

Mount Calvary, West View

PROVERBS 9:1-10, EPHESIANS 5: 6-21, JOHN 6: 51-69

HYMNS: JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE LSB #803,

PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY LSB #790,

JESUS LOVES ME! THIS I KNOW LSB #588

Theme: Hard Times, Hard Life, Hard Faith

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

Our Text is the continuation of St. John's Gospel, the 6th Chapter:

When many of His disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh is of no avail. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray Him.) And He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. So, Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God."

This past VBS week was a wild one. The theme was white water rafting, and as it can be quite tumultuous to be in a little raft, or an even smaller kayak, but God keeps His promises on life's wild ride!

Life can be quite a wild ride. There are tremendous ups, like getting married, our children being born, and getting them baptized. There can be incredible dips, like losing a job, losing a house, or losing a loved one. The thing is, these events can be calm and smooth, like a lazy river one after another with nice pauses in-between, a time to recuperate before the next event. Sometimes they come all at once and we find our life tossed and turned about like a raging river trying to drown us. Yet, no matter how tumultuous our life may be, God has promised us He would never leave us nor forsake us. Our Bible lessons give us the proof necessary to trust and believe His promise.

On Monday, we saw the early life of Moses, where he was born, yet hidden, because Pharaoh had

a decree that all the Hebrew boys should be immediately killed. I think we can all agree that this is worse than any situation we may have been in. Pharaoh did this because if there are no Hebrew boys, they cannot grow into Hebrew men and thereby become a great army and revolt against his rule. What a plan, yes? Ah, but God thwarts the plans of men: *“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.”* Proverbs 16 verse 9. Even though Pharaoh thinks he has this all planned out, God makes everything work out for His glory and our good. Even though Pharaoh wanted all the Hebrew boys killed, God saved Moses in giving the mother the faith that her basket will keep Moses afloat; that he would survive the journey in the Nile amongst the crocodiles. That He would save His people through this Moses, and make His people enter into the promised land of their father, Abraham.

So, on Monday we saw that God protects the little children, Tuesday we saw that Jesus let the people enter the promise land with His blessings upon another appointed prophet. Moses had led the people through the red sea on dry ground and thereby established that God was with them through His mouthpiece, Moses. With the death of Moses, people feared that God left them. When God told Joshua to have the priest with the ark of God touch the water, God did the miracle of setting the wall of water so again the people could pass over on dry ground, signifying that God has not abandoned His people, but is as near as His Word and His appointed prophet.

Which leads us to Wednesday, where the Jordan river once again is featured, this time as a bathing place for Naaman, who had a case of seemingly incurable leprosy. Yet through God's Word, Naaman was told to dip into the Jordan river seven times and he would be cured. Naaman complained mightily, but when he finally did as He was told, was given restoration from his disease. And he was not a believer! Yes, God allows the rain to fall on the just and the unjust as well as allowing the sun to shine on the unrighteous as well as the righteous. We are only asked to receive such goodness with thanksgiving to the real God that gives us these things. Not to earn it, but to give thanks for all we have to sustain this body and life, for God is faithful, yes, He is!

Thursday jumped out of the Old Testament, over the Gospels, and landed in the Acts of the

Apostles, where Paul is in the midst of a terrible storm in a boat that was going to break up. God told him it would happen, but if only the people on the boat would believe in His salvation, they would be saved. If they left the boat, there was no hope for them. It was touch and go for the 276 souls on board, many attempting to try and save themselves but were stopped. Yet, God gave them hope through His Word, and they all survived.

Monday Moses was in peril, Tuesday the people of Israel were in peril, Wednesday Naaman was in peril, Thursday 279 people were in peril. And you tell me you had a bad week. Well, Friday was a real up day, where we saw Jesus baptized. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by being baptized and thereby consecrating all baptisms in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as the one true baptism for the forgiveness of all sins. Indeed, though the world is a tumultuous place, God has a promise that in Baptism we are His children and that the world may rant and rave, and collapse and destroy, yet Jesus is our Savior, Yes, He is, and nothing can take that from you. Not the world, not the devil, not even our very own flesh.

Yes, we may face hard times in life, yes, we may face a hard life because of the sinfulness in this world, but with our Hard and fast faith, we are saved by the cross where Our Savior Jesus has shed His body and blood and given us the living bread that came down from heaven. The world can complain and grumble that it does not like the Word of God being the Salvation necessary for salvation, but like the Words of Peter, we can face any hardship, for we confess with him, ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God.”*** He has come, He has died, He has risen, you have faith given in your baptism, and you are saved.

So take heart, though your life is filled with hard times, making it a hard life by earthly standards, remember that our God is always with you, has redeemed you by Christ and His blood from the cross, and will by the Holy Ghost keep you firm in the truth of His Word, Hard in the Faith, that you may enter into eternal glories. Rejoice, for Indeed, God says YES to us through Jesus, for all the promises of God find their YES in Him. In our Triune God's Name, we pray. **AMEN.**

-4-

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

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