

The Fourth Sunday of Easter & Saude Confirmation – Pr. Faugstad sermon  
1 Peter 2:11-20: “You Have Been Called into the Light of Jesus.”  
April 20/21, 2024 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

### In Nomine Iesu

+ + +

O God our Father, who taught us that our citizenship is in heaven, and has called us to tread a pilgrim’s path here on earth: Guide us, we pray You, on our journey through this world to the Celestial City; defend us from the perils that await us in the way; give us grace to endure faithfully to the end; and at the last bring us to Your eternal joy; through the mercy of Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (*Parish Prayers*, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 87)

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)*

---

*The sermon text for today is taken from the second chapter of St. Peter’s First Epistle. We read selected verses in Jesus’ name:*

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. / Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by Him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. / Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

---

*These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)*

In Christ Jesus, who suffered for our salvation and calls us to faithfully follow in His steps, dear fellow redeemed:

No one really likes the idea of being “called out.” To be called out is to be accused of some sort of wrong. This often results in the accused person feeling angry – angry that his sins have been revealed, or angry that he has been misrepresented in a public way. But the apostle Peter used this term in a different way – a very encouraging way. In the words just before today’s reading, he wrote, “*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*”

He says that you have been “called out” by God. But these are not words of condemnation; they are words of salvation. The Lord “*called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*” He called you *out* of the sinful state you were in that could only lead to death. And He called you *into* His marvelous light.

This is the “*marvelous light*” of God the Son who took on flesh to save you. It is the light of His righteousness, His perfect keeping of the Law which is credited to you. It is the light of His forgiveness, the removal of the darkness of your sin. It is the light of His salvation, your redemption and justification through His death and resurrection. You have been called into this marvelous light by the Holy Spirit who has worked faith in your heart.

You live in this light. Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*” (Joh. 8:12). Because you live in this light, you see everything around you differently. In today’s reading, Peter writes that the people around you should see you differently too.

He says that we are “*sojourners and exiles.*” We are just passing through this world. We are like those who stay in a hotel room for a night—temporary quarters—and take nothing with us, or like those who eat at a restaurant but make no claim on the tables, plates, or silverware. What we have in this life is meant to be used for the glory of God, for the good of our neighbors, and for our own needs. We can’t take our possessions with us when we die; they are only for the here and now. Far better riches and treasures are waiting for us in heaven.

So the people around us should not see us full of greed, unwilling to help others. Neither should they see us indulge “*the passions of the flesh*” like unbelievers do, passions “*which wage war against [the] soul.*” These are the passions that violate the holy Commandments of God, passions that put any number of desires and pursuits in the place of God. The unbelieving world is ruled by these passions and does nothing to rein them in.

We who walk in the light of Jesus are called to live differently—with self-control, discipline, making sacrifices for others. Then when unbelievers call us out, “*when they speak against [us] as evildoers,*” as our reading says, “*they may see [our] good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*” But our good deeds will not stand out if we do not stand up for what is right.

That is difficult to do. Our culture today is turning more and more against the teachings of the Bible. Shining the light of God’s truth through our words and actions is jarring in this world of darkness; it is blinding and offensive to unbelievers. The effect is like one person wearing a Cyclone jersey to a Hawkeye rally or the other way around. We stand out as Christians, and this is not welcome. The world tells us to be silent, to change our beliefs, to get on “the right side of history.”

We could respond to these attacks in an obnoxious way, returning “*evil for evil or reviling for reviling*” (1Pe. 3:9). We could feel superior on our high ground and pat ourselves on the back like self-righteous Pharisees, thanking God that we are not like all the bad people (Luk. 18:11). But that is clearly not the approach that God calls us to take.

As we pass through this world, Jesus calls us to shine His light into the darkness. He calls us to humility, to patience, and to sacrifice. We find this in Peter’s words inspired by the Holy Spirit, which he wrote at a time when the governing authorities persecuted the Christian Church. Peter writes that we are to be subject to the governing authorities, respect them, honor them, and

pray for them. This is the teaching of the Fourth Commandment, which demands respect for authority beginning in the home and going outward.

Now your parents may not always seem worthy of your honor and respect, but you are to honor them because they are over you, put in place by God. The same goes for the governing authorities. They may not always seem worthy of your honor and respect, but they have been put in place by God for purposes that might not be clear to you but are clear to Him.

This principle also applies in the workplace. Peter writes that servants are to be subject to and respect their masters, whether they are “good and gentle” or “unjust.” Then he adds, “For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.” Now this does not come naturally to any one of us. If we suffer unjustly, it is often the case that we do not endure these sorrows with patience. We think how unfair it all is, how heavy the burden we have to carry, how we don’t deserve to be treated like this.

And that shows us how different we are than Jesus. Just after today’s reading, Peter describes our Lord’s righteous attitude and actions—a bright Light shining in the darkness: “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1Pe. 2:22-23). This was Jesus’ active obedience, His active keeping of the holy Law, which He kept perfectly.

We often have let our sinful passions get the best of us, but He did not let the devil tempt Him from His mission. We have dishonored and disrespected our parents and authorities placed over us, but He obeyed His Father’s will without faltering. We have not endured our trials with patience and humility, but He willingly suffered for the sins of others. Everything that we have failed to be and do, Jesus lived that perfectly for us.

And He let Himself be accused and crucified in our place. This is His passive obedience, which Peter also describes: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (v. 24). The blood He shed cleanses us from all of our sins. Our bad behavior, our disobedience, our impatience—all of it is forgiven, washed away by His holy, precious blood.

This is what Jesus has done for us. This is the light of righteousness and salvation that we have been called into by the power of God the Holy Spirit. This is the light we remain in by His ongoing work. The Holy Spirit works in us and has promised to work in us in no other way than through the Word and Sacraments of God.

When God speaks, He does. That’s how it was at the beginning when He said, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3), and that’s how it still is and ever shall be. God speaks the light of Jesus into us through the Gospel message. He replaces the darkness inside us with His own holiness and love. As we are filled and strengthened through His powerful Word, we are also equipped to shine His light toward others and bring Him glory. Jesus said, “[L]et your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16).

What this means is that your life is not really yours anymore. It is not about you. You have been claimed by the God of all glory, majesty, and might. He called you out of darkness and into His

light. He chose you, and since He chose you, He will not leave you to fight the enemies of darkness alone. He will not leave you to fend for yourself. He will not let the darkness overcome you and fill you like it did before.

The light you have been called into is a brilliant, powerful light. Just as it has changed your heart, it is powerful to change the hearts of others, and so it has. You do not journey as a sojourner and exile by yourself. You go forward along with all who have been called into the light of Jesus. We press on until God calls us out again, out of this short life of trouble and trial to a light still brighter, the light of His glorious presence in heaven.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.*

+ + +