**“We Have”**

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Ezekiel 17:22-24

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Mark 4:26-34

3rd Sunday after Pentecost

“**We know** that if the **tent**, which is our **earthly home**, is destroyed, **we have** a **building from God**, a **house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens**.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

We are now into the front end of the half of the year that the Church calls the Season of Pentecost. It’s half of the year for the Church. Summer till just before Thanksgiving is the half-year where the People of God are steered to focus upon **their life because of the gifts of God through Jesus (His Son) made man so He could be sacrificed to give us a redeemed life**.

As the other half of the year focuses upon the **actions** of God’s Son to save the world that had fallen, the Season of Pentecost focuses on His **Words**. From the Great Commission, **discipleship** (or **that life**) is **defined** and **executed** by being Baptized into name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then learning (being Taught) about what all He’d said and commanded. Baptism is into **what Christ did (His actions)** and, yet, we’re taught to live in the hearing His Word (which is His work and will). The lessons from the Old Testament for this season will always **remind us of how God’s acted** **(**actually **fulfilling what His Words promised)**, but the Gospel lessons, they show Jesus **teaching what it all means**. The Epistle then (much more expounded upon this season) **instruct (build)** from the further unpacking of those Words from Jesus …

… where He will (most often throughout this Season) **teach by “parables”**. Today, it’s said of Him by Mark this: “**with many such parables He (that is Jesus) spoke the Word to them all, as they were able to hear it**. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately **to His own disciples (and, therefore, His Church … hence the Epistles)** He **explained everything**”.

I, then, “**set that stage**” since that’s what **Mark did**, which **each of us must be OK with (the instruction of God through His Word in parables and Epistles and all of that, then, unpacked in preaching and teaching)** **because** **instruction by the Word of God is what builds us (develops us … “build” the term Paul uses)**. From our **birth into that** made, first, His by Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **growth then must happen (construction and an ever-developing strengthening-of-knowledge by being taught**. It’s all **preparation (the progressive opening-up of the Kingdom of Heaven in our awareness)**. **We gain (by that Word)** the **ever-more effect of the benefits (**“**Good courage**” **and** **confidence and boldness** **and** **the knowledge that we’re each-day-taught-in-Him-more-fully “pleasing God”** **and near Him**, **with** **a universe and cosmos becoming larger and larger, it (in our awareness) growing toward the huge size of the heavens are that we’re made part of** **… the “kingdom of Heaven”** **under God’s reign**.

**Text**

Last weekend we got a **start on that** as we heard **of the bigger family that we’re in (the Divine and eternal family, remember Jesus said “who are My brothers and sisters but those who do the will of God)**. Visually, it was wonderful to have that presented more in the Service at the Park that we did, with (I think) 61 of us and a, then, an **expanded family** to include 30+ of our brothers and sisters from Trinity, Columbia. **We joined them** and **they joined us** as the broader Church gathered, people all of God of one voice singing (together) “A Mighty Fortress is our (collectively-confessed) God”. We **all-together** heard the Word of God (the Law and the Gospel) and then **sat down for a meal together** (“broke **bread**” or, rather, **chicken**). If weather would have permitted, we might have played softball and certainly had additional games available. We **had fun together in the Lord … and that fun suggested the broader Divine family we’re in**.

What **bridges to** **this week** is a **verse** **repeated in the text**, and while I didn’t talk about it last week, I did promise-to today. 2nd Corinthians 5:1 **overlaps us**: “**We know** that if the **tent**, which is our **earthly home**, is destroyed, **we have** a **building from God**, a **house** **not made with hands, eternal in the heavens**”.

There are, there, **two action verbs** that are critical to the sentence. “We **know** (that’s the first) and what we know is what we do (indeed) **have**” … and all that is **shaped by what God teaches us (including here)**. The “**tent which is our earthly home**” last week got presented to us as “**our outer self**” **(that “tent”)**, **it** “wasting away” but our **“inner self”** is being **built** and **solidified** and **fortified** / “being **renewed** day by day” (God says). The previous chapter called our “earthly-tent-home a jar of clay” yet **housing the “treasure” of the “surpassing power of God”**. Though “afflicted”, “perplexed”-often (it says of us), “persecuted” and “struck down”, we’re **purposefully “carrying in our bodies (this tent and jar of clay) the death of Jesus”** **but also so the “life of Jesus may also be shown in our bodies”**. “In this tent Christians groan” (2nd Corinthians 4 says), faith shown in our **“longing to put on our heavenly dwelling”**, **demonstrating** “Good courage, walking by faith and not by sight …

**Application**

… which is a “lofty” thing to have said about us. But it’s God the Father who promised it as He also promised that He would (recorded in Ezekiel) “He’d take a Sprig (**His own Son and the wood of the cross**) from the lofty top of the cedar (or the Godhead and the universe / the eternal kingdom) and **set it and Him out” (which got expressed by Him crucifying Him upon a cross / Jesus and that cross connected in that …** **it** **lifting Him from the surface of the earth to hang there and die for us)**. “I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a **Tender One (Jesus)**, and I Myself will **plant it / Him**” (on the planted and embedded-into-the-ground cross) “on a high and lofty mountain” (which is Golgotha on Mount Zion). “On the mountain height of Israel will I plant **it**, that **it** **may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar (the kingdom)**. And **under** **IT** will **dwell** **(house and home language)** every kind of bird (**us there dwelling under Christ and His cross**); in the shade of **ITS** branches **birds of every sort** **will nest (or find their “house” and “home”)**. And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord” … we will be known by our “**knowledge**” (and **showing of it**) of what we “**have**”.

If you **wonder whether or not you have it**, then know that it’s yours by **BAPTISMAL PROMISE**. “He **who has** **prepared us for this very thing is** **God**” (not us: we’ve brought nothing to “font”). God did this and is continuing it through our hearing of His Word (we don’t **grow or build ourselves**, just **seed planted and grown in us by God, the “mustard one” becoming HUGE)**. Born of “**water and Spirit**”, that last sentence of the first paragraph of the Epistle text says that it’s God **who’s** “**given us the Spirit as Guarantee**” … so **we have** a “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” built by God. Thanks be to God, and let it continue **in construction by the hearing of God’s Word … being built by Him**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.