

**"The LORD Your God"**  
**Exodus 20:1-2**  
23 March Anno Domini 2003  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of Emmett, Idaho  
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Dear Baptized,

God beholds His Church and each one within. He hears the cries and listens to the prayers ascend. He knows the hurts and pains and sorrows of each and all. He comes down to deliver and save, for neither one nor all is capable of loosening the bonds that bind. No one is able to free and pardon and release himself or herself. Enslaved in a fallen world is an awful condition and God will not abandon His Church or any one of her children. God is come to proclaim release to the captives and to set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18).

And this God has done, does and will do. And you, child, are the beneficiary of this God Who has come, Who comes and Who will come. The One and Only God has spoken, speaks and will speak. And you, child, are the recipient of this God Who has given, Who gives and Who will give. Your salvation is wrought by means of His Word ... words written, words spoken and words heard.

The sermon text for this Sunday is the first two verses of the Old Testament Reading. Please listen to that text once more and hear the Word concerning ...

... "The LORD Your God."

"And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'"

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

Do you remember living in the house of bondage? Do you recall the unbreakable fetters and the merciless taskmasters? - the enslavement that granted no hope for real life or true freedom or joy? - the waking from the darkness of night to the darkness of sin, death and Satan where the sun smote the masses? Some bear those memories, some don't. Why some and not others? Simple. It's age. Some of you weren't old enough to remember them as others do who had no hope in that land subject to the whip of man and the whims of the gods conjured by the forces of the Evil One. Some of you do bear the scars of long years before being sought out and brought out. Truly both may declare with thanksgiving to God because, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His Beloved Son, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

"And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'"

Do you remember the day of your baptism and the water that at the same times kills and makes alive? - that both drowned the old Adam and gave new life? Some bear those memories, some don't. Do you recall the Word that opened the very Gate of heaven at the moment when everything appeared to be lost? - when you were between the Devil and the deep red sea? - when the Angel of God stood in the breach between you and certain death? - when you, according to the promise of God's Word, were washed and joined in the church's march to the promised land? - when you heard the Word through the shepherd's mouth who invited you to follow the Word of your Savior? Some of you do recall your baptism that day; some do not remember it. Why some and not others? Simple. It's age. Some of you weren't old enough to remember. Of course, still others were not there. "I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

"And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'"

So here you are, dear children of God. Ponder this place where you are. Behind you is the land of death. Ahead of you is the Promised Land. You are delivered from the one and not yet arrived at the other. This is the wilderness and you are on the exodus journey of the Church as she plods her way to the final day when the last of her children are begotten of her through water and the Word.

Look at this wilderness. As long as we are here, we are not far from Mt. Sinai, the mountain that is wrapped in smoke and quaking at God's Almighty Presence. We have the Ten Commandments ... the Law of God that always accuses the old sinful nature in each of us as the quaking heightens and we shudder. "God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them" (Small Catechism). Thanks be to God that the Law is not the only Word from Him. This God is also merciful and gracious, giving His Word of forgiveness, eternal life and salvation. He reveals Himself to us even as we stand in the shadow of Mt. Sinai. "I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Behold this wilderness. It is here that God is with us and come to redeem us. The LORD Who accompanies the Exodus mass in the form of a cloud by day and a column of fire by night is the same LORD God Who came down from heaven, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, fulfilled His own Law perfectly, atoned for the sins of the world and died on a wooden cross beam. He "Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" also is He Who hung in the breach between heaven and hell.

The Blood of Christ was poured out to pay the price and cancel the debt of the world. "This was to show God's righteousness, because in His Divine forbearance He had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26). On the third day, after having been placed in a lifeless tomb, our Redeemer rose again from the dead. Satan is defeated. Sin is paid. Death is conquered. The Risen, Ascended and Enthroned LORD Jesus continues to be Emmanuel ... that is, He remains "God with us."

May we become complacent? No. Look at this wilderness. We follow Christ and this is a dangerous journey. The winds and spirits of false doctrine blow from shadows here and there. Sirens sound

forth trying to lure you from the sure foundation of the Truth. Various gods are conjured in the world and far too often, tolerated in the congregation and among the folk of Christendom. Jehovah declares what we need continually to be reminded of when He says, "I am the LORD your God."

Dearly beloved, Baal is not your god. Money is not your god. Neither is Vishnu, black magic, Satan, power, Allah, Buddha, Smith, Thor nor a legion of so-called gods. These gods will only deliver you to and imprison you in the house of bondage. "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the LORD your God.'"

Thus the Church responds in faith and hymn:

The haughty spirits, Lord, restrain  
Who o'er Thy Church with might would reign  
And always set forth something new,  
Devised to change Thy doctrine true.  
(The Lutheran Hymnal, # 292, st. 6)

The LORD wants only what is best for you both now and for eternity. He has provided you with all that you need to be sustained in the wilderness until the day you enter the promised land. There is the true Manna from above as the daily bread for your souls. There is the Sacrament of the Altar wherein the LORD is present with you as He serves you Himself. His cleansing Word is declared and you are forgiven of all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Dear Baptized, the LORD your God gives you His Word that He will never leave you nor forsake you. The LORD your God is with His Church always, even to the end of the age. Thus, the children of God are present tense people. You are baptized. You are forgiven. Whether male or female, you are sons of God. You are heirs of the Kingdom of God. You are the Church and the LORD is your God.

Thus the Church responds in faith and hymn:

Oh, grant that in Thy holy Word  
We here may live and die, dear Lord;  
And when our journey endeth here,  
Receive us into glory there. Amen.  
(The Lutheran Hymnal, # 292, st. 9)