

Sermon Acts 2 21 Pentecost

Sermon: Pentecost Sunday (PPS)

Text: Acts 2:21: “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

Theme: To call on the name of the LORD.

Goal: To direct people to focus only on the name of the LORD for our salvation.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: To whom will you cry and look for at your last hour? To the doctors in the hospital, waiting for some more help? To your beloved ones who will be around your bed, as they could help you somehow? Your last hour is the farewell from this earth; and you shall not look more to the things behind you, to your earthly stuffs, - as Luther wrote in a sermon. It’s your entrance to eternity; and you must call on the only One who can take you by your hand and lead you in safety into the blessed eternity. This is our Lord Jesus, the only Way to the Father’s house. - “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved,” – says our text.

Jesus Himself gave us an example at His last hour: When He cried on the cross on our behalf: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian Church, did the same as he was stoned: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59).

The last hour is the transition between the earthly life and the eternal life, a new life that had begun sometime before, - maybe at our childhood, - and that reaches its goal at the moment God calls us to Himself. A new life that began by work and merit of the Holy Spirit, who’s Festival we celebrate today: Pentecost Sunday; to Him we give all glory with the Father and the Son.

This new life began at our Baptism according to God's promise. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." And He explains what it means "to born again": "No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit," this is: The Holy Baptism.

And this is what happened at the first Pentecost to about 3,000 people who were baptized, as they responded to Peter's preaching when he said: "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

What does it mean "to call on the name of the Lord"?

I – To react to God's call

"To call on the name of the Lord" is to react to God's Word by repentance and faith as the crowd did at the first Pentecost. After Peter had preached the Law, condemning them because of their sins and because they had put Jesus on the cross, they reacted as we read in v. 37: "When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?""

We cannot be indifferent to God's Word. When we read it, when we hear His message, some reaction happens in our heart. Some people just turn their face against God and don't accept His invitation to repent and to believe. NO! We cannot resist to and be rebel against the work of the Holy Spirit, who is calling us to repentance and wants to create in us the faith and the new life. "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved!"

We read more, how the Holy Spirit worked through Peter's preaching. Peter replied to the crowd's question: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the

forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” – And about 3,000 came repented to the Baptism, confessing their sins and their faith in Jesus, the Lord and Savior. God’s promise had been fulfilled in their lives: “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

The Holy Spirit is still working in our hearts through the preaching of God’s Word, calling us to His Kingdom. We are those who were “far off”, according Peter’s prophecy. God’s desire is that every one shall repent from his wrong way and from his wrong deeds, shall confess their sins (as we do at the beginning of every Service) and shall believe in Jesus Christ. Then the promise of v. 21 will be fulfilled in every one of you, because God cannot fail in His promise for those who believe in Him: “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”

II – To worship God with words and deeds

“To call on the name of the Lord” also means to worship God and to serve Him in words and deeds. We read about the first converted (v.42): “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.”

We “call on the name of the Lord” when we come together and worship Him with our songs of praise and thanksgiving, as we do it in our Service. We “call on the name of the Lord” when we worship Him with our lives, as the first Christians did it after they were baptized, coming together and taking care of the needy, as we do it through our donations to Luther’s loot. As we do that, we are testifying to the world that we are saved people by God’s grace in Jesus, walking and working all together as brothers and sisters, to

reach the goal of our faith: the eternal salvation. We strongly believe that “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” And we are among them!

III – To long to our glorious future and to call on His name in prayers

When Stephen “called on the name of the Lord” at his last hour, and he said: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”, this was a confident prayer that we can offer every day. Our life doesn’t belong to us any more. It belongs to Jesus, our Savior. We entrust our lives in God’s hands daily, until He calls us to be with Him in His home. Luther once prayed: *I am Yours. Save me...* And Jesus will take us by our hand to lead us to the Father’s throne.

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is also called “the Counselor and the Comforter”, just because He helps and comforts us in our distresses, giving us strength and hope. His promise remains faithful: “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” Let us believe in His promise and call always on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle - Cape Town, 19 May 2013