

Second Sunday after Pentecost – June 19th, 2022
DADDY!

Prayer

Abba, Daddy, we thank you that you send your gift of the Holy Spirit and ask that he would attune our minds and hearts to your message this day.

AMEN

Father's Day

"Abba" in today's text is a familiar term, one that a young child might use, not unlike the name's kids give their grandparents, like ma'am aw or pop-pop. And since it is Father's Day, I want to wish you Fathers a blessed day and I trust that you enjoy the sock, ties, t-shirts, wallets, consumables etc. that you received as gifts today.

Law – Our Guardian

The epistle for today starts with the Law. The captivity that is referenced is less like doing time for the crime and more like protective custody – to protect us from both ourselves and the evil influences of Satan and the fallen world. It aligns with what Luther called the first use of the law – to control sin and to keep order in the world.

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Only sinners need a savior, and that, according to Luther, is the second use of the law. We often take an analog view of sin – that some sins are evil, while others are almost ok. However, God is digital – sin is sin. While we may like to think that we are better humans than a mass murderer or a child molester, in God’s eyes that distinction is lost – we are all slaves to sin who deserve only death and eternal separation from God. And Jesus came to save ALL sinners, no matter how horrible they may be in the eyes of the world.

Once we’ve realized that we can’t save ourselves and throw ourselves on the mercy of the court – God’s judgement throne – the law takes on a third use. It teaches us Christians what we should and should not do to live a God-pleasing life - a guide if you will. The power to live according to the Law comes from the Gospel – A “want to” rather than a “have to.” If that’s the case, you may have wondered what Paul meant when he wrote to the church at Rome (Rom 5:20)

Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

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From this and other references in scripture, it's reasonable to say that the more we are sanctified, growing close to God, the more His Holy light illumines our lives, and we see the width, depth, and breadth of our sin more clearly. I'm convinced this is why Paul calls himself the chief of sinners later in that same letter.

Gifts from Daddy

As I mentioned earlier, Fathers often receive gifts today from their children. If you're a Lord of the Rings Fan, you'll know that it's traditional for hobbits to GIVE gifts to their guests on their birthday. In a similar manner, God, our heavenly father, GIVES gifts to His children not only on Father's Day but continuously and abundantly.

First – through Baptism, He has adopted us as His children and made us heirs according to God's promise to Abraham. And what was that promise? It most likely refers to the one Paul explained earlier in the letter to the Galatian church (Gal 3:16):

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ

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At our Baptism, God also sends the Spirit into our hearts, sealing us as His own and giving gifts for the enrichment of the body of Christ.

And to sustain and strengthen us in our relationship with Him, God has given us both His word and His supper as means to do so.

It's because of these gifts given to us that we call what we're doing right now a Divine Service. God is the primary mover while we respond to those gifts with worship, thanks, offering, service, and praise.

No Favorites

What it's like being part of God's family? Unlike us fallen mortal dads, God doesn't play favorites with His children. As the cover of the bulletin portrays, our primary identity is that we ARE a child of God, and our citizenship is in Heaven. No identity politics or minority set asides in here – only one united family. Paul makes this clear in his letter to the church at Ephesus (Eph 4:1-6)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, 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

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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.

What Daddies Do

Since we have a relationship with our Daddy – what can we as children expect?

This side of Heaven, we have His protection – nothing can separate us from His love. We also have His provision – He loves us more than His Son’s life and will provide for all our NEEDS (which I want to make clear are often very different than our WANTS). We have His presence – He is not a God who is far off, but one who is close and available. It’s not like we’ve been shipped off to boarding school and only see Him on semester breaks. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, He provides us with wisdom and guidance to withstand temptation and to make good, right, and proper decisions about matters both big and small. He also wants to spend time with us, not to get to know us better, since He knows us

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better than we know ourselves, but for us to get to know Him better. And what family relationship would be complete without chores? As Harry and Megan found out, being part of a royal family has both privileges and duties. God has gifted and enabled us for service in His Kingdom and we shouldn't be ungrateful and NOT use what we've been given.

Once this mortal life is over, He calls us home, to claim our eternal citizenship in Heaven, to dine with Him at this banquet table, and to dwell in the place that He has prepared for us beforehand.

Luther in the Small Catechism sums it up nicely:

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

AMEN