

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity
2 September, Anno Domini 2017
Isaiah 29:17-24
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

In the Name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Who among us hasn't recently longed for things to be different? If only Hurricane Harvey would have weakened instead of strengthened as it it made landfall. If only the test results would have come back normal. If only the medications would have helped. If only I weren't the person I am with the weaknesses and sins that I have. If only I could go back and make different decisions.

None of us, not a single one, lives a life untouched by sin and brokenness and death. We suffer under the weight and consequences of our own sins and then pile on top of that the sins of others. Guilt from within and persecution from without. And this is most true of God's children - children who are acutely aware of their evil desires and deeds and desperately long to be free of them, children who day and night are harassed by Satan and the unbelieving world. We are desperate for relief, desperate for God to deliver us from the seemingly never-ending parade of sorrow and trouble that knocks at our door. We cry out with David and all the faithful in the words of Psalm 70 which we prayed earlier: "Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord!"

We should be able to patiently and prayerfully endure our crosses and temptations without complaining against God. We should be able to sit quietly and hopefully in our hospital beds, trusting in God's promises. We should be able to joyfully confess Christ to our unbelieving neighbors and endure their scorn. But we can't. We hurt. We are in pain. We are overwhelmed and beaten down by our enemies relentless attacks. And we want it all to stop...NOW. "Make haste! Hurry, God because we can't take any more. We can't bear up under it any more. We are going to crack! Our flesh is too weak. Please come and put an end to the madness or we will fall and perish."

Dear baptized children of God, your Father hears your cries. Deliverance is what God promises and that is exactly what He will bring. Your suffering will not be forever. Sorrow isn't what you are destined for. Chaos will give way to order. Sickness will give way to health. Tears of sorrow will give way to shouts of joy. Deafness will give way to hearing. Blindness will give way to sight. Cancer will give way to remission. Flooded streets will give way to dry ground. Riots and unrest will give way to peace. The wicked who seem to rule the world will be brought to nothing and your faith in Christ will be vindicated. Temptation and death will no longer have any power over you. Your enemies will all be cut off for eternity and you will look upon them in triumph.

That is what Jesus does - He turns sin and death on their heads and destroy the works of the devil. He comes to glorify the Name of God

by exalting the very things that the world despises - weakness, humility, foolishness, sickness, even death itself. Taking the form of a servant, Christ has redeemed us all from our enemies by offering His own Blood in death. By death Jesus has destroyed death. Your prayer for deliverance has been answered by those words which Satan can never forget and which you should remind him of daily - "It is finished." All of Satan's works of division and lies and suffering have met their end in Christ and in Christ they will not bring you to ruin. In Baptism, all of Satan's works are undone. You are raised from death to life. Once God's enemy, you are now His dearly beloved child.

And more than just protecting you, Jesus promises to bless you through your afflictions. The deaf mute was brought to faith and confessed Christ after Jesus used his physical brokenness as an opportunity to manifest the work of God. But how long had he been afflicted? How often do you think he had looked up to heaven and sighed, begging for relief and healing? The Lord heard him just as He always hears the cries of those who are in need. And the Lord delivered him, but from something far more debilitating than his inability to hear or speak. He delivered the man from sin and death. Not only was the man made to hear and speak but he now believed Jesus to be the Christ of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus answered the prayer that the man didn't even know how to pray.

This is the Lord's goodness toward us. His love and care supersede anything we could desire or deserve. We can rest in the midst of our

suffering knowing that God is and will use it to draw us to a deeper trust in Him and His Word and finally to deliver us from all that distresses us. "Is it not yet a very little while..." The Lord will deliver you. But do not stop crying out to Him, do not stop urging Him to hasten His help. He will turn and bless you. He will, he has delivered you by drawing you out of death in the waters of the font. The miracles that we heard today are only a foretaste of what Christ came to do. They are the evidence that Christ has come to overcome sin and death and hell, the cause of all other suffering. Jesus goes straight for the root of the problem even though we just want relief from the symptoms.

God is certainly making haste to deliver you in the best way at the best time for you. The day is coming, when your Lord will return in all His glory, and with all the saints, you will enjoy the eternal deliverance from your enemies. They will no longer be able to harass you and harm you. You will not be ashamed because the world will see with their own eyes the One in whom you have placed your hope, the One who delivers, the One who is your help. Make haste this day to the feast of your deliverance. Here is the answer to your prayer. Here is the overthrow of your enemies. Here is your vindication. Jesus Christ, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.

In the Name of +Jesus.