

Happy Lord's Day, brothers and sisters.

We've spent the past five weeks looking at the basic proclamation of the gospel message - the Kerygma - and now this week we finish with the final part, which fittingly looks at our RESPONSE to what God has done in the person of Jesus. The entire Kerygma is something of a back and forth between God and his favorite creature: first he creates us, then we rebel; next he rescues us, and now we have a chance to respond. In order to get to our response, we should first take just a moment to reconsider the third part of the Kerygma.

God is entirely perfect in Himself, he has no need of us. We are so much smaller, so insignificant compared to him. You could imagine a world in which his most fitting response to the rebellion of Adam and Eve would be simply to give up on us entirely and start over. This is part of the power of the Good News, namely that he doesn't just give up on us entirely. Instead, he goes out of his way to rescue us and bring us back into his Kingdom, his family. His love for us is that strong. Incredible!

What would be an appropriate response to that kind of a God? Doesn't it seem like the *only* appropriate response would be a wholesale surrender of your life to him? Without him, you have no future, you have no hope. Now he comes and gives you a future far better than anything you can imagine. The only appropriate response is to say, "Lord, I place my life in your hands. Whatever you say, that is what I'll do. When my will is done, I end up back in slavery. When your will is done, you lead me into freedom. No longer do I want my will to be done, but only yours." The Bible calls this response *faith*.

Sometimes, I think we have to be a bit careful about using that word, *faith*, because the word has lost some of its meaning in today's world. We tend to associate faith with mere feelings, an interior thing that I feel. It certainly includes this interior characteristic, but it also has a characteristic that moves me into action. If someone finds me lost in a dark cave and wants to lead me out into the daylight, I have to actually move my feet once I am convinced that s/he knows the way. It's the same with Jesus. He is the way to Heaven, so I have to put my faith into action by seeking his will in all things and striving to live by his laws. It's not just that I have to live by his laws, but that I can't help but remember that his offer is too good to be true! I'm not going to find such an incredible deal anywhere else, where I can live forever with God and become like him! What's more, he tells us that those who make greater sacrifices will actually have a greater reward in Heaven. This changes everything about the way I approach life. It's no longer a question of what I can get away with, but instead it becomes a question of how much I can give back to him. *How much am I allowed to invest in this fund that only increases over time?? I want to give as much as possible!* He has been so good to me. Now, I want to spend my life being good to him in return AND contributing as much to the life-saving mission as I can, helping others come to know his goodness and make a similar act of surrender to him in faith.

Brothers and sisters, let's live the gospel!
May the Lord give you his peace!
Fr. Bryan