

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 5, 2024
We'll Remember Forever
1 John 5:1-8

Welcome to Confirmation Sunday! And what a glorious day this is. Today we confirm the vows made at your baptism, that you are indeed a believer in Christ and that by Faith in His Name you are saved!

Boy, did we pull out the red carpet for y'all. We had the amazing dinner last night, we passed out the gifts, and we took the pictures to memorialize your special day.

Oh, there will be other days that we will celebrate with you coming down the road. Undoubtedly, thanks to the education you have received and the parental support you have been given, you will graduate from high school. Then, most, if not all of you, will receive a diploma for post-secondary education and vocational credentialing. Then you will be the employee of the month, get pay raises, and advance up the ladder of your respective vocations. Many of you will find that special helpmate found to be suitable by God, and start a family...

Ok, I'm clearly getting ahead of myself, but seriously though when you have babies bring them here to be baptized for sure!!! Ok, I'm done now.

Today we will simply let be today, because, as our epistle lesson says in verse 4, "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith."

And that is exactly why you processed in today under the banner of the cross. This is why you don the white robes of the eternal saints in Heaven. This is why we bring you up to the front of the sanctuary; because you are the church!!!

Today you will overcome the world, because this is your victory, your Faith.

That faith which came to you by water and the Word through baptism will continue to grow as you are drawn closer to your Savior Jesus.

Mr. Yurk and I have worked so hard for you for this day. We put our heart and soul into religion classes, public school confirmation classes, church, bible study, youth group, and Sunday School to prepare you for this day.

And even though it exhausts us, we don't begrudge even a moment of our time working on all the spiritual growth opportunities, because God has promised us that His Words will accomplish what He set them forth to do. (Isaiah 55:11)

And indeed, He has, in you!

Not only that, but your faith has also blessed homes. Your faith has supported one another. Your faith has been there as sponsors and supporters of others getting baptized. Your faith has shown compassion, love, and understanding like no one outside the faith could ever understand, and that's not because of the quality of your faithfulness, it's because of Whom you have faith in.

“Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes Jesus is the Son of God?”

I mean, only Jesus was able to satisfy the demands of God's law, His crucifixion being His final act of absolute obedience.

And because of Jesus, what we could never do no longer burdens us, rather it is enabled in us by Him. And God enables us to carry out His will, that is why it is no longer burdensome.

We live our lives in Christ, forgiven, redeemed, lifted every day for His purposes.

Again and again, we have this incredible example of what real forgiveness and redemption means. Real forgiveness and redemption that lasts can only come from one place.

One of my favorite podcasts, that I listen to while I'm fighting all this newfound traffic in Lake County doing my pastoral care visits, asked an interesting question...

...The host of the show, actually said, “What if Jesus is real? What if we can prove it undeniably? Why do we need him?”

Now, I want you to know that his first assumption is a silly one. Of course Jesus is real and has been undeniably verified, even more so than any other figure in history by archeology, history and even geography.

But ignoring Scripture might allow you to ignore how Jesus is God. He is God proven by the miracles He performed. He is God by the fact that He raised people from the dead to live again. He is God by the fact that He was undeniably dead by the methods of the Roman crucifiers, and then walked out of the tomb alive. He is God because his actions and interactions with more than 500 people, saw Him alive.

But even if you didn't know all that, a simple explanation makes Jesus matter. Jesus matters: because forgiveness and redemption matters and Jesus is the ultimate personification of what it means to forgive. He showed it by dying for the people that wanted Him dead and His death redeemed *them* from *their* sin.

So today, you are being confirmed for this very reason. You are forgiven by Christ, and through Christ you have been taught to love and forgive the unforgivable. And that's the hard truth, but it's an important one for those joining the church. The church is not a place for those who think we are better, superior, or more deserving. No. The church is for all those unworthy of God's grace, but He gives it to them because He loves them.

I think you all know how much we love you here at Faith - your teachers, Mr. Yurk, me, and everyone sitting behind you in the pews right now.

Perfect love casts out fear and we are here because we have no fears about your confession of Faith. Jesus casts out all fear of any harm befalling you that God can't handle.

Our Love is nothing compared to God's love.

I know I hope to be here when it's time to marry you, baptize your children, and bring them to church and school just like when you first came to us. We're doing that with some of the first kids I taught here at Faith. They had me marry them to their BFF, and baptize their children, and I get to joyfully greet their kids every morning at school.

I can't promise you that I will always be here. I can't even promise you that this school or church will be here. I mean, don't worry it most likely will be, but you just never know for sure.

But what you do know and can trust forever when you are taken by your angel to Abraham's bosom, is that your baptism is eternal. The blood shed on the cross is eternal, and Jesus' love and forgiveness for you no matter what you do is eternal, too.

As verse 6 in our lesson says so clearly, “This is he who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood.”

Indeed, Jesus came in the water of your Holy Baptism, and indeed His Blood was shed for you, to forgive you, redeem you, and confirm you on this holy day we all will remember, forever, in Heaven!

AMEN

Now may that peace which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus Always. Amen.

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