

Pentecost 23 11/16/25
2 Thessalonians 3:1-13 28C

BUT THE LORD IS FAITHFUL. HE WILL ESTABLISH YOU AND GUARD YOU AGAINST THE EVIL ONE.

As the day of Jesus Christ draws near, do you find this happening to you?

You go through a typical day of work, shopping, running countless errands, chauffeuring kids here and there, cooking, and cleaning. The end of the day comes, you're wiped out, and all you want to do is go to bed. So, you put on your Green Bay Packer pajamas, crawl under your Big "G" blanket, say your prayers, and close your eyes. And that's when it happens. On the big screen on the back of your eyelids, that classic horror film entitled, "All the rotten things I did today," starring you as the villain, comes on. There was the know-it-all co-worker that you wanted to tell where they could go with their opinion. The hot girl that would make your life perfect. The clerk at the store who couldn't count change when your patience was gone. That's when the voice of the narrator begins, "How could you have done that? You call yourself a Christian? If you were really a Christian, you wouldn't act like that; you wouldn't say that."

Or, how about this: you are sitting at the Thanksgiving table and various topics of conversation come up: marriage, abortion, this great lie of the devil that all religions lead to the same heaven. You know what the Bible says about all these things, but you listen to the voice of your neighbor, and you doubt. So you begin to think: Maybe the Bible really doesn't say... what it really says.

Or, how about this: You go through the news of the day – reading the *Tribune*, watching the nightly news, checking it online – and its pretty much

the same as every other day. Natural disaster kills thousands. Some kid was bullied at school to the point that he/she felt their only recourse was to take their own life. Wars, calamities, and crimes. You find yourself growing numb to it. Oh well, you say, that's just the way life is.

I. My Fellow redeemed in Christ, that's **not** the way life is. When the movie of your failures and shortcomings plays before you; when God's Word is rejected and doubted and just thrown aside; when disaster and pain and sorrow fill our days, that's not life. That's the **work** of the evil one. He tries to make you doubt that you are a child of God; he tries to convince you that you cannot believe God's Word; he tries to drive you to feelings of despair and sadness. The devil is out to get you.

There's a reason for that. Are you listening? Because I'm about to say something profound -- the day of Jesus' return is nearer today than it was yesterday. Jesus' return draws ever closer. The devil knows his time is short. The evil one knows that on the last day, Jesus will throw him and all his demons into the lake of fire. So, he makes the most of his time trying to drag you into that lake of fire with him.

So, you ask yourself the question: What can I do to protect myself from the attacks of the evil one? Did you catch that? When you ask yourself **that** question, the devil just got you again. You see, **in** and **of** yourself, you are helpless to protect yourself from his lies. You know the Battle Hymn of the Reformation,

With might of ours can naught be done,
Soon were our loss effected {LSB 656:2}.

The right question to ask is: What can God do about the evil one? What has God done about the evil one? The Lord is faithful. He will establish and guard you against the evil one.

II. The Good News for us is that God has done something about the evil one. Right after Adam and Eve went along with the devil's temptation and ate the forbidden fruit, God promised a Savior and He did it with these words to the evil one and promised, *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"* (Ge 3:15).

In the fullness of time, God was faithful to that promise and He sent forth that offspring of a woman and she wrapped Him and laid Him in a manger and gave Him the name Jesus. The Bible says, *The reason [Jesus] appeared was to destroy the works of the devil*, and that's exactly what He did (1 Jn 3:8).

At the beginning of His public ministry, He went into the wilderness where He did not eat or drink anything for 40 days and 40 nights, but He had constant company. The evil one was there, throwing temptation after temptation against Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, do this; If you are the Son of God, do that." Jesus wouldn't do any of these things because He was faithful, faithful to bruise the serpent's head, so He rebuked the father of all lies with Word of God.

Jesus was faithful to bruise the serpent's head. When He went to the cross and His hands and feet were nailed to the cross. Under that cross was the devil's head, with all of his lies, the temptations, the ugly accusations, all his works and ways. Also under that cross was the movie of your life, with all your sins, shame, guilt, shortcomings; under the feet of Jesus were all your doubts about God's Word; under the feet of Jesus were all the pains, sorrow, agony, tears of life in a world broken by sin.

Jesus rose again triumphant over all your sins, shame, guilt, shortcomings; He rose triumphant over all your doubts about God's Word;

He rose triumphant all the pains, sorrow, agony, and tears that take place in this world at the hands of the evil one.

With his head bruised, Satan is mortally wounded. You know what a snake does when it is mortally wounded? It thrashes about and strikes out. That's what Satan is doing. He is thrashing about, striking at you, Dear Child of God, to bring you down with him.

III. On the day Jesus returns, He will throw the devil all his cronies into the burning lake of fire. Until that day, what Jesus does is this: He establishes you and guards you against all those attacks and lies and temptations.

That's what He's doing here this morning. That is why you come here: God showers you with His love and forgiveness. We begin our worship services, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," to remind you of your baptism and to comfort you that God has taken you under His care. You hear the absolution pronounced over you; the Gospel proclaimed; you are fed with Jesus' own body and blood, given and shed for you.

This is the way God Himself has chosen to establish and guard you against the evil one by removing everything the evil one has to attack you with – He forgives you your failures; He firms you in your trust in His Word; He assures you that the day is coming when you will be triumphant over pain, disasters, sorrows, and all evil.

BECAUSE THE LORD IS FAITHFUL, HE ESTABLISHES AND GUARDS YOU so that when the evil one comes thrashing and striking at you, whispering his lies and accusations, you can boldly say,

"Satan, I defy you! The Lord Jesus is faithful, faithful to the promise that He would bruise your head and He has risen triumphant over you.

He has given me His victory in baptism, His supper, the preaching of His Word, and in the absolution. I am established and guarded by the Lord Jesus Christ. And, the day is coming when Jesus returns and I'll go to live with Him in heaven. And, you will go to live burning lake of fire."

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.