

JUDICA—PASSION SUNDAY / THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Text: St. John 8:42-59

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

The proceeding forth of the Word of God into His creation is an eternal procession—a procession with neither a beginning nor an ending. It is the Word of God that spoke creation into being, and when time is done the Word of God will command its destruction. The Word of God is the canon or standard by which all things will be judged and is, therefore, the power of God unto salvation.

The Word of God feeds all things, for *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”* For this reason, it is correct to say that the Word of God sustains all things, maintains all things, nourishes all things, restores all things, and heals all things. If ever God should cease to speak, all creation would cease to exist as though it had never existed at all.

It is this Word of God, spoken by the HOLY SPIRIT into the ear of a young Jewish maiden, that conceived the Flesh of God, and the Word was made Man. Thus, this Man is the Word of God Incarnate, the very Word made Flesh in CHRIST JESUS our LORD. This Man, the CHRIST, is the SON of God who was with God in the beginning and will be with God when comes this world’s end. This Man, JESUS, is the Word of God, and is God, who lived and walked among us, and *“we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth.”*

To hear the Word of God is more than how one might *“hear”* the constant ticking of a clock, the tolling of a church bell, the dripping of a faucet, the noise of highway traffic, or the constant ringing in one’s ear. These, we learn to tune out so that in hearing them we do not hear. To *“hear”* the Word of God is to listen attentively, in a sense, to absorb His Words and embrace them that they should become a part of one’s very being and the guiding principle of one’s very life. This is what the Word of God should be; this is how it should be heard.

Yet, natural man is at enmity with and hates the Word of God, and so, hates God’s SON, making the Words of JESUS in our Gospel text appointed for this day all the more damning. JESUS said, *“If God were your FATHER, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.”* To hate the Word of God is to hate God’s Son; to hate God’s SON is to declare that God is not one’s father, but one’s enemy.

This is the state of those who have the devil as their father—not *born* of the devil, for the devil can *never* give life but only death, but of the same desire as he. For one's desires, as much as one's deeds, demonstrate one's lineage, and those who are of the devil desire to do his will. They are murderers and liars who stand not in the truth, because even as their father, there is no truth in them. They prefer lies rather than the truth. Indeed, so corrupt are the children of the devil that they will readily believe and even repeat the devil's lies, for it is in their nature, in their DNA, as it were, to believe, repeat, and declare the devil's falsehoods.

You see, children of the devil are not merely unwitting accomplices of the devil. They are not simply under his power having been deceived by him. They delight in him and his ways, to the point that he is in possession of all they are, body and soul, whether they are aware of it or not. They are, in fact, one with him. Indeed, they are doubly children of Satan, having rejected God and His Word! In whatever things the devil delights, so too, do they, even as they deliberately embrace such evil and reject all that is good.

I suppose all of this begs the question, "*Whose child, are you?*" That is, "*Who is your father?*" Have you turned a deaf ear to the Word of God, despising His SON and therefore, your very salvation? Before you think to yourself, "*Well Pastor, I am here am I not?*" remember this: a child of our Heavenly FATHER is not simply going through the motions as though performing some sort of spiritual pantomime. He or she is truly born of God, regenerated by His loving Word—His Word spoken into one's ears, and His Word poured over and into him or her. His or her nature has been converted by God in order that he or she understands and takes to heart the Word of God as spoken by JESUS.

If one does not and will not hear God's Word, then one simply is not a child of God, but of the devil. There is no other option; one is either A. a child of God, or B. a child of the devil. It is that simple. Those who refuse to hear God's Word have nothing in common with Him but are in fact, His enemy.

Therefore, you either hear God's Words and live, or you do not. Either you confess His CHRIST, or you deny Him! Either you are a child of God, or you are a son or daughter of the devil. JESUS tells us, "*He who is not with me is against me.*" You see, with our LORD there is no room for the middle ground.

Therefore submit to the Word of God for "*blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it,*" and again, our LORD says, "*He who is of God hears God's words.*"

In this, is a promise. For that day in the Temple, JESUS said, "*If anyone keeps My Word he shall never taste death.*" This is so, because JESUS came to taste death for us, to

drink the cup of suffering to the dregs in order that we may be released from its power. In exchange for this cup of death and suffering, He gives to you a Cup of Life in the New Covenant of His Blood given at His Altar. Clinging to His life-giving words and the promises found in them, we are delivered from death's strong bands and its eternal judgment.

As we have learned from our Epistle text written in the Book of Hebrews, JESUS entered into the Holy of Holies with His own Blood as your High Priest and obtained there, for you, His people, everlasting redemption. This was His plan before time began. For this timeless One, who was before Abraham, knew that just as Isaac would climb a mountain with the wood of his death and sacrifice on his back, He too would climb that same mountain two thousand years later carrying the wood of His Cross and death upon His back as the Perfect and Ultimate Sacrifice. There He was laid and nailed uncomplaining upon the altar of the Cross to suffer our FATHER's fiery wrath for you, suffering for you the price of your transgressions, that believing His Word you may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Therefore, you may see that JESUS is the Ram who died in your place, His head caught in a thicket of thorns pressed down hard against His brow. JESUS, the Word of God made Flesh, came to be sacrificed in your place. God's promise has been kept. The LORD has provided.

The Ram nailed to a cross with your sins, the Body laid away in a tomb, has been raised up to life. JESUS lives and in Him, you have life. The very substance of that sacrifice, JESUS' Body and Blood, given and shed for you, is now provided for you to eat and to drink, uniting you to Him so that you can understand His speech and listen to and believe His Word.

So the Eternal Word comes proceeding forth from God, the FATHER, in the person of God, the SON. He comes to dwell among us, to love and save us. He comes as our own High Priest, His priestly Blood to shed and pour out upon God's Altar as an everlasting atonement for our sins and this is His eternal Word, spoken to the children of God yesterday, today, and tomorrow—*"I forgive you all your sins."*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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