

## **John 16:15 - Our salvation is the work of the Triune God! Trinity Sunday/Father's Day 05/30/2019**

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Grace and peace are yours from God our Father, won by Jesus Christ and revealed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised great things not only from Him, but from the Father and the Holy Spirit in John 16:15. These are your words, heavenly Father. Strengthen our faith in Christ by your truth. Your Word is truth.

Dear Members of Christ's Family,

"What do you want to be when you grow up?" The answers have varied depending on age. One might say: a cowboy, an astronaut, a firefighter, a soldier, a doctor, nurse, teacher, sports star or actor. How many children would answer: "When I grow up, I want to be a Christian!" We didn't do that because we assume that we will automatically remain Christians. There are several surveys of adults who were Christians, baptized and confirmed, who are no longer believers. These facts should have churches and parents praying and asking God what they can do to keep children in the faith. Of course, the devil doesn't stop tempting God's people when they turn 21. He is constantly trying to separate all Christians from the church. If he can take people away from God's Word and Sacraments, he knows that people will eventually weaken or lose their faith. The Bible warns, "*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits...*" (1 Timothy 4:1). God forbid that such a thing would happen to our families! God's warning should put us all on guard and keep us watchful against temptations that try to keep us from God's Word. At the same time, God gives us hope for the future because: our help comes from the LORD! We can be confident because:

### **Our salvation is the work of the triune God!**

**First, it's the Father's will that we be saved.** God the Father is our Creator. But, He didn't make everything and then leave, like someone winding up a clock and letting it run by itself. The Father desires to live closely with people. He provides the sun and rain to give food at the proper time and He preserves people so that they might respond to His kindness with thanks (Acts 17:27). But most people are not thankful. Even we, by our old nature, are ungrateful to Him. We make excuses as to why we don't follow His commands. And, should God temporarily withhold a blessing from us, we become angry with Him.

We're celebrating Father's Day, a time for children to express their thanks to fathers. What if a young man became so rebellious against his parents that he rejected them and said that he would never speak to them again? No Father's Day card from him! He avoided them so much he didn't even come to their funerals. But, how amazed and humbled he was, when a lawyer contacted him that he had inherited his parents' fortune! They hadn't disowned him and never gave up on him! We are like the young man. God is like the parents. Paul reminds us, "*At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, and deceived ... by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy ... hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God... appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy*" (Titus 3:3-5).

God had every right be angry with us. We often question His loving purpose in our lives. Due to sin, we've earned His curse instead of His blessing. We should be punished. Yet, amazingly, God's love remains! He is faithful. It states, "*The Lord... is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance* (2 Peter 3:9). It's hard for us to love or care for others, especially if they don't care about us. We pray for God's help with this. But God is so different. Ezekiel described people living in rebellion like wandering sheep. He wrote, "*This is what the Lord God says: As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so I will look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered...*" (34:11-12). The devil will do anything to disrupt families and keep congregations from proclaiming God's truth. But, God continues to gather His people!

**Second, the Son completed the Father's plan.** Jesus said, "*All that belongs to the Father is mine*" (v.15). That is like what Jesus said earlier: "*I and the Father are one*" (John 10:30). Jesus is equal to the Father. (We confessed that in our creed today). Jesus loved people just as the Father did. John wrote, "*The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hands*" (John 3:35). As parents, you know it's not easy to turn over the keys to the car for the first time to your child unless you are sure they are ready to drive. God the Father had no problem turning over the work of salvation to His Son because He knew that Jesus was ready. It states in John, "*God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*" (3:17).

Jesus had described His work as "*what was yet to come*" (v.13). His work included His death and resurrection! We all need Jesus to be our Substitute in death and life because we are not pure before the Lord. Jesus was pure and perfect in God's sight. When He died on the cross, it was for our sins only. Through Jesus' payment we are forgiven and through faith in Jesus we are members of God's family. The Bible states, "*Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God...*" (1 Peter 2:10).

Jesus is our living Savior, who rules over heaven and earth to care for us. He is praying for us. He has given His Word to us and commanded us to use His sacraments. If a doctor diagnosed us with a medical problem, but then assured us of a medicine that would keep us well, we would be foolish not to take the medicine! So, when Christ gives us His Word and tells us to hear and use it faithfully, we and all families will really benefit by doing what He says.

So, why do some Christian children fall away from true worship of God or why do Christians of any age stop believing? Were they not instructed by parents, teachers, or pastors? Did they not understand the sacrifice Christ made for them? Do they not care whether they have forgiveness or will die in their sins? If they were baptized in the name of the triune God, those children had faith. Yet, when some grow up, their faith is choked out by the sins of the world or they value what's in the world more than what's in heaven. God, Help us not to fall away, but to reach out to others with the Gospel to bring them to Jesus!

**Third, the Holy Spirit will help us to know and reveal the truth.** Jesus said, "*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.... That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you*" (v.13, 15). At Jesus' death, the disciples needed extraordinary help to keep believing. Yet, Christ told them not only to believe but to become bold witnesses for Him. The only way that could happen was by the Holy Spirit. He helped them understand what Jesus had taught them. He inspired them to write Bible truths to give us confidence in Christ.

The Holy Spirit has revealed every truth that we need to know to be saved. The devil seeks to use every deception. He tries to discredit Bible truths about creation in 6 days or Jesus' miracles. If that doesn't work, the devil tries to get people to neglect God's Word. Yet, even as we gather today, the Holy Spirit is strengthening our faith. The Bible states, "*No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit*" (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Spirit's work is to place Jesus before our eyes and into our hearts.

So, whether we be children, teens, or adults, we face challenges to our faith at home or away. But, God the Father has a rock-solid plan: to have God the Son be a perfect sacrifice to save us from our sins and offer us the gift of life! God the Holy Spirit presents these truths in His Word and keeps us in the saving faith! Let us hold to these truths and be confident in the work of the Trinity to save us. Amen.