

Getting Ahead of Ourselves

John 16:23-33

The Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 1, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

You believe that Jesus came out from the Father. That is the confession of faith of this congregation. You believe that Jesus came out from the Father. You believe that Jesus has returned to the Father. Because you believe that Jesus came out from the Father you treat Him well. Therefore the Father loves you.

In the Kingdom of God it is not what you know it is who you know. If the Kingdom of God were set up to reward what you knew instead of who you knew then you would all be in hell. Fortunately the Kingdom of God is not set up to reward what you know, but rather who you know. Get in good with the king of the kingdom of God and you will do well.

It is no different in our earthly relationships. When a President is appointing someone he appoints the people that he knows. How can he appoint someone whom he does not know? Such a person may be qualified well enough, but since the President does not know him, he does not know to appoint him.

You are no different. When you send your children to school how you receive other children at the school depends on how they treat your child. If you send your child to school and your child does not misbehave and other people treat him badly, you will not receive them. Even if a teacher or a student from a prominent family mistreats your child when your child is not misbehaving you will not receive those people. You will not like them. You will be opposed to them.

However if you send your child to school and other children receive him well, then you will receive those children well. If your child counts them his friends and he is not misbehaving you will count them your friends as well. If adults receive your child well when he is not misbehaving you will receive those adults well. Your reception of people depends on whether or not your son is misbehaving and if he is not on whether or not the other people receive your son well. If your son is not misbehaving and they receive him well you will receive them well. If your son is not misbehaving and other people do not receive him well, you will not receive them well either.

This is how it is with the Father and the Son. This is why God has taken vocational terms and applied them to Himself. The Father has sent forth the Son and He did not misbehave. This is why at His Baptism the voice announces that He is well pleased with His Son. Because the Son did not misbehave those who treat the Son badly are people whom the Father does not receive. Those who receive the Son gladly are those whom the Father also receives.

This is why the Father no longer calls you slaves. He calls you friends. The only reason that He calls you friends is because you have received His Son and received Him well. You have not mistreated the Son. You honor the Son and therefore the Father honors you. The Father grants you a great privilege. He loves you and receives you. He calls you His friends. He does so for the sake of His Son.

Since the Father has received you and calls you friends you may ask Him anything in the Name of His Son and He will do it for you. So get out there and ask. And when you ask, ask for the big stuff. Ask for eternal life. Ask for the forgiveness of sins. Ask for the Holy Spirit. Do not limit yourself to only the things of this world. It would be easy for the Father to give you long life or great wealth or advantages over others. That would be easy. If you want to ask something, ask for something big. Ask to be raised from the dead. Ask for the sin in your heart to be put to death. Ask to live forever. Ask for the Holy Spirit. The Father is God after all, right? He is capable of more than we can ask or imagine. Then ask

for the big stuff. He can do it. He loves you because you believe that the Son came forth from Him. You also believe that the Son returned to Him.

Now all of that is great and glorious, but let us not get ahead of ourselves.

Jesus says many things in figures of speech. He says these things in part to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah who predicts that the Word of God will harden the hearts of some so that they do not understand what God is saying and the Word of God will soften the hearts of others so that they will believe in Him. When Jesus uses figures this is one of the things that He accomplishes. Some believe and some do not. The word that He speaks either pushes them away from God or draws them near to Him.

Let us consider some of the things that Jesus says in figures of speech. He has told them that He is the shepherd of the sheep. In being the shepherd of His sheep He has said that He would lay down His life for the sheep. He also said that He would take up His life again.

He has said that in a little while the disciples would not see Him because He would die and be buried. Then He said again a little while and they would see Him meaning His resurrection. He compared it to a woman being in labor.

He has told those who did not believe in Him that because they claimed that they could see that their guilt remained. Only those who claim blindness then can see clearly. He has told them that He is the vine and that they are the branches and that apart from Him they can do nothing.

He has told them that the Son of Man must be lifted up in the same way that the serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness. That is to say that the Son of Man would be lifted up on a pole. When the Son of Man is lifted up on a pole, He will draw all people to Himself. And so the Son of Man was lifted up on a pole.

The Jesus that you are receiving as the Son of God is the crucified Jesus. Make sure you know that when you receive Him. You are not receiving just any old Jesus. You are receiving the crucified Jesus. Even if you receive the glorious risen from the dead Jesus, He is still the risen from the dead Jesus. He is still the One who was crucified. When Jesus rose from the dead He showed His disciples the marks of the nails in His hands and the spear mark in His side.

This is the Jesus whom you have received. There is no other to receive. In submitting Himself to crucifixion He did the Father's will. He has not misbehaved. He has done the Father's will. You have received Him. Therefore the Father loves you.

You have received a crucified Son.

That means that there are several things that you will need to include in your prayers while you are asking the Father for anything in the name of Jesus. You will need to include a prayer for forgiveness and not just for the sins that bother you, but also the sins that you have forgotten or did not know that you were committing when you committed them. You will have to ask for forgiveness for the sinful condition in which you were born and conceived. You will ask for forgiveness for all that made His cross necessary.

And you will have to anticipate your own tribulation. You will not get out of it.

Our Lord speaks in figures. He tells us that a slave is not above his master. If they hated him, they will hate you as well. There is no getting around that either.

If you are going to face attacks from the world and Satan you are going to need to be able to ask the Father anything and have Him give it to you. Ask to be spared from temptation. Ask to be spared from times of testing. Ask to have your life preserved from those who would oppose the Son of God. Ask

that your faith would persevere because if you do not have the power of the Father your faith will fail you.

The good thing is that the Son has told you all of this in advance. He has not hidden anything from you. He has warned us about the things that are to come and that have come. There is nothing happening in the world right now that was not foreseen by the Son and the Father. There is nothing that is happening in our state or federal government that the Father and the Son have not foreseen. They knew it all would come. They know that worse things will come. The Son has delayed His return long enough that we have seen that worse things have already happened and that they will happen again. Since the Father and the Son have foreseen such things they have told us about them so that when they happen we will not be surprised. We will also know that when these things happen they happen under the authority of the Father and the Son. It is not like the Father and the Son have lost control of the world. They have told us such things so that we will look forward to what they will do to overthrow the powers and forces of evil in this world. Such things are bound to come, but take heart the Son has overcome the world. There is nothing in this world that has any intrinsic power to take you away from the Son. There is no sin that is so bad that it can tear you away from Him. He will not let you go down with the rest of the world. He will save you.

He is after all the crucified Son, the One who fulfilled the Father's will, the One who after the worst possible thing that could happen to anyone happened to Him rose from the dead. He promises you a future on the other side of grief. He promises you a future on the other side of suffering. He promises you a future on the other side of sin. He promises you a future on the other side of death.

He makes these promises as One who rose from the dead Himself.

Ask the Father whatever you want in the Name of Jesus and the Father will give it to you.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.