**Advent Vespers II,**

**The First Sunday in Advent,**

8 December 2019.

*Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“God Dwells with Men Graciously in His Word and Sacraments, i.e., the Gospel, to Forgive Sin and Save.”**

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Isaiah 7:14**.

**Introduction**.

God’s Name is “Immanuel”, which means, “God with us.” But where do we see God with us? We have God with us in His Word and Sacraments.[[1]](#footnote-1)1

In God’s Word and Sacraments God dwells with us Graciously in order to forgive sins and save. Through His Word and Sacraments God dwells Graciously with men, revealing and bestowing upon them His Mercy and Grace in the Passion of Christ.

God dwelled with men Graciously in the Passion of Christ. In the Passion of Christ He assumed the burdens of men and Atoned for their sins.

God continues to be “Immanuel”, namely, “God with us”, because God resides with us Graciously to forgive sins and save through the Gospel.

**I. God Dwells with Man in the Incarnation to Atone for Sin and Save.**

**A. Sin deprives men of God’s Blessed Dwelling with men.**

Last week we noted from this passage in Isaiah that Christ is properly called God with us because He is God Incarnate. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.[[2]](#footnote-2)2

God came to dwell with men in the flesh because they had become bereft of God’s Blessed Presence through sin. After the fall into sin, Adam and Eve did not find enjoy God’s Blessed Presence. 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 in the Garden of Eden.[[3]](#footnote-3)3

**B. God dwells with men in the Cross of Christ to Atone for sin and save.**

Didn’t, however, Adam and Eve have God with them still in the Garden of Eden after sin? After all, they heard His Voice. Yes, God was present, but not with a Blessed Word of God. Rather, they had a word of condemnation from God. Remember what the Lord told Adam and Eve? Moses writes:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest therefore thou shalt surely die.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

*The word regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and consequent transgression is what Adam and Eve had. Adam and Eve had transgressed God’s command and now fully expected the consequences, which was death*. Even though Adam and Eve had God dwelling in their midst, they did not have the Blessed Knowledge of God in their midst because they now lacked a Blessed Word of God.

Because of man lacking a Blessed Word of God, God became man. The Apostle St. John writes:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

In the Incarnation of the Son of God, God dwells Graciously with men in order to Atone for sins and save. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

But while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.[[6]](#footnote-6)6

*Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, God dwelling with men in the flesh not in order to condemn them -- He needn’t become man to do that but could have done Un-incarnate from on high -- but rather to shoulder the burdens of men, Atone for their sins on the Cross, and save*. The Apostle St. John writes:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sins not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.[[7]](#footnote-7)7

**II. God Dwells with Men in His Word and Sacraments, i.e., the Gospel, to Forgive Sins and Save.**

**A. Christ’s Advent in His Word and Sacraments, i.e., the Gospel, is Immanuel, namely, God with us, today.**

We’ve see how God Graciously dwells with men in the Incarnation to be the propitiation for their sins and save. God also dwells Graciously with men in His Word and Sacraments. The Rev. Dr. Luther Reed writes:

Lossius[[8]](#footnote-8)8, the friend of Melancthon[[9]](#footnote-9)9 and the editor of a famous Reformation cantionale, speaks of a threefold advent – his coming in the flesh, his return to judgment, and his daily coming in the ministrations of the Word and Sacraments.1[[10]](#footnote-10)0

In other words, *we enjoy Christ’s Advent daily in His Word and Sacraments*. Christ’s First Advent was His Birth in Bethlehem (His Incarnation). But Christ didn’t leave us after that. *Christ continues to make His Advent* (*His coming to us*) *to us in His Word and Sacraments*. The Apostle St. John writes:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confessseth that Jesus Christ is [come and remains] in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

St. John the apostles says “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”, in other words, everyone that confesses that Jesus Christ is come and remains1[[12]](#footnote-12)2 in the flesh through the Word and the Sacraments is of God. Likewise in 2 John 7: “... who confesses not that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh”, namely, that Jesus is continuously coming in the flesh and therefore remains in the flesh.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3 Or in Jesus’ words: “... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” St. Matthew 28:20b.1[[14]](#footnote-14)4 In other words Jesus has come in the flesh and and dwelled with us in the flesh (St. John 1:14) and remains with us in the flesh (St. Matthew 28:20b). Consequently, Jesus says:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.1[[15]](#footnote-15)5

Christ came into the flesh to be with us in Baptism and at the Holy Supper. Every Spirit who is at pains to teach that Christ does everything through the sacraments of God, is glad to hear about Christ, and gives thanks. For he understand that Christ is his and that He came in the flesh. Therefore this has been stated emphatically. Behold, this is the test of a spirit, whether he is of God or of the devil.1[[16]](#footnote-16)6

**B. Christ is Immanuel in the Word and Sacraments to Forgive sins and save.**

Just as Christ dwelled with men in His Incarnation to forgive sins and save through His Passion, so now He also dwells with men in His Word and Sacraments to forgive sins and save. The Apostle St. Matthew writes:

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.1[[17]](#footnote-17)7

Christ makes His Graciously Advent amongst us daily in His Word and Sacraments to forgive sin and, thereby, save. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation. So we learned in catechism:

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking? That is shown us by these words, “Given and shed for you for the remission of sins”; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.1[[18]](#footnote-18)8

**Conclusion**.

Christ continues to be Immanuel to this day. He is Immanuel because He makes His daily Advent to us in His Word and Sacraments, i.e., the Gospel.

Through His Word and Sacraments, Christ dwells Graciously with men to forgive sins, save, give life everlasting, and the resurrection of the body when He returns again in glory on the Last Day.

**Amen.**

1. 1“When God makes a promise, there He Himself is dealing with us and is giving and offering us something.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 3, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2**St. Matthew 1:23**. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3**Genesis 3:9**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4**Genesis 3:16-17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5**St. John 1:1**,**14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6**St. Matthew 1:20-21**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7**I John 2:1-2**. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8“**Lossius**, **Lukas**, 1508 (or 1510)-82; assisted in introducing the Reformation to Luenburg; later rector of school in Lueneburg ... .” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, s. v. “**Lossius**, **Lukas**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9“**Melancthon** (*Schwarzerd*), **Philip**; b. February 16, 1497, at Bretten, in Baden ... D. April 19, 1560.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, p. 450, s. v. “**Melancthon** (*Scharzerd*), **Philip**.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10The Rev. Dr. Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 466, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11**I John 4:1-3**, translation from the Greek in brackets is mine. The translation reflects the Greek perfect. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12The Greek perfect tense is here used. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13The Greek present participle is here used. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, past President of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, writes: “Of this joint opposition of the Roman Catholics and the Reformed in denying the communicated omnipresence the Lutheran theologian Cundisius writes: ‘With vigorous opposition and censure the Calvinists and Jesuits commonly accuse us of the great crime that we subvert certain doctrines of the faith by our doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ’s body. ... The Lutheran theologian Kromayer writes: ‘They urge against us the omnipresence: 1. The ascension into heaven. But we reply that Christ by His ascension withdrew from us not His presence altogether, but only His visible association, for, just as He was about to ascend, He promised that He would be with us till the end of the world ... .’” ***Christian Dogmatics***, Vol. II, pp. 183, 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15**St. Matthew 18:20.** [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 285, 286, emphasis added. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 17**St. Matthew 26:27-28**. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 18*The Small Catechism*, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)