**“Reconciled”**

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Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Romans 5:1-11

Mark 8:27-38

Lent 2

“God showed His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we **reconciled** to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are **reconciled**, shall we be **saved by His life**. More than that, we also **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ**, **through whom we have** **now** **received reconciliation**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

“Rejoicing in our sufferings.” That’s a **stumper**. But, yes, **perspective-wise (and the fact of the matter), “what can this world do to us?”**

It’s the weekend when we **bury** one of our own. But it’s also the weekend when we **rejoice with** Jim Heidenway for the love of God “shown for him”: that while (and when) Jim was “weak”, barely without faith and full confidence in the God who would do such a thing, Christ Jesus lived perfectly where Jim couldn’t and then died on a cross so that Jim could have the hope of Paradise and perspective baptized into that, secure to salvation to enjoy though tried … a passage in peace, secure and enfolded in the arms of God with that never being different (just much the fuller) than any of the rest of us **always have** also baptized and believing and reconciled because of Christ’s death and baptismal connection to us.

**Text**

I pick **death** as only a remaining enemy **if** (and only **if through it**) one gets **hounded to Hell for the second death / an eternal one**. And none of the texts speak to people who are **so jeopardized** other than **“none need to be”** (**pulled-down instead of lifted-up** like what’s depicted in a blackness that’s apart from the cross / shown behind it and slightly to its left in the bulletin cover’s picture … the small man, there, **hounded to Hell**). Today’s readings are for the **those gifted “life of Christ” from His wounds of love that earned freedom for believers** which is shown in the rest of that picture … including walking “above and over” death like the more noteworthy man on the bottom left of the picture.

Peter would not have **“gotten the just” of that picture**: that “The Son of Man **must suffer**”, as Jesus said “plainly” (without any parable to “sugar-coat” it), **being the Christ** which actually meant a good deal of something **in particular ,,, a necessary meaning**. God told of it of old, illustrating it with Abraham and his son, Isaac, so all should have known: that a **sacrifice for sin would have to made, which HE’D PROVIDE**. “**Reconciliation**” **(God reinstated to be able to have a Good connection with fallen man / RECONCILED**) required “**fence mending**”. A righteously perfect Man would have to fully **sacrifice Himself** and **be worthy** as that sacrifice for it to be **sufficient for all men**. **GOD, loving man** by **becoming him but also still fully God**, **COULD** … and **HE WOULD** **do that**.

You know, it’s easy to proclaim Jesus as a Helpful Brother (what a **“friend** we have in Jesus”, in the simplest form of that word, “friend”. But it doesn’t do enough justice to the word “**friend**” unless you remember **WHAT “friendship” cost God in the sacrifice of Himself in Christ Jesus**). And I think some of that **diminishing of the fact** was exactly what that first paragraph in Mark’s Gospel reading showed … and **that** even showing in the closest of disciples of our Lord Jesus at the time.

I remember being **where** paragraph one happened (in Casarea Philippi). Where Jesus asked for that profession of faith wasn’t on the safe shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus did not ask them to voice this acknowledgement over, say, a dinner table of just safely them. But He asked the question walking in what was the **“Sin City” /** **Las Vegas of that time**. Caesarea Philippi was Roman set up, and for the very pagan and secular reason of being an adult playground for the world. Walking around there was where Jesus asked … and disciples were called to answer. They answered honestly and simply (the best way they, so far, apparently, knew to). Some say, Jesus, You’re John the Baptist or, maybe, Elijah having returned, or one of any other prophets. But “You are **the Christ**”, the “**Anointed One**” as that “Christ” word means. “But we don’t really understand what that Christ word means since it’s meant earthly royalty or leadership on earth or some sense of glory while here. Never has it ever meant **“destined for destruction” except from every hint that way all through the Old Testament**.

Jesus “began to, then, teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and **be killed**, and after three days rise again. And He **said this plainly**. And **Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.’”**

“The **THINGS OF GOD**.” The **suffering, death, and sacrifice of the Christ was “the thing of God”**.

“**One will scarcely die for** a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but **God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**.” …..

**Application**

“**Reconciliation**” (us to God by Christ’s death and sacrificial bloodshed) **is** the **“loving thing of God” that** **Lent most washes over us**. Jesus as the **Christ of sacrifice for us** **is what that means:** “who **for us men and for our salvation** came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was made man; and was c**rucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures**”. He “redeemed us (all of us actually in this whole world), and we know ourselves (and admit ourselves as) those “lost and condemned” (without recourse but for the “reconciliation” of His saving of us by the sacrifice of the Christ sent for that purpose. Jesus “purchased and won humanity (and you and me) from all sins, from death eternal, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but **with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death**, that all (**we**) may be His own and live under Him” and with Him and from Him “in His kingdom” … here and now even … and “serve Him” (each of us / ourselves) “in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness”.

It is, by the way, this **second article of the Creed faith** that **accepts the Christ who God sent to save us** **because we needed saving**. We rejoice then even in suffering ourselves which would always pale by comparison to Jesus’, yet is expected of us with a glorious perspective to it since “we’ve obtained access by faith in this grace in which we stand” (as Paul reminds us who are the baptized and believing) “**We** rejoice then in God through our Lord Jesus, **THE CHRIST**, through **WHOM** **we have now received reconciliation**”, or the **pleasure … now … of the Father because of Christ for us and Him joined to us**.

Let’s pray: “Lord God, Heavenly Father, may we never forget that “Your glory” is in Your Christ Jesus and through what was necessary (what You in Him did for us). You **saved us who needed saved**. And Your willingness to do so in suffering is the **Wonderous Love that we cherish and even worship**. Thank You!” And may the peace of God that passes all human understanding (in His love in even **sacrificial action**) keep **our** hearts and minds **in Christ Jesus**. Amen.