

A House Not Made With Hands

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (b) June 17, 2018 [SO, EH]

II CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. **6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—7 for we walk by faith, not by sight— 8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.** 9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

We are not at home, not where we belong. This world is not for us. It was for us. There was a time when there was no better place for us.

This world was made for us. Not us for the world, but the world for us.

This is as we are given to teach it to our children. When they start seeing the wonder around them, the dog who everyone in the family loves, the beauty of the flowers in the back yard, the wonders of how a bird flies, the way the human tongue tastes chocolate and says, *this is good*, but tastes brussels sprouts and says, *I'll wait*, when our children show their God given curiosity about the world around them, the sun in the sky, about their own toe-nails, for that matter, we teach them how the Lord created the world and the universe for us, creating it by speaking out of his mouth the creative word.

How he set us here, man and woman, in his Image.

He didn't show us to all of creation and then announce how we should fear creation for it would have dominion over us. Rather, he showed all of creation *to us*, announcing that we were to have dominion over it to take care of it and enjoy it.

That's the account of Adam and Eve we teach our children in times of family prayer, in times of answering questions about the wonders of the world around us, teaching our Lord's Word to our children, as Scripture says, *when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.* [Deuteronomy 6:7]

What are the Sunday School teachers and V.B.S. teachers doing when they teach the children? They are assisting the parents in this most holy task of teaching the children the Lord's Word.

This world *was* our good home. There was no better place. We were set here to care for creation, to bring forth children and bring them up in the joy of knowing our home where we were at peace with our God who loved us so much he created us for just that purpose, to be the open vessels to be filled with joy and life from him.

Now it's different. We have no home. We know what happened.

By Adam and Eve's sin, the sin still fully in you and me from our birth—for we are children of the lineage of Adam and Eve and we have nothing except that we get it from that lineage—by this sin, we brought the wrath of God upon us and upon this whole creation over which He set us, so that now, this world is no home.

This terrible sentence is the Law of God at work. God's Law puts all things and all people under judgement.

For us as humans, home is not some address, nor some state or country, but is being at the face of God. That's the language God uses, speaking to us of his face shining upon us and his countenance being lifted up for our blessing. Face to face with God in his blessing—this is peace for us, it is for him to be in

fellowship with us.

He created us for that—to be the people of his love, standing at his face, receiving gifts from Him.

Now this world is unholy, holy God will not be found in unholiness, so we are not at home.

For God to be found somewhere, it must be holy.

God's Name is holy. He will not be separated from his Name.

His Name is himself, his person, as he reveals himself. God has promised he will not vacate his Name.

God's Name is holy. Where God places his Name, there it is holy. Nowhere else is holy.

The only place true life is found, where voices are given to break out in joy, where unholiness, and sin, and mortality, is cast out, the only place life is found is ... at the Name of holy God. For where he places his Name, there is he has located himself.

“For where two or three have been gathered in My name,”

says Jesus,

“there I am in their midst.”

[Matthew 18:20]

He has brought us home. Home is the face of God in our midst. At the Name of Jesus, then, we're home. At the Name of Jesus, he is in our midst, in communion with us, bestowing his gifts upon us, breathing his Holy Spirit into us.

But will the Holy Spirit dwell in any unholiness?

So Jesus removes our unholiness. He speaks us forgiven. He declares us innocent for his sake. He places his Name on us, clothing us in his righteousness. By his Name, you are holy.

You are now, by the word of Jesus, the holy dwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

With the Holy Spirit breathed into you, you stand in the presence of God in peace, and at home.

That's the life of faith.

Faith clings to the righteousness of Jesus. Faith knows our own righteousness brings only death. Faith clings to the Name, and knows that as Jesus lives, so those called by his Name live.

Faith holds onto the sureness and certainty of the forgiveness of the Gospel, for by faith you know that at the forgiveness of sins, the Kingdom of God is opened to you for all eternity, and you are home.

That's the life of faith.

"We walk by faith and not by sight."

[II Corinthians 5:7]

By the life of sight, by the life of sinful flesh, only the passing life of our unclean world can be known.

No one needs Jesus to know the temporary life of this unclean world.

But by the life *of faith* we are given to see what the eye cannot see. In faith, you are given to know that you are not separated from Holy God. For he calls you by his own Name—his Name he gave you in your Baptism—so that, if His Name is holy, you are holy.

By the life of faith, we are given to know that while nothing of this earth will stand, just as surely nothing in all of creation, not principalities, not powers, can tear down the Name of Jesus. Therefore, those called by His Name will not be torn down.

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

[II Corinthians 5:4]

You are, in your life of faith, your life bestowed by the Word of Jesus, a building from God, a house not made with hands.

You are home. You are at the face of God in peace. You have been made the eternal building of God himself, for he has placed his Name on you, and he will never depart His Name.

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.