

"God Puts His Name on His Children"

Numbers 6:22-27

1 January Anno DOMINI 2006

The Name of Jesus

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Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the LORD our God; that is, in the Name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Baptized,

The words of the Old Testament Reading are familiar to the faithful who are blessed by being in the Divine Service unto the end. Those who are here this day, and who remain here in the Presence of the LORD unto the conclusion of God's Divine Service, will hear the Benediction, which is a good word meaning, "Good Word." Specifically, the 6th Chapter of Numbers contains the Aaronic Benediction; which is, the Good Word that Aaron and his sons were to speak to the congregated Church.

These words, which are pure Gospel, you will hear today if you remain steadfast in the congregation. For, if one were to leave prior to the Benediction at the end of this time and these days, that one would miss the Good Word of the Benediction wherein the Name of the LORD was placed upon the children of God. This is God's Word and His promise is certain. Those who remain unto the end and hear the Good Word in faith will surely be blessed for that is the promise of God Himself. Therefore, you are invited and encouraged to remain steadfast in faith and in the faith and in the congregation of the faithful. If the Holy Spirit grants you such trust and abiding, then you will know in your mind, heart and soul that . . .

. . . "God Puts His Name on His Children"

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, 'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.'"' And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

So much time has passed and we've come such a long way. As we look ahead to this year before us, it's wise to ponder the past and to remember the great mercy, the marvelous grace and the wonder of God's peace that has given us Life and has sustained the same unto this new day and year.

Now, before we get to the announcement of that blessed Benediction, we must begin in the land of bondage, for that is the condition in which we were conceived and that is the world into which we were cast forth onto this earth. God's Law, which always accuses our old sinful nature, caused our

backs to break in bondage. And, at the same time, remembering that Satan's accusing onslaught ceases no more in these latter days, than did the biting whip in the Egyptian taskmaster's hand and the curses of Pharaoh in the years long since past.

The children of God cried out and the He heard their pleas for mercy and pardon and relief. The LORD sent a shepherd, a man named Moses, to His people and entrusted him to tell the people the Name which they could invoke and call upon in the day of trouble. Moses, tell the congregation that I AM has sent me to you and then go out and baptize them in the waters of the Red Sea as they are delivered from the land of bondage and their old enemies are drowned.

Yes indeed, pastor, baptize men, women, children and infants in the fountain filled with water and the Word that delivers them from the abode of eternal death and drowns their old adam. Speak God's Word that makes children of God and put God's Name upon them. And whenever you and the congregation gather together in God's Name, call upon Him – that is, make your invocation one in the Name of Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and His is the Name which was revealed to you from the midst of the burning bush, oh Moses.

Thus is the congregation led in the direction of the Benediction. But along the way and in the way is Mt. Sinai with God's thunder claps of "Thou shalt not" and His lightning strikes of "Thou shalt." The Word speaks and it breaks and it accuses every old adam conceived by the union of man and woman. This Word of Law brings no relief, bears no mercy, bestows no forgiveness. It crushes. It condemns. It kills. And if you are not convicted then you haven't been paying attention and you haven't pondered His Commandments up against your life, His demands up against your mouth, His unwavering expectations up against your thoughts. You can not, and you may not, approach God, or enter His Presence, or abide in heaven by the deeds of the Law. So don't you dare attempt to come to Sinai's holy mountain as sinners ruined by the Fall, and don't listen to false shepherds who bid you to do so.

So what can you do? What may you do? The answer? Well, at this point, would anyone ever think of, or even dare to address the LORD God Almighty and make a confession of sin, like this, "I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended Thee and justly deserve Thy temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray Thee to give me another chance to try to climb Mount Sinai and to earn your favor and to merit being in Thy Presence." Who would be so foolish as to come before the One, Holy, Perfect, sin-hating, Righteous, all-knowing, present-everywhere God with such a confession of sin? How crushing this would be, heaping condemnation upon curse and multiplying the sentence that sends to even deeper depths of hell. And such is life under the Law and such is the future for all those attempting to be justified in God's court based upon the Law.

So what can you do? What may you do? The answer? Well, at this point, simply listen to the Word, for God has promised that there is Good News of forgiveness, and that there is a rest for body and soul, and that He will be present with His people, and that there is eternal life and salvation. It will not, however, be from Mount Sinai that this Gospel is wrought. Hope is in the Word of God which bespeaks forgiveness of sins and He is found in a manger in Bethlehem where the silent Word is pleading, in His being named Jesus on the eighth day and on a cross on Mount Calvary where the Word is pleading.

Thus, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; that is, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. His life under the Law, in our stead, began at His conception wherein He had no original sin. His life under the Law, wherein He fulfilled the demands of the Law in our place, began in infancy. For on His eighth day of breathing the air of this world, the incarnate Christ was named Jesus, which means Savior. On that day He suffered circumcision and shed the first drop of His precious, innocent Blood on our behalf. And though one drop of His Divine Blood could atone for all sins of all people of all times, this was but the beginning, for along the way . . .

. . . He shed His Blood unto death that you would be forgiven without measure
. . . He defeated the Devil in the wilderness that you be granted Paradise
. . . He wearied at the well in order to give you rest
. . . He confronted the false teachers that you would listen to true pastors
. . . He suffered the whipping that by His stripes you would be healed
. . . He thirsted on the cross that you would be pardoned of all your sins
. . . He petitioned from the cross for forgiveness while we were yet sinners
. . . He lay in a tomb to sanctify the graves of those whom He calls His own
. . . He rose from the dead to defeat death for you and to bestow life unto you
. . . He has given you His Word, sent the Holy Spirit and placed His Name on you

So what can you do? What may you do? The answer? Simply state the truth, Oh, LORD God, I “confess unto Thee all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended Thee and justly deserve Thy temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray Thee of Thy boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Thy Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being.”

Just as the LORD revealed to Moses what charge was to be given to Aaron that the children of God congregated in olden times would hear the Gospel of forgiveness, eternal life and salvation, so also the LORD reveals in His Word what stewardship is to be given to pastors that the children of God congregated in the Presence of the LORD would be able to hear the same; namely, that God, through His called servant will place His Name upon you, declaring you His own and, for the sake of the Jesus’ innocent suffering and death, and by the command of Christ Himself, as you have already heard this day, will forgive you all your sins, in the Name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

But wait, there’s more, for we certainly have not yet heard about everything that bespeaks God’s grace, mercy and peace. And what shall I say in addition in this sermon? For time would fail me to tell of the Introit, the Gloria Patri, the Kyrie, the readings from the Word, the Creeds and the hymns. There’s more to tell and yet, when is there time to tell of the Our Father, and the Words of Institution, and the Nunc Dimittus, and the Proper Preface, and the Agnus Dei? Oh, I beg you to be patient with me and to wait on the Lord; for the blessing is drawing nigh. When the faithful stay to the end and hear the Benediction, they are blessed. So listen and you will recognize it when the Word of God is spoken unto you; specifically when you hear Number 6:22-27, which reads . . .

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ‘Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, “On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, ‘The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up His

countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”” And they shall put My Name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.” Amen.

May the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, now and forever. Amen.