance the enemies of Your Church, and grant them amendment of life. Protect and defend Your Church in all tribulation and danger, and sustain with Your Spirit our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world who experience persecution. Strengthen us and all fellow Christians to set our hope fully on the grace revealed in Christ, and help us to fight the good fight of faith so that in the end we may receive the salvation of our souls. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, bestow Your grace on all the nations of the earth. Bless especially our country, its inhabitants and all who are in authority. Let Your glory dwell in our land, that mercy and truth, righteousness and peace may abound in all places. Bless also all who serve in our armed forces, that they may serve with integrity and honor. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You have promised to send Your holy angels to guard and keep Your children. We thank and praise You for the gift of life and for the protection and care you have provided as **Richard, Robin, Laurie, Carol, Miriam, and Tanner**, celebrate their birthdays. Grant that they may grow in grace, continue to know Your loving-kindness, abide in the confession of Your care and protection, serve You faithfully all the days of their life and finally come to the fullness of Your joys in heaven; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate Lord, graciously defend us from all calamity by fire and water, from war and pestilence, from scarcity and famine, and from every other evil. Protect and prosper all who labor in their rightful callings, and let all useful arts flourish among us. Be the God and Father of the lonely and the forsaken, the helper of the sick and needy, the comforter of the distressed and those who sorrow. Look with mercy on the suffering, the shut-in, the lonely, and those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit, especially upon those who have requested our prayers, *[including Carmen, Susan, Ken, Marvin, Zoey and those name in our hearts,]* that they may ever cling to Jesus as their sure and certain hope. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant Your Holy Spirit to those who come to the Lord's table this day, that they may receive the very body and blood of Jesus Christ in sincere repentance and firm faith, and to their abundant blessing. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, as we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, help us by true faith and a godly life to prepare for the world to come, doing the work You have given us to do while it is day, before the night comes when no one can work. And when our last hour comes, support us by Your power and receive us into Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**