

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

King David, Prophet, Psalmist, writes “For there is none like You, nor is there any God beside You.” His ascription of praise is based in the mercy and grace of God, who bestowed upon David bountiful and manifold gifts. But it is not by the gifts that David came to know God. He proclaims “according to all that we have heard with our ears.” Faith comes by hearing. David heard the Promise. He believed.

The lesser shepherd king of Israel would know tribulation too. His great wealth became a snare to him. But David clung to the Word he had heard, the Word of Promise, the Word that works and sustains faith. So too the nobleman. The Scripture doesn’t identify him specifically. We simply learn there was a certain nobleman, in the throws of great tribulation. At the Lord’s life-giving Word, the nobleman believed. St. John writes “So the man believed the Word that Jesus spoke to him.”

So too it is in our tribulations. We have the Word. Faith seeks no sign. Fear, worry, anxiety and doubt - these are not of faith. Indeed doubt is antithetical to faith. Consider the Words of our Lord spoken throughout the New Testament: “Do not be afraid,” “Worry not...” “Be not unbelieving, but believing...” “Peace to you...” “I will never leave you nor forsake you...” Let these Words be your comfort, your consolation, your hope.

Still, amidst Promises aplenty from the Lord of Hosts, this fallen world has hemmed us in and assaulted us. Tempted, tired, tried and failing our flesh has desired to push aside the Promises of God and the faith they work. We have sinfully focused not on the eternal, the heavenly, but rather on the temporal, the earthly.

We have not focused on the hedge of angels God places around us, rather we have been worried by the bills that seem to daily hedge in our checkbook. We have not focused on our place in the Kingdom of God, rather we have been anxious over the place we hold, and the things we have, in this fallen world. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness.

We have not focused on the heavenly mansion God has prepared for us, rather we have worried about the repairs we desire for the house or the car. In our fallenness, we have not focused on the eternal peace God offers, rather we have become embroiled in conflict at school and work, and in arguments with family and friends, as the division in our society invades our homes.

And so, worried about the things of the world, doubting, eyes upon the temporal, we have sinfully lived as if God were afar off, ignorant of our tribulations, as if He were busy on another job. And we have soon found ourselves with the nobleman, whose pressing fear and anxiety can be heard even 2000 years later and half a world away: “Sir, come down before my child dies!”

He spoke those words as if God were not aware of his child's condition, as if God were not omniscient, as if God were forgetful and distracted.

The nobleman did what each of us has sinfully done. Consumed with the trial, in fear, he forgot the power of God. His request makes the Lord, if it were possible, like unto the false god Baal, who could not see or hear or help his worshippers as they slashed and beat themselves because he was busy elsewhere. So, in his fear, the nobleman boldly and sinfully dictates to the Christ how and when the healing is to be accomplished.

Amazing – a man who would try to command God! But perhaps you have done the same. Perhaps you have, consumed with a trial before you, forgotten the power of God. Perhaps you have thought that God wasn't aware of your suffering. Perhaps you have been disappointed that God has not acted as you think He ought.

Perhaps you have become impatient with God because you have come to think that He hasn't intervened quickly enough. Or perhaps you have not been pleased with the Lord's solution to the situation, feeling that what you desire would be a better outcome.

Hear then, the rebuke of the Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent God: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." Repent. Faith seeks no sign. Faith is satisfied with the Promise. Faith is satisfied with the Word of God. Faith is born of that Word. Faith is sustained by that Word. Repent, for faith waits patiently for the good and gracious will of God.

And yet, in mercy, the Lord does heal the nobleman's son. That tells you a lot about God. He does know what you endure. He does see. And He alone can heal. He heals the boy according to His will. He heals him with a Word, from afar. A doctor, even the best doctor, would have to be present with the boy. But not so God. God works miracles. Believe it. So the nobleman learned of the power of God. And perhaps more importantly, he learned the grace and mercy of God.

The son of the nobleman was healed. So too was Isaac spared, as was the son of the widow of Nain, as was beloved Lazarus. In each case he who should have perished eternally was spared death by the Son – the Son of God who Himself was not spared. For as He was arrested, no one came to His aid. No one stayed the hand that drove the spikes.

No one spoke a word of mercy to relieve His suffering. And because He covered Himself in your sin, no father intervened for Him, begging a miracle. For bearing your transgressions, He was separated from His Father. The prayers of the Son went unanswered. In His great love for you, He died the very death He saves others from.

And then He did the greatest of miracles, He gave the sign, He fulfilled the Promise He made to all the faithful of all time – He gave the sign of Jonah. He crushed the head of the Devil, and He took up His life again. Faith seeks no sign, and yet, in mercy, He gave the world the sign of forgiveness and life for all that believe in Him – the empty tomb.

In His death is the Promise that your sins are forgiven. In His resurrection is the Promise that you who believe in Him shall also rise. That is His Promise to you. It is the greatest of miracles. But for faith, His Word, the Sword of the Spirit, is enough.

But He gives you more. He signs His Promise of forgiveness and life by adding water to His Command. It is there, in the font, that He heals you from afar, with a Word. By that washing, your sins are forgiven. By that washing, the Spirit of God comes to you personally, and remains with you and in you for your healing and protection.

And you, dear Christian, you who are declared forgiven, healed and alive; you who have God's Promise, to you He gives the signs of bread and wine, with which you receive the miracle of His Body and Blood for you to eat and drink. And He promises you "Your sins are forgiven", and He promises you "Behold, I am coming soon!" For faith, that is enough.

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