**“Hope in You: Baptism Now Saves You”**

Psalm 66:8-20

Acts 17:16-31

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

Easter 6

From 1st Peter: “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” … and **here goes:** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the Righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.” And, as Peter in Acts (citing Job) reminds us: “**In Him** we live and move and have our being”.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

First of all, a very blessed Mother’s Day weekend to you. A bumper sticker I’d once read says that “God can’t be everywhere, so He made mothers”. The fact of the matter is (as we all know): God, indeed, **can** be everywhere, but **made mothers to do the most serious task of nurturing and raising children made His through Baptism**. It’s because of that most important role that we, here (and I) celebrate and thank **our** Christian mothers who made us to love Jesus by **seeing us through Baptism into Him** and **teaching us Him** so that our parenting and family care is not just of **this earth**, but **of Heaven** so **divine**. I’m convinced that God’s edict to Adam and Eve and then to Noah and his children to “be fruitful and multiply” wasn’t demanded of the “**world at large**”, but rather to **believers all baptized / covenanted to and in Him**. What God has always wanted was **more children that are His**, and not just more unbelieving kids who He’d have to eventually judge upon their own merits not covered in the saving blood of His Son.

Where we’re at in the calendar of the Church Year isn’t so much Mother’s Day but the last of the few days remembered where the risen Christ walked this earth and showed Himself alive and well before returning to His Heavenly throne at His ascension. Remembered way back come this Thursday, Jesus left His Church not as orphans but under the care of **each other** and (most importantly) **the Holy Spirit** gifted through baptism and preaching if His Words … His that Spirit “**poured into us**” in the Sacrament. We here are dedicated to the motherhood of, also, the Church given the Lord’s “Commission” also remembered commanded way back when from Thursday to make “disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that [He’d / Jesus, God’s Word in flesh] committed to His people”. We’ll celebrate **that teaching and learning process** in two weeks with Miranda Nixon, remembering her Baptism with her Godparent having witnessed her Baptism **here for her Confirmation**, her / Miranda “**making a defense of the reason for the hope that’s in [her]**” that weekend (and we’ll here it). With it being the festival of Pentecost, we’ll recognize and thank the Holy Spirit in her as Catalyst and Tutor for her and Guide of her development and faith. Him it was who was seen 2 thousand years ago alighting upon people yet very active to be known working in our day as well … all the way until the judgement comes at Jesus’ return.

One of Miranda’s assignments is the one all are given in today’s Epistle reading: to “**make that defense of the hope that’s in us when asked**”. And there’s no hope without the **penetration of it in the Spirit indwelling with us by baptismal promise to connecting us to the Jesus’ cross and work there (death) the resurrection for us**.

I was recently asked about my: the “**hope that’s in me**” and, since asked, I’m liable to show, maybe, Miranda **how I’d write my paper, “Making my Confession” of Jesus and Him for me**.

**Text**

It’s my desire to **be “zealous for what is good. Even if I should suffer for righteousness**”. **I wish “not to fear or be troubled” in the face of suffering for the sake of “righteousness”**. I **want always to “be prepared to make a defense to anyone of a reason for hope in me, with gentleness and respect, having the good conscience” of being forgiven my sins**. **“Suffering” should be what I’m ready for for “righteousness’ sake” because Jesus “suffered, once for sins” intensely upon the cross and throughout His whippings and, really, every moment that built up to that from, especially, His baptism into my sins carried around on His shoulder till crucified with His flesh on the cross**. **He** **desired to “bring me to God, being put to death in the flesh but then raised / made alive”**. And **all of that I’ve been baptized into when I was but a baby when (like** **the “eight persons in an ark”) I was taken “safety through water” where otherwise I would not be safe in a deadly storm**.

God’s promise that “**BAPTISM NOW SAVES YOU**” is **MY HOPE**.

Mom (and dad) and brothers and sisters and all who’d ask about my faith and openness to suffer for the sake of righteousness, “baptism now saves you” is the four words **summarizing it for me**. I take my hope on all of Scripture’s activities for my Good: God’s prep for my salvation the birth of God’s Son as Sacrifice for me (and all of us/all mankind) and His baptism into my/our sins and journey to Jerusalem to be crucified for me (and us all), and His resurrection then and ascension and promised return for me (and all His people), His giving of Himself to me and all believers through bread and wine, His promise to be with me and us always, making even my flesh and my bones His temple yet addressing me outside of me through Word and Sacramental promises. All of that worth everything because He’s baptized me **into Him** **…** and **THAT “saves me”** and I **can** **KNOW** that I am **saved THAT WAY** because He’s **PROMISED IT**. In 1st Peter 3 and also so many the other places of Scripture, but **here specifically God “minces no words”** …

**Application**

… so, mom and dad, and pastors along the way (especially one who, 63 years ago and in a little church in Columbia City, Indiana, God used His hands and voice to “baptize / save me”), I thank. **My “hope”** has “**a REASON**” … and Scripture’s promise makes it clear. ….

Instructions for **Miranda** is that you must put identifiable and knowable promised stuff like this into your own words … **you all** must put **THIS** into your own words. However **I’m wrong about it being your own Words because here they’re given:** **“Baptism now saves you”**.

Technically, I guess, Miranda that your profession of faith can **steal mine** because **stole Peter’s** which is, by the way, all yours to **share**. **Our** **“REASON FOR HOPE”** (for, at least all that I know of in this room) is that **“baptism now saves”**. The book of Romans calls it **what unites us to Jesus and His saving work** … **HOW** that happens. ….

Flowers are nice gifts for moms this weekend. So is just sitting with them or talking to them in remembrance of their unique role they lived up to so well. Maybe, also though, **tell them of your “reason for hope” which will comfort them** … it’s **what I’m doing now. So for mom and dad … and for all of you (since the text dictates it) … HERE IT’S BEEN**. Thanks be to God, in **+**Jesus’ name, Amen.