

Second Midweek Advent

John 8: 31-36

December 10, 2014

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

Our Advent Theme Is About How Jesus Frees Us From Sin.....Last Week We Heard How He Frees Us From The Guilt Of Our Sins. Tonight We Hear About A Freedom From Sin That Is Not As Well Known Or Understood.....That Jesus Frees Us Not Only From The Guilt Of Our Sin But He Actually Frees Us From The Power Of Sin. This Is Taught In Several Places In The Bible Including Our Two Readings For Tonight. In Our Gospel Lesson Jesus Says, **“Truly, Truly, I Say To You, Everyone Who Practices Sin Is A Slave To Sin. The Slave Does Not Remain In The House Forever; The Son Remains Forever. So If The Son Sets You Free, You Will Be Free Indeed (John 8: 34-36, Esv).**

I. The Scriptures Tell Us And Experience Teaches Us That We Human Beings Are Imperfect, Flawed, Self-Centered Sinners. But This Was Not Always True. God Didn't Create Adam And Eve As Sinners.....He Created Them To Be Holy, Perfect, And Pure...They Were Made In...The Very Image Of God. But Then In The Garden Of Eden Satan Tempted Them To Rebel Against God And To Live For Themselves... And In That Moment Their Nature Was Changed; It Was Corrupted. And This Corrupted Sinful Nature Was Passed On Through Adam And Eve And Through All Parents And Children Till The End Of Time. Ever Since That Fateful Day Every Child Born In This World Is Born In Rebellion Against God And Living For Self....For It Is Impossible To Live For Self And For God At The Same Time. This Is Condition Is Called **"Spiritual Death" Or "Spiritual Blindness"...."Original Sin".**

A. Sin And Temptation Come To Us In Three Ways: Satan, The Sinful World, And Our Own Sinful Nature, Which Is Called **"The Flesh"** In Scripture. Sin Is Described As A Power That Leads Us Away From Serving God To Serving Ourselves. And So In God's Sight People Are Not Basically Good But They Are Evil. And So We Don't Have To Teach Children How To Lie....We Have To Teach Them To Tell The Truth....We Don't Have To Teach Children To Steal.....We Have To Teach Them To Not Steal.....We Don't Have To Teach Children To Be Selfish..... But We Have To Teach Them To Share....And On And On. How Anyone Can Raise Children And Not Believe In Original Sin Is Beyond Me.....Indeed The History Of The Whole World Including What We Hear Today On The Daily News Is Nothing But A Litany Of Self-Serving Living Shown In Greed, Power, Violence And Immorality.

B. But We Need Not Look Beyond Ourselves To See And Feel This Power Of Sin. Even Though We Believe In Jesus As Our Savior Who Frees Us From The Guilt Of Our Sin.....We Still Have Our Flesh.....Original Sin As Paul Writes In His Letter To The Romans: **"So I Find It To Be A Law That When I Want To Do Right, Evil Lies Close At Hand. For I**

Delight In The Law Of God, In My Inner Being, But I See In My Members Another Law Waging War Against The Law Of My Mind And Making Me Captive To The Law Of Sin That Dwells In My Members" (7: 21-23, Esv). And To The Galatians He Writes: **"But I Say, Walk By The Spirit, And You Will Not Gratify The Desires Of The Flesh. For The Desires Of The Flesh Are Against The Spirit, And The Desires Of The Spirit Are Against The Flesh, For These Are Opposed To Each Other, To Keep You From Doing The Things You Want To Do" (5: 16, 17, Esv).** Every Christian Knows This Internal Struggle Against Self Serving Sin And To Live For Jesus Who Has Died And Rose For Them.

Ii. But In Our Lesson For This Evening Our Lord Jesus Reminds Us That We Do Have The Power To Resist Sin And To Say **"No"** To It. We Have The Power Not To Sin.

A. How Could This Be? Well, First Of All When The Holy Spirit Brings Us To Faith In Jesus As Our Savior.....Something Happens To Us...We Are Changed, We Are **"Born Again"** As John Says In His First Letter, **"Everyone Who Believes That Jesus Is The Christ Has Been Born Of God" (5: 1, Esv).** And In Our Baptism Our Old Self Died And A New Man In Christ Was Raised Up As Paul Says In Our First Reading: **"Do You Not Know That All Of Us Who Have Been Baptized Into Christ Jesus Were Baptized Into His Death? We Were Buried Therefore With Him By Baptism Into Death, In Order That, Just As Christ Was Raised From The Dead By The Glory Of The Father, We Too Might Walk In Newness Of Life" (Rom. 6: 3, 4, Esv).** Because Of Our Union With Jesus Christ And The Gift Of The Holy Spirit We No Longer Want To Live For Our Selves....But For God As Our Lutheran Confessions Teach, **"Since Faith Brings The Holy Spirit And Produces New Life In Our Hearts, It Must Also Produce Spiritual Impulses In Our Hearts" (The Apology, Iv, 124 (125), Tappert).** We Do Then Have The Power To Resist Sin And Temptation Because By God's Word And Baptism We Have Been Born Again, We Have Received The Holy Spirit And We Have Been United To The Death And Resurrection Of Jesus Christ Both James And Peter Say In Their Letters, **"Resist The Devil And He Will Flee From You" (1 Peter 5: 9; James 4: 7).**

B. This Means That God Will Give Us Both The Will And The Ability To Resist Sin And Live For Him.....Just As Paul Says In His Letter To The Philippians: **"...For It Is God Who Works In You, Both To Will And To Work For His Good Pleasure" (2: 13, Esv).** This Means That God Has Not Only Saved Us From The Guilt Of Our Sin.....But Also Its Power. This Is As Much As A Promise Of The Gospel As Is The Forgiveness Of Sins And Eternal Life. And How Do We Use This Power? By Faith. Whenever We Are Faced With A Temptation To Sin We Simply Believe God's Promise That He Has Also Freed Us From Sin's

Power And That He Will Give Us, As Paul Says, Both The Will And The Ability To Live For Him. It's That Simple. And That's What Jesus Says In Our Text: **“Truly, Truly, I Say To You, Everyone Who Practices Sin Is A Slave To Sin. The Slave Does Not Remain In The House Forever; The Son Remains Forever. So If The Son Sets You Free, You Will Be Free Indeed” (John 8: 34-36, Esv).** But If We Are Free From The Power Of Sin.... Why Then Do We Still Have Sin In Our Lives? Because We Don't Remember Or Believe This Promise. I Am Convinced That Many Christians Don't Know About This Gospel Promise...That They Are Free From The Power Of Sin. And We Can't Use What We Don't Know. Or Even If We Do Know About It We Can Either Forget About It.....Or Not Believe It. And In Such Cases We Are More Likely To Give Into Temptation And Sin.....And Then We Have To Believe That Other Promise Of The Gospel.....That In Jesus Christ We Are Forgiven. But In Jesus Christ This Promise Is Always True: He Has Not Only Freed Us From The Guilt Of Our Sin.....But Also Its Power.

Conclusion: The Moment We Become A Christian Our Battle Against Sin Begins. And It Is A Life-Long Battle. Sometimes We Fail...We Give Into Temptation And Sin. But We Must Not Let Such Defeats Discourage Us. This Struggle Shows That We Have Spiritual Life And VitalityOr We Wouldn't Care. And When We SinWe Repent, Confess It To God...And Believe That For The Sake Of Jesus Christ.....It Is Forgiven. And It Is This Forgiveness That Motivates And Empowers Us All The More To Want To Live For Jesus Who Died On That Cross So That We Might Be Free Of Sin. Free Not Only Of Its Guilt But Its Power. And The More We Remember This And Believe It We Will Also Have Many Victories Over Temptations To Sin.....Times That We Resist Temptation And Say **"No"** To Sin.....Simply Because We Have God's Promise That We Can. And Yet We Long For The Day When This Struggle Will Be No More.....The Day That We Will Be Completely Free Of Sin.....The Day That Jesus Returns To Take Us To That New Heaven And That New Earth.....The Home Of Righteousness.....But That Is A Message For Next Week. Amen.