

## **John 12:27-36** - “From the Father’s Heart”

Midweek Lent II - “Dear Christians One and All Rejoice” series (556 LSB, stanza 4)

At the time of our text from John 12, Jesus was in Jerusalem during the week before His death. He was speaking to a crowd of people about His coming glory. Glory would come to the Father and to Jesus not in the way the people thought it would come. Instead, the glory of God would come by way of a cross, which would lift Jesus “*up from the earth*” as the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all people.

That holy week, was the time that all creation had been, in a sense, waiting for. The hour when God would restore His creation to the way it was before man’s fall into sin.

But let’s back up to a time even before man’s fall into sin. In v. 4 of our theme hymn, “Dear Christians One and All Rejoice,” Luther speaks of the Father beholding the misery and wretchedness of our sin even “before the world’s foundation.” Therefore, in mercy, God also “planned for our salvation” even “before the world’s foundation.”

What does this mean? The eternal plan of salvation through Jesus’ death and resurrection was not an “emergency measure” or a “plan B” with our Triune God. It was something He knew He was going to need to do even before He created man. “*In love He predestined us [He chose us before the foundation of the world] for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved*” (Ephesians 1:4-6).

From all eternity it has been God’s will to be our God and Savior. It’s at the heart of who He is. Because God is love, He always desires to pour out His blessings—to give of Himself.

While God’s love and plan of salvation has been in God’s heart for all eternity, Luther points out that the heart of God is most clearly revealed on the cross. When we look into our hearts in this life, we will always find sin. This causes us to wonder and even be terrified of what God thinks of us, and what He in the end will do to us. That’s why it’s so important, and such a blessing, when God reveals to us in His Word what’s in His heart. Through His Word, and by the power of His Holy Spirit, He reveals His love and power to save us, especially through the message of His death and resurrection.

When referring to the Apostles' Creed, which speaks of our Triune God's work of creating us, redeeming us, and sanctifying us, Luther wrote: "In all three articles [of the Apostles' Creed] God Himself has revealed and opened to us the most profound depths of His fatherly heart and His pure, unutterable love. For this very purpose He created us, so that He might redeem us and make us holy, and moreover, having granted and bestowed upon us everything in heaven and on earth, He has also given us His Son and His Holy Spirit, through whom He brings us to Himself. For...we could never come to recognize the Father's favor and grace were it not for the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the Father's heart. Apart from Him we see nothing but an angry and terrible judge" (Large Catechism II:64-66, Kolman, Wengert, 439-440).

On the cross, God's heart was laid open, broken and bleeding for our salvation. God "did not choose the easy part but gave His dearest treasure." That treasure was and is His only Son, begotten of the Father from all eternity and born of the virgin Mary so that He could free us from death through His death. When God turned to you a Father's heart, He gave you Jesus. He gave you His Son to be your blood Brother.

Through His blood, shed for your sins and mine, God declares in our Epistle reading from Romans (3:24-25) that we are "*justified by His grace as a gift*." We are cleansed of our sins, forgiven, loved, welcomed, protected, approved by the God who has a heart big enough to restore us and all creation.

When our hearts condemn us, we have One who is greater than our hearts. We have God's own heart. We have His Son crucified and risen.

All glory be to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.