

Easter IV

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[0 : 00] One of the great tricks from the devil and his demons is to make us doubt the goodness of our God.

! The strategy is to get us to focus on all the bad around us or to entertain the irrational thoughts that come into our minds that then breeds panic and fear.

The first words that Satan spoke to a human being were, did God really say? In our day, it is no different.

We sometimes think, does God really care? Is God really present? Is God a mere concept invented by human beings to cope with life?

Is faith a mere crutch to get us through life? In persistently doubting the goodness of God, we begin to slowly creep towards unbelief and despair.

[1 : 07] The ultimate win for the devil and his dominions. Our epistle text this morning from James chapter 1 verse 17 begins with the following words.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

We learn from this text that God is not only the creator, he is a gracious father who gives us gifts.

These gifts involve life itself. The very breath that we breathe is a gift. He gives the gift of love. He gives the gift of creation to enjoy.

He gives us gifts of family and friends. We are further given the gift of knowing that he, that is God, is our gracious father who is not moved by irrational thoughts, nor does he change his mind due to emotional wins or changes.

[2 : 21] God is not and cannot be taken by surprise. He is the one who does not change. In the midst of all the change, God does not change.

He is the giver of all that is good. We go on to read here in James chapter 1 verse 18. Of his own will, he brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. God brought us forth. He created us by his own will out of sheer love. And we read that he brought us forth by the word of truth.

The word of truth. What is meant by this phrase, word of truth? In the gospel of John chapter 1 verse 18, we read, And the word, speaking of Jesus, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the father, full of grace and truth. In other words, the eternal son of God, Jesus, came from the father into this world to give us life and to give us truth.

[3 : 44] And Jesus is that truth. Jesus is not a mere guru who teaches us about enlightenment. No, he embodies the very essence of truth.

And in him, we see what it means to be truly human. We are children of God because we are united to Jesus.

And it is through the waters of holy baptism that we are united to God and share in this truth, which is Jesus himself. The point is simply, God is a gracious father who rains down gifts upon his children.

And the greatest gift that he has given to us is his son, full of grace and truth. And he does this to unite us to himself so that we are made children of God through the waters of holy baptism. Jesus unites his divinity with our humanity into one union and communion in order to reveal himself who is truth and to make us children of God.

[5 : 01] Therefore, when we feel alone, when we feel hurt, when we feel pain, when we feel anxious, when we suffer, God is present.

Because we belong to him in Christ Jesus. God became man and he felt our pain. He felt our hurt.

He felt our suffering and even experienced death. In order to raise us up with him as he conquered death and the grave.

And he gave us the greatest gift, eternal life. And we are to remember, we are to believe, and we should be comforted by this truth as we make our way throughout life.

So we noted earlier in James chapter 1 that God does not change. However, however, as children of God, we are called to change.

[6 : 09] We are called to mature. We go on to read here in James chapter 1 verses 19 through 21. So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your soul.

God does not change, but we are called to change. In order to become more and more like Christ. Growing in his perfect humanity and sharing in his divinity.

We are to mature in Christ. Allowing the word of Christ to dwell in us richly. According to Colossians chapter 3 verse 16. Therefore, St. James says that we are to be slow to speak.

Overly opinionated and stubborn people that never listen are those not willing to be changed into being servants of Christ. Such people remain self-serving and selfish people.

[7 : 28] Never having any kind of self-reflection. We are not to be wrathful people holding grudges against others.

Instead, we are called to become more like God. Being patient and kind. Imitating the God who graces us with his heavenly gifts.

Furthermore, we are told to put away all filthiness and wickedness. Things like lust, power, selfish ambition, conceit, vanity, an unwillingness to trust in God.

These are the sins that we are called to get rid of. We are called to be conformed to God by confessing our sins. Seeking to be gracious and loving people.

Who reflect the very good and gracious nature of our God. Our calling then is to be a grateful people of the God who gives us his good and gracious gifts.

[8 : 37] As baptized Christians, we are called to trust in God above all. Receiving his implanted word. That language again of Christ.

That we received in baptism. And conforming our lives more and more to him. And as we do that. As we do that.

The anxiety. The fear. All of that subsides. You see, we are called to become by grace what God is by nature.

Growing deeper in the mystical bond of the divinity and humanity of Jesus. We are to change. We are to change daily.

It's called conversion. We are to change so that we reflect the God who does not change. Whose grace and mercy have no limits.

[9 : 41] The father of lights. Who desires to give gifts. Who freely gives his truth to all who believe. And all who receive his greatest gift.

Jesus the Christ. Amen. In the name of the father and of the son of the holy ghost. Amen. Amen.