**“Majestic Mercy”**

Psalm 8

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Acts 2a, 22-36

John 8:48-59

 Holy Trinity

From our Psalm for today (Psalm number 8): “O Lord, our Lord, **how majestic is Your Name in all the earth!**”

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Bridge**

I regularly hit hard on something called “**orthodoxy**”. In other words, that **the content of our faith matters** is really strongly emphased in true Christendom, especially shown by the fact of today’s festival. Orthodoxy has been stressed, of course, in all of Scripture, but **today**, the **beginning** of the season (or half year) of what God calls “The Church” because of its **particular** **apostolic content** and sacramentality is noted. We acknowledge (as a **start**) the regular “Breaking of the Bread” and baptizing of all nations, both like Jesus dictated (whole households baptized, as in everybody of every age), and all this **under and in** the **unique** (and **content-full**) name of God who’s Father, +Son and Holy Spirit, “teaching that same all nations from everywhere and of all ages, then, to observe everything (and not just some things of choice, but “all things”) that He’s commanded specifically.

The Church (from the beginning) used for this the **Apostles’ Creed** as the content and text of **what** they baptized households into. Knowing the necessity of an “**orthodox**” (or **accurate in content**) faith kept that, expanding on it by necessarity in the Nicene formula and then the Athanasian where (and I quote) it says that “**this is** the catholic (or **universal and orthodox**) faith; and whoever does not believe **IT** faithfully and firmly can’t be saved”. This said, the Church has always been holding itself (and close) to the content of “truth” (full and accurate “truth). It’s always been theological statement that makes us Lutheran, with a rigorous stress on theology, since Scripture rigorously holds to it. Christianity has never been about being, just, “**adequately true**”; but always “**catholic**” and “**orthodox**” in substance and stance**.** None of that’s, really, not **denominational, but universal or collective in all that is revealed “truth”,** unified by (and only by) an **accurate and accuracy-concerned doctrinal stance**. Being a Missouri Synod Lutheran (for instance) has never meant anything but (or beyond) just **Christians admittedly concerned about being “catholic” with that small “c” and “orthodox” with a small “o” (universal and correctly praising God in content)**.

And **God’s Church has always been concerned with that**, disavowing (the Church always had) people’s validity to call themselves “Church” if they’re weren’t (or off-base in content). Statistically, 60% of so-called Christian pastors aren’t even willing to accept Scripture’s authority and yet “pastor” and “Church” are still **titles** that secular and tolerant-of-that people permit for **titles** of worship leaders and space. We’re (as a general so-called Christian culture) not so concerned about **orthodoxy** as The Church once was.

But, **we here** **begin** the Season of the Church (Pentecost) in and under Jesus and “all that He’s commanded” (**what Christianity really is**). God’s Church “praises **Him** really from whom all blessings flow” (**THE** “**Doxology**”, or words about, the **correct praise of God**). “Praise God from whom all blessings flow” is full in “content”, both demanding and doing the **praise of the majesty of the God who** **correctly deserves that**. We say it and sing it and know it and stand-by those blessings (what what they are and how they really-do flow … and we demand of ourselves to adhere to the “truth” in that as it’s given). There is no **good enough** position with doxology / no **adequate acceptance** of “truth”. **Our faith is demaned to be in** **THE FAITH**.

**Text**

**A** **general (non-specific or not worth being specific)** **god** Pagans **get**. Unless one is an angry atheist, **whoever it is** that’s divinely supreme would be**, of course, “majestic”** **(just like Psalm 8 says of the** **one “True” God)**. Primalism, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism respect the **concept** (all) of a creator “much-bigger-than-us” yet **Christians praise God as He’s defined Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)**. “The Church” has never been afraid to be **credal about THE FAITH** (we don’t have faith **in** “**faith**”, but faith **in** **THE FAITH** **as God’s expounded-upon it in the theology of Holy Scripture**. And Jesus said about His part of that with His Father that “if you **confess Me before men** I’ll confess you before My Father”. As “**Confirmed** Members” of God’s Church we’ve promised out-loud and before men to, till death, **adher-to and believe the content of truth**.

It’s for **all the right reasons** that the Church begins under the banner of the **fullest credal symbol of the expression and articulation of name of God in His identity and mercy**. Psalm 8 dictates the **format** for what is the Athanasian Creed, and **specifies its importance** repeating the fact of the **majesty of God’s name with all that it means**. With one fell swoop that Creed efficiently announces the Gospel both in the **need for it in man** and **the Father’s willingness to give it through the incarnation and humiliation work of His own Son Jesus**: “What is **man** that You are **mindful of him**?”, yet He **is** **mindful of man**, **sending the “Son”, making Him “a little lower than the heavenly beings”** and **joining those baptized into Him to that, then, ascending through the resurrection**.

**Application**

**Two things** (I think) are the **message of the Athanasian Creed**: **one**, the **content necessity of a fully-professed and stood-up-for doctrinal orthodoxy (a faith in substance rather than, just, in a supposed emotion that can be fleeting**,and, **two**, **a demand that we consent to it** (“doing **good**” as the Creed concludes that’s not just **moralism** but submitting to **God’s name and will**.

I don’t have permission to draw some **“good enough” line** for you of “what you’ve got to know rather than all of it”. And I don’t have permission to give you permission to be pleased with yourself by anything less than a **total** subscription to the confession that’s appropriate. What I **have** permission and the **duty** to do is be **honest with you and work with you**, keeping you off of any swerves off the “main path” / the “way” since **slippery slopes are slippery** and I can’t tell you that **too close is safe**.

The “Church” has been given the **system that’s God**. Jesus **ordained** **the system**. It’s **disciples / “students” of the truth** of what He and His Father and the Holy Spirit are and want and the demand that “all nations” worship and follow Him, baptizing “all nations” into the **full name of God and then teaching them all that’s of Him**. **Baptize and teach** … and **stay in that teaching**. **Baptize and confirm-ourselves-in-that-baptism**.

**Blessed** is “The Church” **concerned with its orthodoxy and universalness (or catholicity) in that orthodoxy**. Let’s pray:

“Majestic and majestically merciful God, You ‘want all to be saved and come to the **knowledge of the truth**’. Destroy any hindrances to it being heard, believed, and confessed. Enlighten us wherever darkness tries to settle-in, motivate us where complacency does, and give courage to where challenge to Your words need to be fought against. May **we here** serve you in **what is true**. May **a faithful confession before men** remind us that Your Son, Jesus, promised to also confess us before You. **Keep us faithful**. In +Jesus’ name. Amen.”