

## Confirmation Sunday “Complete Grace” June 27 2021

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing unto You, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen!

Sometimes we expect the wrong things from God. We want health and wealth. He gives us His love. Which is better? By definition, the gift He gives is the best gift. If only we would take what He gives.

I hate always talking about the busyness of life and its misplaced priorities – but it is a real problem. Of course, WE don't have that problem though – here we are in church on a Sunday morning. Or do we? Are we guilty of the same misplaced priorities and looking in the wrong places for the answers to life's questions? It's like asking if we are all sinners...clearly yes, we are.

What's the solution? Jesus Christ!

We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Where do we look to find love? The manger - that's why Jesus came in the first place – His birth is one of the greatest demonstrations of God's love. For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Where do we look for God's love? In Jesus life where he fulfilled the Law for us, in Jesus on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, in the Lord's Supper that strengthens our faith, in Holy Baptism by which we are adopted as children of the Heavenly Father, in the Bible containing God's promises for us, in prayer where He promises to hear us. These form the 6 chief parts of our faith.

In our Old Testament reading, we heard how “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is His faithfulness.” And so, “It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.”

O how hard it is for us to wait patiently on the Lord when we are afflicted in any way, whether by a trial sent by the Lord or whether by an affliction from the devil or this fallen world!

That command to wait patiently is certainly Law and as such we can never perfectly fulfill it until the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the passage closes with Gospel hope: The Lord “will have compassion according to the abundance of His steadfast love; for He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.”

Thank you, Jesus!

In our Epistle reading, we hear Paul extolling that the grace that the Macedonians had received, although they were afflicted, they were now sharing abundantly with the Christians suffering in Jerusalem. And Paul, remarking how the Corinthians had excelled—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in their love for others, as a result that they will excel in this same act of grace (toward the Jerusalem Christians as well). This is the rhythm our faith: His love, our response; we love others as He first loved us.

In our Gospel reading, we heard two different stories of Jesus’ grace and mercy. Intertwined together was the miracle of the healing of the woman from a disease that caused her to have a discharge of blood for 12 years and consequently unable to come into the presence of God in worship during those twelve years. She was cut off. She is healed by touching Jesus’ clothes as she is passing by in the crowd. Jesus asks the rhetorical question, “Who touched me?” For surely, He knew. It was why He had come. But when she had confessed, what was Jesus’ reply? “Daughter, your faith has made you well!” She had been saved from separation from God, from spiritual and physical death. He made her well. And she had received it through faith, by grace, a gift.

And what about the other healing? The daughter of the synagogue leader, Jairus? She was twelve years old and she was dying; no she had died of her disease. Her unwellness, the wages of her sin, killed her. And yet Jesus called her back to life. “Do not fear, only believe!” Jesus said. Why these two out of a world of suffering?

It was in order to testify to the person and work of Jesus, who He was and what He was doing for us. In these two acts He demonstrated that the old temple sacrificial system was being replaced by the one final sacrifice of Jesus for us. And the blessings of that sacrifice would be received by all who had faith, all that believed in the person and work of Jesus. Grace to heal us from our afflictions, grace to give us eternal life with God.

Today, we turn our eyes and ears to our confirmands. They will be taking an oath, which is Law. And like the rest of the Law, they will not be able to fulfill it perfectly until the coming of the Day of our Lord. But Jesus fulfilled the whole of the Law for them and for us. And Jesus died for the sins of the world so all their sins and failures are forgiven as are yours and mine, by grace through faith.

They will speak of some of the chief parts of the Christian Faith and how they apply to their lives. These parts include the 10 Commandments that show us our sin and drive us to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; the Apostles Creed which shows us our God and His work through the Trinity to rescue us from our sins; the Lord's Prayer which Jesus promises to hear as we ask for God's will to be done - and His will is to save us; Holy Baptism where we die with Jesus in a death like His so as to rise with Him to new life as children of the Heavenly Father, heirs of His kingdom; the Lord's Supper in which we receive the very body and blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith to life everlasting; and the Confession and Absolution through which we receive God's promise that whoever confesses their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness.

These form the essence of what we believe and how we are saved: and it is all by grace, all the time, completely grace, for there is no merit or worthiness in us. Thank you, Jesus!

And may the love of God and the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit abide with you to life everlasting. Amen!