

Wednesday after the Eighth Sunday after Trinity / Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, 2020 A.✠ D.

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

The Apostle writes to describe God working to redeem you, to save you. He writes that God's great love for you is demonstrated in your redemption. If you seek proof of the love of God, you need look no further. The work proper to His Divine Nature is to create and to bless and to save, to provide and to protect.

Consider how He blessed His chosen people Israel, choosing them through no merit of their own, and repeatedly delivering them from danger even though they were unfaithful. He was faithful, and kept His promise of leading them into the Promised Land, and making it theirs. God is a God of love.

God is just. He is the source of all true justice. He is just as an attribute of His Being. Men can feign justice, but God is just because He is Justice. Because God is Just, because God is True, although it is His alien work, God is wrathful. Justice cannot tolerate sin. Righteousness cannot tolerate transgression. In the presence of Holiness, unholiness is destroyed.

So the wrath of God is horrible. One cannot hide from it. One cannot avoid it. All one can do is suffer it. And to suffer God's wrath is to suffer it for eternity. It is an awful sentence. It is not what God desires, but it is what sin has earned. Our God is a jealous God, a consuming fire.

Fallen men mistake this blessed season of God's grace for a sign that there will be no day of judgment. Sinful men mistake God's longsuffering and mercy for weakness, or for the absence of God. So fallen men carry on in their sins, their gluttony, their lust, their arrogance and pride, their hard-heartedness and selfishness.

And it is not just some generic "men" that have done so. Every man with Adam's flesh, which is to say all men, have done so. You too have seen that sin is not met instant rebuke from God. You have seen that God does not immediately respond to the breaking of His Law with consuming fire from heaven. So what God means for good lulls sinful men into a false sense of confidence. Sinners feel more comfortable sinning. So man, created by God, becomes an enemy of the very God that made him.

So be warned. You must repent of your sin. For there will be a day of judgment, regardless of what sinners believe. And that day comes soon. What all sinful men have earned, what you have earned, is the wrath of God. So does the Lord Himself say "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off." "If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off." "If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out."

It is not hyperbole. Just as God commanded Israel to put to death every man, woman and child in the promised land, a horrible command, so it is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, two feet, or two eyes and entering hell, where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

Wednesday after the Eighth Sunday after Trinity / Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, 2020 A.✠ D.

But if you were to begin cutting off and plucking out every part that you used to sin, still you would not be clean, still you would not be without sin, for sin comes not from hand nor foot nor eye. Sin comes from the fallen heart. And to pluck out the heart is to die.

But thanks be to God, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The sinless flesh of His hands and feet was pierced. His eyes were darkened. He became for us a worm and no man, the lowest of all. He stood before the Father bearing your sin. While the wrath of God was poured out on Him, His Blood was poured out for you.

He died the death required for sin. He died the death required for the sins of the world, for He was without sin. And eyes darkened, hands nailed to the cross, He suffered His sinless heart to be pierced.

The wrath of God of which St. Paul warns was poured out upon Christ in full. So you are saved from the wrath through Him. You are reconciled to God through the death of His Son. You are justified by His Blood. And much more, having been reconciled, you are saved by His life, which having willingly laid down, He took up again.

Like Israel, God chose you with no merit or worth on your part, simply by His grace, simply because He loves you, simply because He desires fellowship with you. In that love, He has repeatedly delivered you from danger. He has brought you into His Church, where He keeps and nourishes and protects you. And He has reserved for you a heavenly Promised Land.

That heaven meets earth at the Baptismal font, where your sins are removed, and Paradise is made yours. You taste of that Paradise this day when you hear His Word. For that which is holy and just pierces the sinful world and brings life and salvation, feeding your faith. You taste of that Paradise when you receive the Holy Eucharist, when the Lord that died for you brings that healing, comforting forgiveness and life to your lips and tongue and into your soul.

Thanks be to God, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. His free gift to you cost His life. But given that life, given eternal life, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

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