

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. (Rom 1:8-17) Even in the Old Testament, the Gentiles were beneficiaries of God's saving power. Though unimpressed at first with the Word of God, a Syrian commander is persuaded to receive that Word, and in the water he is cleansed and brought to faith in the God of Israel. (2 Ki 5:1-15a) Evil is overcome by good. (Rom 12:16-21) So also in the New Testament a Roman centurion demonstrates great and humble faith in the Lord. (Mt 8:1-13) All He needs is the Word of Christ. For He trusts that Jesus' Word of healing has authority to accomplish what it says. And indeed it does. The centurion's faith is praised by our Lord above that of any Israelite. For the last shall be first, and the first last. Apart from faith in Christ, there is no salvation, even for a Jew, but only weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Introit: (Psalm 97:1, 10-12; antiphon: Psalm 97:6, 9)

Pastor: The heavens proclaim His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.

Congregation: For You, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.

P: The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!

C: O you who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

P: Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.

C: Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to His holy Name!

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, Is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: The heavens proclaim His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory.

C: For You, O LORD, are most high over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.

Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

+2 KINGS 5:1-15 +

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. (2) Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. (3) She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." (4) So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." (5) And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. (6) And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." (7) And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me." (8) But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." (9) So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. (10) And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." (11) But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. (12) Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. (13) But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" (14) So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (15) Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him.

Gradual: (Psalm 102:15, 16)

Nations will fear the name | of the LORD,*

and all the kings of the earth will fear Your | glory.

For the LORD builds up | Zion;*

He appears in His | glory;

+ ROMANS 12:16-21 +

(16) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (17) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Lutheran Confessions Responsive Reading: The Small Catechism (1529)

P: As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.

How can water do such great things?

C: Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water.

P: For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

C: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying". (Titus 3:5-8)

Verse: (Psalm 97:1)

P: Alleluia! The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice;

C: let the many coastlands be glad! Alleluia!

+ MATTHEW 8:1-13 +

When He came down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him. (2) And behold, a leper came to Him and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, if You will, You can make me clean." (3) And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (4) And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them." (5) When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to Him, appealing to Him, (6) "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." (7) And He said to him, "I will come and heal him." (8) But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. (9) For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." (10) When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who followed Him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. (11) I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, (12) while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (13) And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.