

Vespers III
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Concordia Lutheran Mission
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“Jesus was Able to Bear the Chastisement of Our Peace because He is True Man and True and Almighty God.”

“... the chastisement of our peace was upon him”

Isaiah 53:5

Introduction

What does chastisement have to do with peace? Chastisement means “to punish; to inflict pain upon, by blows or otherwise, for the purpose of correction.”¹ So, again, what has that to do with peace? Because of man’s sin, God’s wrath was aroused. With God’s wrath inflamed by man’s sin, man had no peace with God. Only payment for that sin could assuage God’s wrath.

And Christ, Our Savior, bore the penalty for our sin, assuaged God’s wrath, and brought peace with God. Hence, our peace came through God chastising His Only-Begotten Son in order to save us from our sins.

And it is self-evident that only God Himself could bear such a burden. Hence, Jesus was True Man in order to bear the burdens of men but He was also the True and Almighty God in order to be able to bear such a burden. Because Christ is God, He is able to bear the chastisement for our peace.

And this peace Christ distributes and gives freely to us by speaking peace to the nations through absolution, the Gospel.²

¹*Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, p. 307, s.v. “**chastise**”.

²In Scripture, Gospel means absolution: “Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII**. (V.).39, p. 261.

I. Christ Bears the Chastisement for Our Peace and Brings Peace with God.

A. Peace with God departs because of man's sin and man forever flees God and perishes.

Peace with God is essential to life.³ That is obvious for anyone to see. For, if God be our enemy, then there is no way we could prevail against such a foe. Peace with God, however, would mean life eternal because He would be for us in all circumstances.

But men obviously don't have peace with God because they are too busy fleeing Him. This flight from God began in the Garden of Eden. Fear and dread of God is the engine that drives men away from God. Moses writes:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.⁴

Luther writes of the fall of man and his flight from God:

From this passage the holy prophets, who read this book with far greater diligence and faith than we do, drew many of their statements. Among these are "The wicked flees when no one pursues him" (Prov. 28:1); "The wicked rages like the sea" (Is. 57:20) From this passage Christ took His striking statement which appears in John (3:20): "He who does evil hates the light." It is the nature of sin that it desires to remain hidden and not be brought into the light, just as Adam covered himself with a girdle and fled to the trees.⁵

And because God remains holy and man unholy apart from Christ, this lack of peace and flight from God must go on interminably, man never finding any peace or rest. Luther writes:

Let us learn, therefore, that this is the nature of sin: unless God immediately provides a cure and calls the sinner back, he flees endlessly from God and, by excusing his sin with lies, heaps sin upon sin until he arrives at

³Peace with God means, obviously, access to God. St. Paul writes, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." **Romans 5:1-2.**

⁴**Genesis 3:8.**

⁵*Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, p. 181.

blasphemy and despair. Thus sin by its own gravitation always draws with it another sin and brings on eternal destruction ...⁶

B. Christ bears the chastisement for our sin and, therefore, saves and brings life eternal.

Obviously, the key here is to restore peace with God. But because man is in eternal flight from God because of his sin and mounting sins, man can never find peace with God. What, then, is the answer? The answer lies in Jesus Christ, who is True Man and, therefore, able to bear the burdens of man's peace with God, and True God, able to bear the justice required to establish peace with God. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

One man had sinned, one man should pay, but here was a total lack of capability to do so.⁷

In other words, Adam had offended the infinite and eternal God. Such an offense, therefore, is infinite and eternal. How can a finite man pay an infinite and eternal debt? Why, it would take an eternity and then some to do so. We, therefore, see man's predicament: He has offended God and lacks any capability whatsoever to pay God for his offense against God. Dr. Gerhard continues:

God was able to pay, but He didn't owe it; that's why God became man, so that then the payment would be credited to man, since the debt was incurred by man and at the same time was fully paid because the payment was derived from God. The wrath of God was inflamed by sin. This wrath was greater than what heaven and earth would be able to endure, for it was as big as God Himself. Therefore, to endure and assuage this wrath, an almighty power was needed. Such power resides only with God; that's why God became man, so that the wrath of God

⁶*Luther's Works*, Vol. 1, p. 175. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes: "Of course, there was a glorious peace between God and men in the beginning, between the angels and men, between men and all creatures. God spoke with man in friendship, the angels gladly associated with man, and all creatures were obedient to man; but [these conditions] didn't last long. As the Devil toppled men into sin, God became his enemy, and contrarily, man became God's enemy; he fled from God and no longer regarded Him as His Father. The angels also no longer wanted to be man's friend. Instead, cherubim with a sharp sword were placed in front of the garden to scare off man (Gen. 3:24). Indeed, all creatures became man's enemy because he was God's enemy." *Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 79.

⁷*Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 37.

would direct itself upon the truly guilty because He was a man, and yet was able to bear this huge burden because He was God.⁸

And here in the Cross of Christ is the chastisement for our peace. Christ bore the infinite and eternal wrath of God so that we would have peace with God, Christ having soaked up and extinguished every last scintilla of the infinite and eternal wrath of God against man. In this way, Christ is the Prince of Peace for us, because He brings peace with God. Dr. Gerhard writes:

Isaiah finally calls this Child a **Peace Prince**, [a term] taken from Psalm 72:7: **At its proper time righteousness and great peace will blossom** etc. For we are once again reconciled with God through this Child (2 Cor. 5:18). ... So this Son of God had compassion and promised to pay for mankind's sin. He subsequently carried out the deed, thereby once again pacifying God and man, so that the angels also once again were of a friendly disposition to men and sang at the birth of this son: **Peace upon earth**. We thus now have such a Prince of Peace in this our new-born little Child, who at the same time is a Sovereign or King, and yet a Peace-Prince. His kingdom is a kingdom of peace, in which we can find peace with God, with the angels, with our conscience, and yes, also peace against the Devil and all our enemies.⁹

II. Christ Brings His Peace with God through the Gospel and Gives Life Eternal.

A. Christ is the Prince of Peace because He rules through Absolution, which is Peace with God.

Here in Christ we have a Wonderful Ruler, a Ruler who Rules through Peace with God. The prophet Zechariah writes of Christ's world-wide rule of peace through the Gospel:

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth.¹⁰

⁸*Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 37.

⁹*Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 79.

¹⁰**Zechariah 9:10.** "Here He Himself goes on to explain that the kingdom of Christ shall not be furnished physically with weapons; for He says that He will have neither chariots nor horses nor bows in His kingdom, as He also says in Is. 2:4: 'Neither shall they learn war any more, etc.' ... *And he shall teach peace to the Gentiles*. It is for this reason that He will need neither chariot, nor horse, nor bow, nor battle. For He will be a 'Prince of Peace,' as Is. 9:6 also

This peace is the Gospel, namely, absolution of all sins for Christ's sake. St. John the Apostle writes:

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.¹¹

The Lutheran Church confesses this Blessed Rule of Peace through absolution:

Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. (40) And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. Wherefore the voice of one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven.¹²

Christ, then, takes the peace with God which He earned through bearing our chastisement on the Cross and rules our hearts and lives with that Blessed Peace of Absolution.

B. Christ's peace with God gives life eternal.

And, moreover, this Blessed Rule of Peace with God quickens, as our Lutheran Confessions say, namely, it makes alive.¹³ For if the wages of sins is death, then the absolution of that sin must be life eternal. St. Paul writes:

says; and this peace is to be also among the Gentiles. Therefore His rule will consist in the Word or in speech, because He says here that He will speak, or teach, peace to the Gentiles.” *Luther's Works*, Vol. 20, p. 288.

¹¹**St. John 20:21-23.**

¹²*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII. (V.).*39, p. 261.

¹³“to animate; to enliven; to make alive; to vivify; to revive or resuscitate, as from death or an inanimate state.” *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, p. 1479, s.v. “**quicken**”.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses ...¹⁴

Conclusion

Chastisement and peace do not seem to go together, except in the Cross of Christ.¹⁵ There Christ reconciles them in Himself because He is able to bear the chastisement of God's wrath over sin and reconcile God to man and bring peace with God to men.

And Christ delivers to men this hard-won peace with God through the Rule of the Peace of the Gospel, through which Blessed Rule comes the remissions of sins, saving faith, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting in peace with God.

Amen.

¹⁴**Colossians 2:12-13.**

¹⁵The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes: "According to Scripture, Christ's death reveals both God's love and God's wrath. This truth is brought out in this very passage, Rom. 5:8-11: 'Hated by God (... lying under God's wrath), we were reconciled to God.' Love prompts God to reconcile us to Himself by the death of His Son, that is, to render satisfaction to His punitive justice. Scripture teaches that God's compassionate will or love does not preclude the settlement with the righteousness of God, but includes it." *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 353, underscore added.