

14th Week After Pentecost
September 10/11, 2022 Sermon

Which of us does not react if something has been taken from us, or we lose something that is precious to us? You understand that all of the other things pale in that moment, for you realize that what is missing is important. God, the Creator of all things, wants found every soul that is lost. He cares so much, He loves us so much that He willingly paid a price You and could never afford in order for us to have the opportunity to be found.

This is not just about something that goes on in the head, but about life itself. In this world, confused and misleading, people are looking to be found even if they do not know it. That is why so many will cling to the cause of the day. For while wanting to be found, no one wants to be found out. We all know our own secrets. We all know where we have not done things right and those places where we want to continue doing things the way we want to do them. God who sees and hears in secret already knows these things. He too wants us to be found.

God has created us to think on our own. Not that we can go on forever on our own, we cannot, but we have the ability to think and reason and this is what has led to the mess. We each do our little part and cumulatively it adds up and this world is filled with rebellion against God. We like the idea of a god who is good and kind, but we do not like the thought of God who is also just and so we wander. Many will seek a style that fits them and pretend they are close to the Lord. Our Lord and God is holy. He will make those who are found holy.

At the heart of the matter is the reality that Christianity is not addressing an intellectual situation, but the moral reality that our ways are not God's ways and our thoughts are not God's thoughts. He intends to make us holy and this is at the core of our being found. We are lost in sin and the Lord will bring us to the place where we are found in Him.

You have every opportunity to be found. It is not a matter of figuring things out, but about being lifted up into the arms of the One who has come to find you. If you seek any other identity than that of being a child of God, you remain lost. If you come into the arms of our Good Shepherd, He will place you in a flock of His choosing.

Even here, there are times when the rebellious heart desires things that ought not be desired. The Good Shepherd prayed that we would be one even as He is One. He places us together to work together. What we accomplish pales in comparison to the reality that the Lord desires that we work together.

The world presses in and judges. How many are attending your church? Big flocks and little flocks. But do we not sing the song, "Have no fear little flock?" Yes, for Jesus places us right where we need to be in order to remain safely in His hands. There are those who may want to control and accomplish, but our Lord comes so that we may have life and have it abundantly. Is not most of life lived in the moment by moment days which are given?

The life Christ offers us is not just something we sit on, but it is something to be pursued. Is that not the reality of life itself? We live life each day. We go out and do the things that we do. So also, this new life in Christ is something to be pursued. It grabs us and we are to grab it. It is in the living of our life of faith that it grows in us. This is why, in part, we gather together week after week. We are called into the presence of the Living God. He is holy and He will make us holy. He is preparing us to learn what it means to be a child of God.

The day you were baptized was a day of great joy. You were given the promise. Many times since then you have wandered off and the Good Shepherd has to come and find you. He is

relentless in His pursuit. He is relentless in creating His image in you. He wants you to be an image bearer. He wants you to become holy, but it cannot be done by our own steam. He must be the One who does it. He is our Savior and He alone knows what must be done for each one of us to remain securely in His flock.

The word of the Lord has been spoken. We have heard the words, but have we heard the truth? The word may fall on our ears, but until it pierces our heart, they are just words. When the word pierces our heart it brings us to the cross and there we see the price our Lord paid for our redemption. He who knew no sin became our sin so that we who are dead in sin might have His life. It is an unfair exchange. We receive the riches of God at Christ's expense. But the story does not end there. It is not just a matter of a sinner's prayer and then all is well with our soul. The Lord must take us on the journey of faith, the journey of becoming and this is the Christian life.

Just because folk gather together does not mean that we are together. We must be pulled together by the power of the Holy Spirit to be a part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. Not just here in this place, but in fulfillment of what we say each week, to be a part of the communion of saints. There is only one church and we are a part of that church. Although every fellowship may have some who do not believe, or are not sure of what they believe, we know that our Lord is always at work for those who believe and are being conformed to the image of Christ. Our Savior is the author and finisher of our faith. We are in His hands and He will finish what He has begun in you.

It matters not from whence we come. It does not matter where we were found. What matters is that our Lord finds us. He who began a good work in You will also do all that is needed in order that we find that we have indeed been conformed to Christ's image. One could look at Saul of Tarsus in an earlier moment of time and in his life think him a terrible man – something he readily confessed. Such were some of us, depending upon the moment of time we are talking about. Once found by Jesus, we are never allowed to think ill of others. Always remember that our Lord has come to save as many as believe. This salvation is offered right up to the last moment in our lives here on this earth. We are to rejoice with any who might come to the Lord. We are to long for the day that any who are wandering are found by Jesus.

The Lord knows those who are His. He knows those who will be found and placed in the fold with His other sheep. Through the water of our baptism, we have all been called. Many are called. When Scripture says that many are called and few are chosen, too often only then do we think that the Lord is somehow doing some kind of capricious selection when, in fact, softly and tenderly the Lord is always calling for poor sinners to come home to Him. In the Father's house are many rooms and all of us have been invited to go to the Father's house and live eternally with Him through the grace our Lord purchased from the cross.

Who are the fellow sinners Jesus sits down with? Why, that is you and me. There are those who grumble, thinking themselves better than others, but the truth is that in while yet each and every one of us was a sinner, Jesus died for us, the ungodly. What lies ahead is infinitely more important than what is behind. In Christ we have hope here, now, today, and forever. We were born lost but through Christ we are found. Learn to rejoice in the truth of the revelation of God in the flesh and that He has found you. Go out into the world and share that you have been found with any who might listen. We never know when we are meeting a brother or sister for the first time. The Lord creates a heart that rejoices in the truth and with every sinner who comes home to the Lord. Rejoice and be glad for today salvation has found you. Amen.