

OCULI SUNDAY John 3: 1-17 Mt. Calvary, West View / Pentecost, Avella 03/19/17

Theme: Too Much Sin to Bare

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. John, the 3th chapter:

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered Him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly."

I am sure that you have heard the wonderful story that goes like this: You are sentenced to appear before the judge and as you approach the bench you find out that the Judge is none other than Almighty God, the Father Himself, and as you take your seat in the place for the accused, you find that the District Attorney is none other than the devil himself. Apparently, a star-studded trial. The trial is to come to order and the DA is asked to present his case against you. Here you see your entire life flashed before your eyes and the eyes of all those who are beholden to your accused life. All the good, and of course, all the bad. It even seems that the mean old devil slows the tape down on those bad parts just to make his point more prominent, so as to make the accusation stick that The Father should and rightly destroy you in hell for your sins.

But wait! In comes the defense attorney, (Why He is "late" must be for dramatic emphasis) and for the defense argument it is not Johnny Cochran, but even better: Jesus the Christ Himself! Upon His request, the tape is replayed and lo and behold, all those sinful scenes are replaced with the imagery of Jesus on the cross! All the evidence that the devil had against you is no longer there because it has been replaced with the cross of Christ! The great miracle of Jesus death is all the Father sees when presented with your sins, so all is forgiven, and you are allowed to enter into the heavenly realms without hesitation and the devil slams his briefcase shut and storms out of the courtroom, claiming he is going to file an appeal for evidence tampering by the defense and an

inappropriate relationship between the presiding judge and the Defense attorney. (I guess my dreams are a little more detailed and entertaining than the common stories.)

As we venture into the reading we have before us concerning Oculi Sunday: the Sunday where we ask God to look upon us and be our defense against our enemies, apparently, this woman at the well did not get the court summon. And apparently, it is not the devil that will accuse her of her many burdensome sins, but Jesus Himself. So much for the cutesy and uplifting story that everybody likes to spread along alongside the *Footprints* story, which is why I like to stick with scripture when explaining what happens when faced with your sins and not watered down, social gospel drivel.

So, for the true, factual story for today: Jesus is exhausted from His ministry and sends the disciples away so that they might acquire some subsistence, and also that He could continue to minister without the side commentary of the disciples as they are so wont to do. A certain woman approaches that Jesus was willing to give the message of the Gospel unto, and as an icebreaker, requests from her a simple drink. Interestingly, she does not refuse, but it appears that she does not fulfill the request either. Instead of fulfilling the request as a good civil religious person, she argues the fine points of decorum and expresses that He should not request such a thing from a Samaritan, and a female one at that. Boy, does that not ring true today. People pick apart the bad stuff, and totally miss the opportunity given to them to do something nice for another. We sinful human beings always find a reason *not* to do what is asked and justify ourselves with goofy religious sounding rhetoric.

Jesus dismisses her racial remarks by informing her, if she only knew, that she could and would be welcomed into the presence of the One True God simply by asking to receive the living water, which if she was looking for the Messiah, is here offering it to her. At this, she uses her

reason and strength to explain to Almighty God that He cannot fulfill His statement for He had not the necessary tools to make it right, and promptly accuses Him of being lesser than Jacob the well maker and his children, and his cattle! The arrogance of this woman! For one who is not to speak to Jews, she sure has a lot to say, and wrongly at that! If only she knew who this was in front of her, she would have had all her burdensome sins removed. If only she was not so bullheaded and stiff-necked towards the truth, perhaps she would receive the grace offered and not be lost forever.

Undeterred, Jesus gives the gospel so that she is ready to receive. He tells her He gives the living water that wells up to eternal life. Still stuck in her reasoning mind, and showing her sin of slothfulness in desiring to never having to draw water again, asks for the living water of earthliness, not perceiving the saving water of life given by the One True God that quenches the thirst of desire for God's mercy and grace, and leads to the comfort and peace of knowing the Salvation of eternal life for the believer in The One Present before her. Jesus is telling her, and us, that we have so much sin that we cannot even perceive the enormity of it. And if grace were like a well that we would have to draw our salvation from it, well, the bucket would be too heavy to draw, the amount too vast, the cost too enormous for us to pay.

Yet, salvation is still available despite the enormity of sin. Jesus asks the poor woman to call her husband over for a chat. It is not a request to let the men talk now, the call to husband is the call to face sins. We cannot receive absolution until we face our sins, and one on one with Jesus we face them, not with the devil. We never face our sins with the devil. We only face them when the Holy Ghost calls us through the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. Wait a minute, is this not Sanctification? How can we face sins if we are sanctified and removed from them? There is the rub. I cannot face them, they are too great and numerous. Yet, through Christ and His blood, I am forgiven of sins, suffer no more for them, and

by grace am removed from them as far as the east is from the west. Boy, that is a long separation, thank you, God.

Saint Paul explains how this “Justified by faith” works. While we were still weak, Christ died for you. Yes, while you were still sinning, Christ died for you. Through His blood, death and resurrection, you received grace, God’s love poured into your heart through the work of the Holy Ghost given to you by baptism and faith. As if this was not enough, Christ comes to you again and again in the Word and in the Supper to continually pour out grace and blessing, overflowing – which is why I say even if we had to bring the grace to ourselves, we could not for it is more overwhelming than the sins! Thanks be to God He saves us through His Son, and you are nothing more than a recipient vessel that not only receives, but offers the same grace to others that do not know or properly understand.

That is the other part of our reading today. This unnamed woman at the well, she had a knowledge of a messiah, but not the understanding that the one speaking to her is Him. This is so true today. 65% of Americans claim to be Christian, said a report on the News recently, yet only 15%, if I heard it right, believe that the Bible is historically accurate. That means we have so many more like this Samaritan that want to believe, but do not know *what* to believe. You and I have the knowledge, we have the truth. We have the staff that can break the rock and bring forth the water flowing to everlasting life if we chose to tell others about Jesus and not be hung up on the particulars. Use every opportunity presented to tell of Jesus, and share a life saved by grace alone. In His most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+
Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment