

“God’s Promises for You”
Trinity 21 – St. John 4:46-54

Expectations. We all have them. God has them for you. You have them for him. Recently, I have been going through the apostle’s creed with my boys and I am learning a lot as well. Here is Luther’s first paragraph to his introduction to the creed in the Large Catechism.

Thus far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine (meaning the 10 Commandments), in which we have seen all that God wishes us to do or to leave undone. Now, there properly follows the Creed, which sets forth to us everything that we must expect and receive from God, and to state it quite briefly, teaches us to know Him fully. And this is intended to help us do that which according to the 10 Commandments we ought to do. For they are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to [attain to or] keep them. Therefore it is as necessary to learn this part as the former in order that we may know how to attain thereto, whence and whereby to obtain such power. For if we could by our own powers keep the 10 Commandments as they are to be kept, we would need nothing further, neither the Creed nor the Lord’s Prayer.

God expects you to follow the 10 Commandments perfectly. Why? You hear why in our OT reading today from Genesis. He, God, created everything. He made all things, and they were good. He made man and it was good. He expects you to follow His commandments because He expects perfect goodness from you. Yet, since the fall of man, it has been impossible for any human to be good. Since the fall it has been the expectation of man that God would send humanity a Savior to free all from the bondage of sin because there was no chance in keeping His law.

In the Gospel, it reminds you that Christ already performed the miracle of the wedding of Cana where Christ blessed the marriage of the couple that ran out of wine. He provided for the insufficiencies and gave an overabundance. This is the view the hearer of the Gospel should take as Christ goes into Galilee once again. The official hearing that Christ was back in town went down to Christ in desperation.

Your child is on their deathbed, doctor's cannot find what's wrong, they have given up. What would you be willing to do to save your child's life? Would you be willing to try something experimental? This official searched out Jesus because he was this man's last hope. His son was going to die. He knowing that Christ performs miracles came only to him because of his son. This man through all caution to the wind and went to Christ because he thought there was a small chance that Jesus could do something. Has God done that with you in your life? Put a need of yours in your life and that need ultimately leads you to look to Christ. Sometimes "God's providence often uses your need to drive you to find even more than just what you think you need." This official with His son came pleading to Christ to hurriedly come see his son. Yet, Christ says to him "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe" Now the you Christ uses in this line is not just singular for the official, but it is plural meaning not just the official, but all who only will believe if miracles are performed. These are the people that have their expectations set only on the blessings of God without understanding who the blessings are coming from. It is true that you only know Christ is who He says He is because He did heal the blind, the deaf, the mute, and brings the dead to life. In this He fulfilled scripture. Yet, even though these miracles point to Christ. The way you know who Christ is who He says He is, is by His death and resurrection. His miracles point to the fact that He is God and He has come for you.

Jesus wanted this official not to just trust in His miracles, but to trust in God, the Savior that was promised to free mankind from eternal death.

“Jesus does not deny the poor faith which this official had but declares that this is not enough. His calling for a better faith, one that is real, must however, not lead you to the hasty generalization that Jesus did signs only in answer to real faith and never where faith is absent. Jesus often calls for faith and seals faith by a miracle, and then again he simply works the miracle in order that faith may follow. Thus miracles, indeed, always aim at producing faith.”

The official, not deterred by Christ’s words of requesting signs and wonders, still calls Christ to come save his son. This is the focus of the Gospel in Christ’s response to the man. “Go; your son will live.”

Jesus spoke these words. You know that Jesus did not always use His divinity and that was Christ’s humiliation, but in His miracles He would use His divinity. Here in these words Jesus used His divine authority to heal the son of the official. This official heard the Word of God in person and the very voice that spoke into creation all things says “Go; your son will live.” The official believes. It is the word that creates true faith and this is what happens to this man. For the command of God tells him to go, and the official goes. He believed the words of Christ. This interaction with the official reminds me of baptism. You bring your child who is dead in sin and come to Christ for help. You come for the child to be baptized because you know God can save your child. You bring your little ones to Him because you see that He is the only hope. What words are placed on the baptized. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God’s Word with the water brings the child from death to life. It is faith in God’s Word that the child has been

brought to true life, and been made a child of God. This you who are baptized can hope in every morning by remembering you're baptized. You are healed, you have been saved from death and made alive in Him.

You in the creed profess this belief. You confess that Christ, God made man came down from heaven to be punished and die in your place, did indeed rise and gain all authority of heaven and sustains you with His Spirit which you receive here in His Church through His Word and Sacraments.

The rest of the Gospel just confirms that God's Word is creative and sustaining. You see that the official's son was in fact healed the very instant when Christ spoke.

How amazing is it to know that Christ's Word is that authoritative and powerful. He says you are forgiven. Then you are! Simple as that. If He says you live then you will. If He says you are His child then you are. When Christ pronounces "It is finished." Then it is. This is what the epistle is speaking of. You have the armor of God because Christ has given you the armor. I am not sure if you were aware of this, but most armor needs to be put on by someone else so that it fits well. He arms you with His righteousness because it is He that died for you, and robed you with His perfection. He has given you the truth that He is the only way to heaven. He has given you that way through baptism. He gives you the Gospel of peace knowing that you are fully pardoned for your sin. It has been paid for in full and left on the cross. He provides you with faith by giving you His Word, a Word that lets you know that you are pardoned. This is the peace of the Gospel. It is in Christ knowing that He did all the work for you making you more than conquerors. You are given His Spirit to reside with you forever. Here at this table, a miracle will happen, bread will become body, and wine will become blood. He does

this to create faith and remind you of all that He has done for you and continues to give you.

God's expectation of perfect obedience was fulfilled by Christ. He seeing the faults and sin of humanity took all of your burden on to His shoulders and carried it to the cross. What can you expect from God? You can leave here confidently knowing that you sinner are saved. He came for you and the whole world to save it. You can expect that God will continue to sustain you through His Word and His Sacraments. He did all of this by sending His only begotten Son to this fallen world to be the unblemished and perfect sacrifice. All of this is stated in the Creed. It speaks to who God is and what He does for you. Our Father, let His Son die so that you may live. He gives you joy and peace because His Word, right now at this moment declares you forgiven, you are His own.

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