

## St. Patrick's Day (The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent)

### Text: Romans 8:11-19

<sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, <sup>14</sup>because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. <sup>18</sup>I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.



### *Theme: Raised to Righteousness, Peace, and Glory*

Today the people of Ireland celebrates St. Patrick's Day. This day has more significance for them than green beer, parades, and Shamrock shakes, the sort of things that we often associate with St. Patrick's day. It reminds them of the man who came to their country with the message that Jesus Christ died and rose for them. People who worshiped spirits that they believed lived in trees, rivers, mountains and animals quickly turned from those gods to the good news of the forgiveness of sins through their Savior Jesus Christ. Toward the end of his life, St. Patrick wrote, “I am greatly a debtor of God, who has bestowed His grace so largely on me, that multitudes were born again to God through me. The Irish who never had the knowledge of God and worshiped only idols and unclean things, have lately become the people of the Lord and are called sons of God.”

Today I'd like to look at how through faith in Jesus Christ, we are all sons of God, raised to a new life of righteousness, peace, and hope in Christ.

#### I. Raised to Righteousness

As I prepared for this sermon, I did some reading on the Celtic religion. One thing that I found that it had in common with the Greek, Roman, Canaanite, and Babylonian gods, were that their gods were often worse than we are. They are often at war with themselves, and they are not very loving toward people. When God told His people in the Old Testament, “*I, the Lord, Your God, am holy,*” it was unique. No other religion believe that about their gods. The concepts of sin, forgiveness, and righteousness, were not in other religions. When sacrifices were offered, they were not to receive forgiveness, but to appease a god. These people had no concept of sin, so they thought that as long as they offered the necessary sacrifices, they could do as they wanted.

Then missionaries, such as Patrick went to these people and preached, “Repent and believe the good

news of Jesus Christ.” God’s Word convicted them of their sin, but it also showed them their Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. It was nothing less than a miracle that they repented and believed the Gospel. They were raised to righteousness. Their sins were washed away, and they were clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now they walked in His ways as reborn children of God.

Through faith in Christ, we have also been raised to righteousness. Listen to these words of Paul from our text again, *“Therefore brothers, we have an obligation— but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are Sons of God.”* Paul contrasts our sinful nature with the new nature that is raised within us through faith in Christ. All of us were born sinners, but God did something about it. He allowed His own dear Son to bear our sins, so that we could be cleansed of every one of them. Because of Christ, we are now children of God. When God looks at those who have been washed in Christ, He doesn’t see a single one of our sins. He sees beloved children, who are as perfect as His own dear Son. Through His Spirit in us, God also gives us the power to live good and righteous lives as Jesus did. As children of God we have been raised to a new righteous life in which our sins are forgiven, and in which we live our lives to the glory of our Father in Heaven.

## II. Raised to peace.

An interesting thing about the religions that Christianity displaced is that those people looked at their gods as someone who needed to be appeased. They did not see their gods as someone who loved them. They lived in fear and terror of their gods. As Christians we have been raised to peace. Paul writes, *“You did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”* When He taught us to pray, Jesus didn’t begin the prayer with the words, “O great Lord and Master, King of the Universe, Almighty God,” even though all of those things could pertain to God. He taught us to begin our prayer with these words, “Our Father.” In the Small Catechism, Luther explains that phrase in this way, *“With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.”* As Christians we look at the Almighty God of the universe as our loving Father, who bids of to call on His name. In Psalm 50, He says, *“Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you and you will honor me.”* In his Confession St. Patrick recounts how He called on God’s name first when He was a slave and many other times in his life and how God delivered Him from one evil after the next.

As Christians we are all raised to that peace. In times of distress our hearts cry out to our Heavenly Father. As Paul writes, God’s Spirit in us reminds us that we are God’s children. While the evils of this world often strike some fear in our hearts, there is also peace in the heart of Christians that God is with me, and He will get me through this. That is expressed well in the second verse of the hymn, “If God Himself Be for Me” where it says,

Yea, this I believe, yea rather of this I make my boast,  
That God is My dear Father, the Friend who loves me most,  
And that whate’r betide me My Savior is a hand  
Through stormy seas to guide me, and bring me safe to land.

### III. Raised to glory.

As Christians we have a sure and certain hope, that when we die our souls will go to heaven to be with our Lord, and that on the last day, our bodies will be raised so that body and soul, we will be with the Lord forever. St. Patrick writes about that sure hope magnificently toward the end of his Confession where it says, *“On that day without doubt we shall rise in the brightness of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of the living God and joint heirs with Christ to be made conformable to His image; for of Him, and by Him, and in Him we shall reign.”* As Christians we are heirs of God. Our inheritance is eternal life with Christ in His glory. This hope is not wishful-thinking. It is a sure and certain promise because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. We will be raised to everlasting glory. Paul puts it like this in our text, *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may share in His glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”* That is a wonderful hope that we have in Christ. If you put all the burdens, crosses, suffering, and grieving, that we bear in this life it this hand, it will not even compare to the eternal glory that God will give to us in Christ.

Like the people of Ireland before St. Patrick shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with them, we were once lost in sin, fear, and death, but through faith in Jesus Christ, God has raised us to righteousness, peace, and the hope of everlasting life. May God’s Spirit keep us as children of God through faith in Christ and may He fill our hearts with the desire that St. Patrick had that other will share in our forgiveness, peace, and hope in Christ.

Amen.

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