

Life Sunday Sermon 2020

John 6:68 “Did God Really Say?”

Rev. Brian Wolfmueller, Senior Pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas

www.lutheransforlife.org

John 6:68, “Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Dear Saints,

“It is good.”

This is the Lord’s refrain through the six days of creation. Light and dark, “It is good.” Land and sea, “It is good.” Stars and moon and sun, “It is good.” Birds and fish, plants and animals, “It is good.” And then there is Adam, and the Lord looks at him and says, “It is *not* good.” “It is not good for man to be alone.”

The goodness of creation is connected to life. If creation brings forth or supports life, it is good. Adam, alone, remains alone. He can have no children, no family. It is not good, not until Eve, and then it is very good.

Then, with the gift of marriage, the promise of children, the joy of life, God rests from His work.

And the devil gets busy.

He finds Adam and Eve in the Garden and begins to nudge them towards death, and the nudge sounds like this, “Did God really say?” Let’s not miss the point, “Did God really say?” is the sound of the devil’s death nudge. “Did God really say you are not supposed to eat any of this fruit?” “Did God really say if you ate the fruit then you would die?”

The devil deceived with these questions of doubt. And, we see, his chief lie was calling God a liar.

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God’s Word is truth and God’s Word is *life*. If the devil wants us to die (which is what he wants), he will tempt us away from the Word of God. And death comes with doubt. Adam and Eve are tempted away from the word, away from life. They ate, and they died, and we and everything else in the cosmos are dying with them.

We often lament that ours is a “culture of death.” No doubt this is true. Life is vulnerable at the beginning and the end and devalued all the way through. We mourn the slaughter of babies and lament the medical murdering of the elderly, but it is important for us to remember that humanity’s funeral march began long before Roe vs. Wade and the push for legalized “ethanasia.” It began in the Garden. It began with “Did God really say?” And it continues to march to that same beat.

But it is this funeral march that Jesus came to stop. Jesus is not content with our dying. He is not happy to stand by and watch us fall into the grave and come to condemnation.

“I came that [you] might have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Jesus interrupts our death with His life. Jesus interrupts our sin with His holiness. Jesus interrupts our rebellion with His crucifixion. He takes our sin, our punishment, and the wrath we deserve, and He suffers in our place. His death is Adam’s death, and Eve’s, and ours. His agony is what we deserved. He bears our sin so that we would know God’s mercy, God’s grace, God’s forgiveness, God’s life that never ends.

And He gives all of this to us in His Word.

In John chapter six, Jesus is giving a difficult teaching. He is the bread from heaven. He is God and Man united in one person. He is the hope and life of the world. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

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Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:53-56). This was too much for the crowds.

There were thousands who came to Jesus for bread in the wilderness, but these don’t stay for the teaching, for the word. Jesus sees that they are all leaving, and turns to His disciples, “Do you want to leave as well?”

Peter answers beautifully, and we with him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” God be praised! Peter sees with a divine clarity what we must also see— Jesus has the words of eternal life. Jesus has the words that overcome death. Jesus has the words that will pull us out of the grave on the last day. Jesus has the words that fell the old evil foe. Jesus has the words that forgive sin. His words are words of eternal life.

And, dear saints, you have them. You have the words of Jesus. You hear His voice. You know His name. You believe what He says.

Now, it’s true, the devil comes to tempt us, the same as in the Garden, “Did God really say?” “Did God really say He loves you?” Yes! “Did God really say your sins are forgiven?” Yes! “Did God really say that you are saved by grace through faith, without any works?” Yes! “Did God really say that we will be raised on the last day, and that we will live forever with Him?” Yes, a thousand times yes! Jesus has the words of eternal life.

Those words and promises are ours.

That eternal life is ours.

God be praised! Amen.