

2 September 2018

God's Word for All People

Text: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9, Ephesians 6:10-20, Joshua 1:9

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white. They are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

Most of us here this morning, I would venture to say, are familiar with this children song. It's a favorite among those who teach children because of its catchy tune and simplicity. And children love it because it's really fun to sing. While simple, its message is true: Jesus does love children, all children, everywhere. He loves the youngest to the oldest, the littlest to the biggest. He loves the newborn and the senior adult. He does not discriminate based on the color of a child's skin nor the sex of the child. He loves them. He loves you. Unconditionally.

But loving them and loving us was never enough. No, for you see, the love that Jesus has for His children costs Him His life. Jesus came to this earth, born 100 percent God and 100 percent man, to a mom and step father who would raise Him and teach Him of Yahweh, the God of their forefathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, as faithful Jewish parents did, they brought Him to the temple to hear the Word of the Lord preached and taught. But His education didn't stop there. No, Joseph and Mary constantly spoke about all that God had told Moses and Aaron because that is what God wanted His children to know about Him. Then Jesus grew up and went throughout telling others and it eventually cost Him His life. His life, in place of His children. His life in place of all children. One sacrifice for the forgiveness of all sin.

Why is it that we hear about Christ and Him crucified for our sins again this morning? We hear about Christ and Him crucified for the forgiveness of sins every Sunday because **God's Word is for the salvation of all people.** Listen again to the words of our Lord from Deuteronomy this morning, "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." (Deuteronomy 4:9).

God's words of forgiveness, life, and salvation are for you, your children, your children's children. They are, as St. Peter said, "the words of eternal life." Eternal life that can only be given to us by God, through the shedding of His only begotten Son's blood for us.

Moms and dads, brothers and sisters in Christ, the Gospel is for our children too. This week they return to school. They return with mostly smiling faces, their hearts full to the brim with stories about their summer. And they can't wait to tell their stories to their friends and teachers.

Among the stories, smiles, and songs of laughter, they also return under attack by Satan and His demons. Like us, they too face temptations and heartache. They are tempted to see themselves as something other than what they were created to be: fearfully and wonderfully made. God's masterpieces. They become confused about what sex they belong to, who their friends are, and yes, even who God is. They are bullied into believing lies spewed from the Devil himself, spoken into their tender ears. And these lies cut, deep, reaching the very center of their hearts.

Satan doesn't stop there either. You see, He attacks the home as well. His work takes His plan for marriage and tosses on its ear. Instead of it being "till death", half of all marriages end with "until I no longer love you." Then Satan works to re-define marriage as well. His work to change marriage is His attack on the church, to change the marriage between Christ and His church. After attacking marriage, then the devil moves in and begins changing families from the inside. His work is subtle and slow and often leads to their being less talking to children about God and more things taking up its place. And before anyone realizes it, the Sabbath Day is no longer Holy. It becomes less remembered. So there is no wonder that children are in danger. St. Paul uses these words to describe this danger that children are in, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12).

What is that we are to do then? How can we protect children from Satan and his demons? The simple answer is the hardest one to hear perhaps: The Word of the Lord. What does that mean? It means doing as Mary and Joseph did with Christ. We speak the words of the Lord to them. We tell them about God's grace and forgiveness of sin. We show them what it means to forgive by forgiving others just as Christ has forgiven us. And yes, we even bring them to church with us where they are part of God's family who hears His words preached and taught to them in the nursery school, Bible school, Sunday school, Bible study, confirmation, youth group, the baptismal font, the altar, etc.

Why? Because we as God's children remember the Sabbath and keep it Holy. As parents, we know that their spiritual development is just as important as their mental, emotional, and physical development. And we do it because it is in God's Word alone where we are equipped with what we know as the "full armor of God" so that we may "be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."

It doesn't mean that the fight will be easy, that some battles won't be lost. But it does mean that the final battle has already been fought and won by Christ alone, for us. That is the beauty of God's promise for of salvation for all people, for every man, woman, and child. God has fought the war for you. He has crushed the head of the serpent for you. Satan has been defeated, for you. Christ died on the cross, was laid in the tomb, and rose from the grave for you. That is the Gospel message for you, for our children, and for our children's children.

Children of God, go this week into your schools, homes, and workplaces with the promises of God's love for you on your minds and in your hearts. Go, and tell others what Jesus has done for you and for them. Come, every chance you get, to hear God's Holy and precious Word for you. Come so that you might go and bring others too. Now and forever. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.