

Saved... To Save!

Today we arrive at the final Sunday of the Easter Season. Next week we will see the Holy Spirit's anointing of the Apostles by appearing with wind and fire. But today, we conclude our eyewitness accounts of Jesus resurrection with a now, but not yet prayer from Jesus.

And this can be a confusing prayer to understand, after all; Jesus is praying for that which has not as yet happened, as though *it has* already happened.

I honestly can't think of much of anything, outside of Christendom, that does this.

When we tell our family we're going to the grocery store, and ask, "what do you need?"

Nobody believes it's as good as purchased and, in the bag, or stocking the shelves of our pantry.

No, you might get there, and they don't have the right kind of bread, or the cereal you wanted. Or the peanut butter and jelly you were craving just came in the small jars instead of the big jars.

These days you can't even count on anything, in particular, being there.

We know this and we accept the reality of it. There is no sure thing.

We also know that if we enter a sweepstakes, play the quarter slots at the casino, or buy a raffle ticket. The odds are never in our favor that we will win.

On a more serious note, what we are seeing in Ukraine today, and our war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, that, even if you have a superior military force; that doesn't mean the war will turn out the way you think it will.

I know this happens with building new homes, rehabbing old ones, or even building a church, just like here at Faith. Even with specific architectural plans, the final product rarely ends up the way you planned it. Money is involved, availability of materials is involved, and...well let's be honest...people are involved.

And that's the difference. If people are involved, that means sinners are involved, and that means anything we do, will be influenced by, likely corrupted, but at the bear minimum, distracted by our sin.

Thanks be to God, that never stopped humanity giving it their all! As social science says, "that's what separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom. We can imagine a future."

A gator just wakes up and looks for its next meal. A bird just makes a nest and finds the worm. A dog just waits for its owner to come home. A beaver just instinctively builds a dam to protect itself from predators.

But we, as God's top of the food chain creatures, imagine the possibilities and with that hope, put together plans for our lives.

We don't just look for food when we wake up, we put together a grocery list and plan the meals, usually as social time with the family.

We don't just build a house to raise children in, we look for the right neighborhood with good schools, and access to extracurricular activities that will enrich our children's future.

And we don't just build a life with security in mind, we secure our lives with an expectation of who may want to hurt us and anticipate the best way to handle that threat in our lives; some by taking self-defense classes and learning Karate Tai Kwando, or Jujitsu!

Or, we get first aid training, we insure against disaster, and we seat belt our children securely everywhere we go.

We imagine, *and sometimes over imagine*, the threats and prepare for them!

But even then, life never turns out the way we think it will. After all, the grocery store just may not have milk and eggs, and the baby will have to wait for formula if the shortage continues.

So, we hope. We pray. And we wait on the Lord. That's our part.

But, it's not Jesus' part. He is completely different.

When Jesus, God in the flesh prays, the prayer is already answered, and you can take that to the bank.

Today Jesus' prayer proclaims the *Now, Not Yet Reality* and gives us a prayer to model for infinity and beyond.

Prayer that knows what is going to happen, even though it's not happened!
As our Lord prays, it in fact it has not happened and He is clearly not speaking from the future, but He knows what is going to happen with a certainty and conviction that conveys the future as if it has happened as He prays it might.

Oh, that our prayers were so convicted.

Prayers that the Gospel will achieve what God's Word set it forth to achieve.

Prayers that the church will increase.

Prayers that the *Lost Will Be Reached*.

Prayers that *Poor in Spirit will be Rich* in the Grace of God.

You see Jesus' prayer today, *for us*, is from the vantage point of after His Ascension, but it is even more:

It is a prayer that glorifies the Father and Glorifies the Son a reciprocal relationship that redeems everyone.

And These are the prayers we need today.

Prayers that Glorify the Son and tells the ultimate narrative of redemption for all sinners.

Redemption for the wasted wanderers of society looking for a home.

Redemption for the tired masses burdened by uncertainty and the ever-changing tapestry of our culture.

And glorifying tales of impossible feats realized by the impossible forgiveness of our God, forgiveness to those who screamed their hatred at our God while they hung him on the cross.

Finally, Jesus' Prayer establishes His name, like The Disciples before; believing Jesus because His Words are from the Father.

So, Jesus believes, that what they believe now, will, with absolute certainty, be what they believe after his Death and Resurrection!

This Prayer is the ultimate certainty of the Glory of His Manifest Name.

CGMN, print it, make a t-shirt of it, post on a giant Sign.

Certainty of the Glory of His Manifest NAME.

That's a big difference from what the world has to offer and that is what we are working hard to communicate in the coming season of Pentecost here at Faith.

First, we are revamping our youth ministry to give them space and resources to prepare for a life of service to Jesus that prepares them to take over the church one day.

We are actively working on a fund to help pay for students who want to go to Concordia Universities and Seminaries to follow through on the preparation we give them here; continuing their service as full-time workers in the church especially teachers, pastors, deaconesses and DCE's/DCO's.

We are looking at the overall structure of the organization, strategically planning, and expanding our spiritual work to go deeper into God's Word so we can spread further into the community.

Finally, we are concentrating on efforts to take our church ministry off campus, to the people that need the Gospel the most, the unchurched, the orphaned, the widowed, and the disenfranchised from the social fabric of our community.

But we are not doing this so we can have the coolest youth program in town!

We are not doing it to increase our Concordia enrollment numbers to save our beloved schools.

We are not doing it to make Faith a more efficient organization.

We are not even doing it to win national awards for helping those who can't help themselves and generate government subsidies.

No, we are doing it, so we can pray in the confidence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So we can see that His sacrifice on the cross was not in vain.

So we can grow and know we have that confidence because He gave it to us through His Holy Spirit, and thereby opened our eyes to the reality of *why we are here*, which many of you know, but maybe some of you don't.

#1, to live: for Christ has given us life and to have it in abundance. Not in the abundance of possessions of things material or temporal, but the abundance of love that God the Father showered down upon us through His dear Son Jesus. So, we are here to love, just as Christ first loved us.

#2. To Serve: Just as Jesus got down on knees to wash His disciples' feet on the night in which He was betrayed so He serves us forgiveness of sins and strengthening of Faith when we partake of His very Body and Blood at this altar right here.

#3 Finally, to share: Sharing the Certainty of the Glory of His Manifest NAME...so His name would be manifest to anyone who does not know Him unto the salvation of their souls.

Through baptism He adopted you and put His name in you, which means you are saved to save anyone He sends you to.

AMEN

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