

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
The Fourth Sunday of Easter
EHV, Year A.
April 19 & 22, 2018



1 Peter 1:17-21

¹⁷If you call on the Father who judges impartially, according to the work of each person, conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence, ¹⁸because you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot. ²⁰He was chosen before the foundation of the world but revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

People of God~rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I read this week about a man named Jimmy. Jimmy sells beverages – mostly in glasses – a different kind of glass for each different kind of beverage. Jimmy also provides at no extra charge bowls of pretzels and bowls of peanuts with his beverages. Or for an additional charge Jimmy will serve you a frozen pizza baked or hamburgers or Buffalo wings freshly made! A customer Jimmy never met before – a total stranger – lost her wallet at Jimmy’s place. Her wedding ring was in her wallet. She was “frantic – really upset!” So Jimmy set out on what I like to call a *quest* – to

find her wallet. Jimmy watched three hours of security footage from half a dozen different cameras. Finally he found her wallet on a bench outside – with a shady character going toward it! After some more investigating Jimmy found the thief – and got him to confess to taking the \$ and dumping the wallet in an ocean channel. More determined than ever Jimmy hired divers to come out the next day. The divers scoured the seabed and eventually surfaced with a soggy wallet – and the irreplaceable treasure inside it. That’s a lot of time and effort and money – to help someone Jimmy didn’t even know! Again this pales to *insignificance* – compared to all Jesus endured to save us! All that Jesus suffered to redeem wretched sinners like us! How great is the love God the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God – and that is what we are by grace through faith for Jesus’ sake. This Fourth Sunday of Easter we again gather around the Easter Gospel to be reminded:

Jesus Is The Spotless Lamb!

- I. **Without Him we are doomed**
- II. **Through Him we are redeemed!**

With Jesus’ permission we will read from Simon Peter’s first Letter for 6 Sundays of Easter – 6 Sundays in a row! The people who pick the verses we read Sunday after Sunday – the Pericopes – for some reason decided not to include the first two verses of 1 Peter. The second Sunday of Easter – April 8th – when Professor Schroeder preached on Jesus saying, “**Peace be with you!**” Remember? That second Sunday of Easter – when still lots of people came to church--we started with verse 3. Verses one and two tell us who the original recipients of 1 Peter were. God’s Word says: **Peter, an apostle** (someone sent out with a message from the King) **of Jesus Christ, To the elect** (picked and chosen to

be saved – before God said-*Let there be light!*) , **temporary residents (exiles) in the world, scattered** (dispersed – *Gk* the *diospera* – forced out) **throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (again--predestined – a word intended to bring us comfort and confidence. Jesus said, “*You have not chosen me – but I have chosen you!*) **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you.** When we were little almost every single sermon began with the words – *grace and peace are yours in abundance through the knowledge of God – and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!* Remember?**

Simon Peter was writing to new Christians in what is today Asia Minor – present day Turkey – next door to Syria – where again chemical weapons were used! Simon Peter was writing to new Christians who were beginning to suffering persecution at the hands of people who hated Jesus and anyone who loved and believed in Him! Last week Simon Peter talked about our inheritance. **³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵Through faith you are being protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.** Sometimes some people are all excited about an *earthly* inheritance. There is a beautiful inheritance – a piece of jewelry – a necklace handed down literally from generation to generation. Someone wears it to an outdoor wedding. At the end of the evening – just after midnight – you realize that the old clasp has failed and the necklace is missing from around your neck – or the most precious stone in the whole cluster has broken a prong and fell out – never to be found again! There was a

grandpa the other day who had a pole barn full of antique cars – that he had spent a lifetime collecting--all polished and perfect – and as the grandpa had only a few days to live – his sons were brutally honest and told their dad the collection that had literally taken his lifetime to collect – would immediately upon his death be sold and all the cars *scattered* to the highways never to be together again! They felt compelled to tell him! What we consider to be the ultimate in precious earthly inheritance would very possibly be sold at a garage sale – or tossed into a dumpster. Such is often the fate of earthly “things and stuff!” What matters is our *inheritance in Heaven – where moth and rust cannot corrupt – where thieves cannot break in and steal!* Where our treasure is – there will our ♥ be also! Heaven is our forever inheritance by grace alone!

God’s Word says~ Simon Peter wrote: **¹⁷If you call on the Father who judges impartially, according to the work of each person, conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence, ¹⁸because you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers...** We have watched more than one season of The Great British Bakeoff. Each episode they bake three different desserts. The second dessert everyone makes the same thing. When the time for baking runs out – all the desserts are placed on long tables – end to end. The bakers all sit on stools – in no particular order – their photograph next to their dessert facing away from the judges. That way each dessert is judged impartially! We know who made it. The judge does not! Jesus judges impartially. Jesus is not impressed if you have a mansion or if you live in one of those tiny houses. Some of us have lived in dorm rooms for many *many* years. We had a bed – a desk – book shelves – a small closet and a washroom down the hall! We ate our meals in the dining hall. The writer to the Hebrews wrote about heroes of faith--people who literally lived in tents and caves

and holes in the ground. They about in sheep skins and goat skins – destitute, mistreated – the world was not worthy of them – yet they were servants of their Heavenly Father and heirs of eternal life! That’s all that matters! We are heirs by grace alone – through faith alone. **Dead in trespasses and sin** we can’t begin to earn Heaven. It is a gift of God. Evidence of our saving faith are the familiar fruit of faith~ **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** Without faith we cannot do **any** of these things. When by the power of the Holy Spirit we do any of these things – all glory belongs to Jesus and to Him alone!

¹⁷If you call on the Father who judges impartially, according to the work of each person, conduct yourselves during the time of your pilgrimage in reverence, ¹⁸because you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers... At first it sounds like we are judged according to the work we do. I was visiting a little grandma in the hospital the other day. She told me her throat hurt from talking. I said let me get you something to drink. I found her Styrofoam cup with one of those bendy straws. I put the straw between her lips. She took a very long drink. Then she said, “That really tasted good!” I told her – that’s what Jesus will talk about on judgment day – Jesus will say, **“I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink!”** You don’t get to go to Heaven because you gave a grandma a refreshing drink. You give a grandma a drink *because Jesus’ forgiving love is in your ♥!* The drink was evidence of faith – evidence of Jesus’ forgiving love!

You were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, not with things that pass away, such as silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot. Jesus never ever did anything wrong! Jesus never said the wrong thing!

Sometimes we say something when we should have been quiet – not said a word. Sometimes we just stand there – when *somebody* should say *something* – and we don't – we just stand there! The older I get the more concerned I am – that I don't become an angry mean little old man. Oh, it might not even be my fault. It could be *dementia* – Alzheimer's – medication – not enough oxygen getting to my brain – poor hearing – so I think somebody else said something – but they didn't! Sometimes – I think I inherited a Schultz scowl – so I look unhappy even when I'm not. It's kind of a default look that is painfully serious! I'm trying to concentrate – and remember and it could be confused with upset! That's not good! Jesus never did the wrong thing. Never intervened when he should have refrained – never just stood there – when somebody should have done something! Jesus never had a bad thought. Luther said "*you can't stop the birds flying over your head. But you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair!*" Sometimes I wonder where some of these birds come from and why do they keep coming back? Jesus never made a mistake – never ever did anything wrong. Then he suffered all the scorn and derision people could heap on Him – to the point of dying – giving up His life to rescue you and me! That's how much Jesus loves us! Enough to die to buy us back from sin and death. Jesus bought you back, too – once for all--forever!

Remember Jimmy – the guy who sells beverages in North Carolina? Jimmy found the thief. At first I think what I might have done was called the police – and had that thief arrested. And yet – stop and think – what did Jesus do when confronted by thieves – one on his right and one on his left? Jesus said to the one, **"Today you will be with me in Paradise!"** Forgiveness full and sweet – apart from doing anything to earn or deserve forgiveness! Jimmy found the thief – just 17 years old – homeless – living in the woods--30° outside – nothing to eat for 2

days?! Jimmy adopted him – had him move in with his family – got him 2 jobs and a future. That's *wonderful*. The only thing more wonderful? The forgiveness of all our sins – and our adoption into the family of believers. God our Father – Jesus our brother – Heaven our Home! We are redeemed by the innocent Lamb of God. Again we say, **"Thank you, Jesus!"** Amen!

To God alone all glory!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rev. Anthony E. Schatz", is centered within a light blue rectangular background.