

Vicar Andrew Wolfgram
Text: Matthew 15:21-28
Date: January 22, 2017
Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Kyrie and Hymn of Praise

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are in our third week of our Sermon Series “Through the Divine Service.” Two weeks ago Pastor taught us about the Invocation and how much content is packed into those 15 words that the pastor says to us. We talked about what the Amen meant in response to the Invocation. Last week, I preached about Confession and Absolution. The continuing dialog that we have with God. The call and response. The dialog where we confess the things that we have done wrong. The dialog where the Pastor forgives all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The dialog that makes us right with God.

Today we are going to talk about the next section of worship: The Kyrie and Hymn of Praise. We have invoked the name of God, confessed our sin, and been absolved of our sins. Next is the Kyrie. What does this Kyrie mean for us as God’s forgiven people? The term Kyrie refers to the *Kyrie eleison*. *Kyrie* comes from the Greek word for ‘Lord.’ *Eleison* also comes from the Greek and is the word for ‘mercy.’

When Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 she says, “**Ἐλέησόν με, Κύριε**” (“Eleēson me Kyrie”). Literally, ‘Have mercy on me Lord!’ This Canaanite woman was pleading on behalf of her daughter who was severely oppressed by a demon. She put her faith in the man named Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus had mercy on her. The woman’s world was turned upside down because of something happening to her family. She went to the only

person she could think of to help her. This man named Jesus who she had heard so much about. She pleaded for mercy and Lord heard her cry and cared for her.

Can we relate? Do we ever have a family member or a friend going through tough times in life? The family member coping with an illness, Lord, have mercy. The wars that rage over seas, Lord, have mercy. The relationships that are broken because of sin, Lord, have mercy. When you can't describe what's happening using the right words, Lord, have mercy. When you hear bad news and words fail you, Lord, have mercy.

We stand before God as forgiven children of God and ask our Heavenly Father the things that our hearts ache over. We have a right relationship with God, we have confessed our sin and been absolved, but we still feel the effects of sin in this world. As we respond in dialog, we recognize the countless areas of our lives in which we plead for God's mercy. We say: In peace let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord. Amen.

As we have been made right with God, we pray that other parts of our life might be made right. That we may experience the mercy that only our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ can give. Lord, have mercy. In other forms of the Divine Service we even go as far as to repeat ourselves again and again. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Amen. We pray for Jesus' mercy.

We turn the page and we are reminded of all the things that God has done for us. We then make a dramatic turn in the service. From pleading for the mercy of Christ to singing the Hymn of Praise. We sing the Hymn of Praise as it describes all the wonderful things that God has done for us. We sing about what Christ has done and where He now resides. In the *Gloria in Excelsis*, Glory to God in the Highest!

‘Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth.’ This phrase is reminiscent of the angel greeting as we hear in the Christmas account in Luke 2. This was the reason Christ was born. To make peace with the world. Peace with us and make us His people. We give thanks for what God has done and what He will do for us. We recognize where Jesus is seated, at the right hand of God the Father. We give praise to God for what Jesus did when he died on the cross for us and rose for us. We get to sing about how amazing, powerful, and loving Jesus is. We sing about where he now resides.

In the Divine Service there are times that there are different options to sing for the Hymn of Praise. It is either the *Gloria in Excelsis* or *This is the Feast*. When we sing *This is the Feast* we are looking forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, and we usually sing it when we are going to celebrate the Service of the Sacrament later in the service. When we get to celebrate the now and the not yet. We join voices with those that have gone before us as they now dwell in heaven. We look forward to that day when we sing together at the feast. This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

In both cases, the *Gloria in Excelsis* or *This is the Feast*, we are singing and proclaiming the victory. We see what victory looks like in this world. This past fall the streets of Chicago were filled with people. Fans celebrating their Chicago Cubs. When the Chicago Cubs made it home, they met a parade waiting for them, in celebration of their World Series victory. Cubs fans

celebrate this victory. Who knows if they will win again next year, or if another team will take home the trophy?

The victories that sports teams celebrate are only temporary. They don't last. But our victory does last. It lasts till eternity. Throughout our worship service we are reminded of this. As baptized Children of God, we remember our baptisms when the Invocation is spoken. After confessing our sin to God, our sin is absolved when the pastor steps and stands in the place of Christ and says, "You are forgiven." In the Kyrie we plead for Christ's mercy in this world when we say 'Lord, have mercy.' We celebrate and rejoice in the victory won for us when we sing together the Hymn of Praise. Rejoicing not in a victory that will end, but an eternal victory. Where Christ won the victory over sin, death and the power of the devil on the cross and His resurrection for you. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21