

**Advent II**  
9 December 2007  
*Concordia Lutheran Mission*  
Terrebonne, Oregon

## **“The Messiah is the Eternal Son of God and therefore Able to Save through the Liturgy as He Promised.”**

**“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me,  
Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee....”**  
**Psalm 2:7.**

### **Introduction.**

Why does Jesus publish this decree? Christ publishes it for the sake of the public, for us, so that we know that He, the Messiah, is the Eternal Son of God and able to save through His Liturgy, namely, the Word and the Sacraments.

For each day is today for God. And so God is continually begetting the Son, even when the Son becomes man. The Son, therefore, is also the Mighty God and able to save even when He is a man.

And this point is important *for us to know*: This Man, this humble appearing Man, is the Almighty God and therefore fully able to save.

The Messiah, therefore, is fully able to bear all the burdens of all men for all time because while He is True Man and can stand in the place of men, He is also the Almighty God. We, then, know He is fully able to save, for this man is the Almighty God Himself, pressing his Divine Majesty, Glory, and Power into the service of men for their salvation.

We, therefore, know that when the Messiah promises to save through the Gospel, namely the Liturgy of the Church, He can in fact do it. For the Gospel is God’s promise and power that saves.<sup>1</sup>

This passage, then, teaches us that this Man, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, is fully able to save through His Work on our behalf through His Gospel.

### **I. The Messiah is the Eternally Begotten Son of the Father and Able, therefore, to Bear the Burdens of All men and Save All Men.**

---

<sup>1</sup>**Romans 1:16.**

### **A. The Liturgy flows from the Person and Work of Christ.**

Last week we learned from Psalm 2 that the cords and bands of God that the nations desire to cast off and rid themselves of us the Liturgy of the Church. The Liturgy of the Church is God's loving embrace that saves us. Hence, the nations desire to cast off the Liturgy because the Liturgy is God's loving embrace in Christ. The Lutheran Church states concerning the Liturgy of the Church:

But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the Sacraments.* And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the term [liturgy] agrees aptly with the ministry.<sup>2</sup>

As we can see, the Liturgy of the Church is Christ's own institution to save sinners. For Christ Himself established Holy Baptism, the preaching of the Word, and the Holy Communion. All of these institutions of Christ forgive sins and save.

We, for example, can see Christ's work in Holy Baptism to save sinners according to the words of St. Paul:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, the Liturgy of the Church through which we are saved rests on the Person and Work of Christ.

### **B. Christ is the Eternally Begotten Son of the Father and fully able to save men from their sins.**

For this reason, namely the preaching of the Gospel, the Liturgy of the Church, Jesus states Psalm 2:7:

---

<sup>2</sup>*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII).39, Triglotta, p. 411.*

<sup>3</sup>**Galatians 3:26, 27.**

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.<sup>4</sup>

Notice what Christ says:

I shall surely *recount* the decree.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Christ will simply publish what has already been decreed by the Father. That of which Christ speaks in the following is *already a done deal* -- because the Father has decreed it.

And what is it that Jesus' publishes here? Jesus publishes that He is God's eternally begotten Son. Jesus says:

Thou *art* My Son; this day have I begotten thee.<sup>6</sup>

*Today* the Father has begotten the Son. And when is today for God? Today for God is forever. Because every day is eternity for God and eternity is every day<sup>7</sup>, the Son who is begotten on *this day* is begotten from eternity. Scripture, therefore, speaks of Christ's existence *prior to His birth*:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; ***whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.***<sup>8</sup>

Luther writes:

Is it not this, that this man born in time of the Virgin Mary existed before He was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit, indeed from eternity? For "today" in the case of God, as we shall point out later, has no beginning and has no end.<sup>9</sup>

And because the Son is begotten *today*, the Son is *continually* from eternity to eternity begotten and brought forth by the Father. The Son therefore is God. Luther writes:

---

<sup>4</sup>**Psalm 2:7.**

<sup>5</sup>**Psalm 2:7.**

<sup>6</sup>**Psalm 2:7.**

<sup>7</sup>**II Peter 3:8.**

<sup>8</sup>**Micah 5:2**, emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup>*Luther's Works*, Vol. 12, p. 47.

Thus the present text joins together the divine and the human so that they are one, so that you may correctly say: This man is God.<sup>10</sup>

And we *must know* that this Man who is so humble in appearance is also the Almighty God and, therefore, able to save.<sup>11</sup> For the Messiah must bear the burdens of the entire world, of all men. The Messiah must fulfill the law for all men in order to save them and also must bear the eternal damnation for all men because of their sins? What one man could possibly do this? No one man could, save the Messiah; and the Messiah can do it because He is God Himself in the flesh<sup>12</sup>.

In Isaiah the Lord gives us a glimpse of Jesus' Almighty Power to save. The Lord says in Isaiah 49:6:

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.<sup>13</sup>

*A light thing it is to raise up or to save Israel from eternal damnation?* What does Lord mean by that? Perhaps we should review what it means to save from eternal damnation before we answer that question.

---

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.* p. 47.

11“*We Christians must know that if God is not also in the balance, and gives the weight, we sink to the bottom with our scale. By this I mean: If it were not to be said [if these things were not true], God has died for us, but only a man, we would be lost. But if ‘God’s death’ and ‘God died’ lie in the scale of the balance, then He sinks down, and we rise up as a light, empty scale. But indeed He can also rise again or leap out of the scale; yet He could not sit in the scale unless He became a man like us, so that it could be said: ‘God died,’ ‘God’s passion,’ ‘God’s blood,’ ‘God’s death.’ For in His nature God cannot die; but now that God and man are united in one person, it is correctly called God’s death, when the man dies who is one thing or one person with God.*” *The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Of the Person of Christ.*44.

12“*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of Peace.*” **Isaiah 9:6.**

**13Isaiah 49:6.**

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, he invoked God's eternal and infinite wrath. Because God is eternal and infinite, one sin against God incurs God's wrath forever because God goes on forever. And because God is infinite, one sin against God is an infinite offense because God is infinite. Hence, the consequences of a *mere one sin* is the infinite and eternal wrath of God, namely eternal damnation. The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard writes:

The unending righteousness of God was offended by the Fall of Adam. Now then, there was only an unending payment required, which neither angel nor man could provide.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, Christ had to fulfill all the commandments for the people of Israel in order that they have an unending righteousness pleasing to God. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes:

The law under which Israel was placed is the sum of all that God demanded of men, specifically of Israel ... and just this is the Law under which Christ was placed. He took upon Himself the obligation to fulfill all the commandments of God. And it was precisely this obedience which made for our redemption.<sup>15</sup>

To bear God's eternal wrath and to fulfill all commandments for Israel and indeed for all men certainly is *no light thing*. So, what does God mean here when He says it is a *light thing* for Christ to redeem men by bearing their burdens under the law? *Here God refers not to the unimaginable magnitude of the work, but rather to the infinite majesty and power of Jesus to save. Compared to Jesus' infinite power and majesty because He is the Son of God, the work is a light thing, a trifle, even though it is of a magnitude that staggers the mind.* The Lord, therefore, says of Jesus and His almighty power:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*<sup>16</sup>

And because Jesus is the Mighty God in the flesh, He has power to spare and can also bear the infinite and eternal burdens of the Gentiles, of us. Hence, God appointed Him

---

14Seven Christmas Sermons, p. 76.

15Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 374, footnote 78.

16Isaiah 9:6.

to be our Savior as well. Isaiarh writes:

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: *I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*<sup>17</sup>

The Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, therefore, convinces us that He is fully able to save us from any and all sin because He in fact is the Almighty God Himself in the flesh.

## **II. The Messiah is Fully Able to Save through the Liturgy as He Promised.**

### **A. The Messiah dwells with us in the liturgy to save us.**

And this understanding of the Messiah is critically important because the Messiah dwells in the Liturgy of the Church to save. We, therefore, must be confident that the Liturgy of the Church, i.e. the Gospel, can deliver what the Messiah promises. Luther writes:

This is consequently the *highest article of our faith*, to know that the Son of Mary is the eternal Son of God, sent by the Father to preach, not to fight. For He has *His strength in His mouth*, not a sword in His hand. And this is the sum total of *His teaching*, that He says: “The eternal Father has begotten Me in eternity.” This is *the most important part of our faith and the highest article of the Gospel*. For this reason Satan has opposed it so strongly through Arius and his impious posterity.<sup>18</sup>

Notice Luther says “highest article of our faith ... His strength is in His mouth ... His teaching ... the most important part of faith and the highest article of the Gospel.” All these statements pertain to the Liturgy of the Church because they pertain to the Word and faith. The Word and faith is the Liturgy of the Church.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>**Isaiah 49:6**, emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup>*Luther's Works*, Vol. 12, p. 45, 46.

<sup>19</sup>“But let us speak of the word *liturgy*. This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, namely, that one minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as one minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says, I Cor. 4, 1: *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, i.e. of the Gospel and the*

Again Luther writes:

Even now Satan does not cease to make *this article shaky in our hearts*. For from where else do these fears, tears, sighs, and complaints of the pious arise than from the fact that *this article is not yet firm enough in our minds*? For if we *believed* for sure that this Jesus is the Son of God, what would we fear, since it is certain that He stands by us and has been sent by the Father for our welfare? Now we miserable people are assailed by sins, we fear death, we fear damnation, for this reason alone that our conscience doubts that Christ is the Son of God. For if we truly *believed* this, we would despise sin as a mere nothing, we would laugh at death and Satan as defeated and disarmed foes. Truly, what are sins, death, Satan to the Son of God? But the fact that we do not *believe* this is a failing not in the *Teacher or His Word*, but in us, who are either entirely without faith or believe weakly. This is, therefore, *the teaching of our King*, that He declares that the eternal God has spoken from eternity: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” You see, moreover, that there is no mention of our affairs and works—the Law certainly does that—but only of this *Son of God with His Word and His deeds*.<sup>20</sup>

Note again that Luther writes of “this article shaky in our hearts ... believed ... Teacher or His Word ... the teaching of our King ... Son of God with His Word and His deeds.” All these statements pertain, again, to the Liturgy of the Church because they pertain to the Word and faith. The Word and faith is the Liturgy of the Church.

Plainly, the Messiah dwells with us in the Liturgy of the Church to save and give eternal life. The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes:

The Anointed is Christ. God Himself has anointed Him and set Him upon His throne. His throne is in Zion. Zion is the place of God’s presence and revelation, the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Grace. Christ is present. He reigns over all things. He has established His throne on earth. He is

---

Sacraments. And 2 Cor. 5, 20: *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, Be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the term [liturgy] agrees aptly with the ministry.” *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV. (XII).*39, *Triglotta*, p. 411. “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. [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, *Triglotta*, p. 261.

<sup>20</sup>Luther’s Works, Vol. 12, p. 46.

enthroned in heaven on the right hand of God and at the same time His throne is on earth. We should think of Christ as being present on earth as well as in heaven. Here in the Church He has set up His reign in Word and Sacrament. The Kingdom and Rule of Christ is secure. God has enthroned His King, God protects Him. Hence His enemies shall never succeed in destroying Christ's Kingdom from the earth.<sup>21</sup>

The prophet Zephaniah, therefore, writes of the Liturgy of the Church in our day:

The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save ....<sup>22</sup>

Where is the Lord in our midst mighty to save? The Lord is in our midst mighty to save in the Liturgy of the Church, namely the Word and the Sacraments. Jesus says:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.<sup>23</sup>

We, for example, are gathered around Jesus' name in Holy Baptism, for we are Baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ...."<sup>24</sup> And Baptism saves. St. Peter writes:

... baptism doth also now save us ....<sup>25</sup>

Because Holy Baptism is the Liturgy of the Church, we see then that the Liturgy of the Church saves because the Messiah, the Almighty Son of God, is in our midst to save us. The Lord, therefore, in the prophet Isaiah calls the Liturgy of the Church the Fortress Walls of Salvation of the Church because the Word and the Sacraments are Salvation:

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong

---

<sup>21</sup>*Lectures on Select Psalms*, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup>**Zephaniah 3:17.**

<sup>23</sup>**St. Matthew 18:20.**

<sup>24</sup>**St. Matthew 20:19.**

<sup>25</sup>**I Peter 3:21.**



city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks.<sup>26</sup>

**B. The Liturgy of the Church is the power of God unto salvation as promised by the Messiah.**

Salvation the Lord Himself calls the Liturgy of the Church. Likewise St. Paul writes of the Liturgy of the Church when he writes of the Gospel:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ....<sup>27</sup>

The Liturgy of the Church, then, is the power of God unto salvation because the Liturgy is the Messiah dwelling in our midst to save us from our sins and grant us eternal life.

And herein we also see that the Messiah, because He is the Almighty Son of God, God Himself, is fully able to save through the Liturgy of the Church, His Liturgy, as He promised.

**Conclusion.**

Jesus publishes the eternal decree of His Father so that we might know and believe that the Messiah is the Eternal and Almighty Son of God Himself and therefore able to save through His Work of Salvation on the Cross given to us in the Liturgy of the Church.

**Amen.**

---

<sup>26</sup>Isaiah 26:1.

<sup>27</sup>Romans 1:16.