

Sermon Text: Psalm 72

Theme: Praise be to the LORD God, Who Alone Does Marvelous Deeds!

Beginning this weekend, during one of our Bible Studies taking place between our Sunday morning services, we will be taking a closer look at some of the Psalms found in the Bible. Because of this, I thought it would be fitting for us during our services this weekend, to focus our thoughts and attention on the Psalm of the Day for this Sunday, as we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord.

Epiphany means “shining forth” or “shinning out”. This reminds us that the baby born in Bethlehem is the Light of the world. As we read in the opening verses of the Gospel of John, “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”

Epiphany has also been referred to by some as the “Gentile Christmas”. In our Gospel Lesson this weekend, we read about Magi from the east who came to see the King and Lord of all people. As we sang a few moments ago from Psalm 72, “All kings will bow down to him, and all nations will serve him.”

The Good News of Christmas, the Good News of Epiphany, is that Jesus Christ came to this earth not just for the Jews, but for the non-Jews, the Gentiles, as well. Jesus came for all people. Jesus came for me. Jesus came for you.

This weekend, as we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord, as we celebrate “The Gentile Christmas”, we join our voices in the words of Psalm 72 which we sang just a few moments ago, and with joyful hearts you and I sing out: **Praise be to the LORD God, Who Alone Does Marvelous Deeds!**

What marvelous deeds has the One and Only true God done for you and me? The fact that he is “the LORD” gives you and me the comfort that he is the God of faithful love and commitment. We know from the Law of God that your sins and my sins make us guilty. You and I need One who is able to save us from the guilt of our sins. And moved by his great love and mercy for you and me, the Savior-God took action. As we read in Galatians chapter 4, “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”

Jesus, your Savior and mine, paid in full the price required by the holy and just God for your sins and mine. Jesus, your Savior and mine, made you and me sons and daughters of our loving heavenly Father. Because of Jesus, your Savior and mine, and the forgiveness of sins that he won, you and I will inherit a life that never ends at his side in heaven. Or, as God’s Word tells us in Psalm 72, “Endow the King with your justice, O God, the royal Son with your righteousness. He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy.” Giving all thanks to our Savior-God for his wonderful gift of the forgiveness of all of our sins and the promise of a never ending life with him in the perfect joys of heaven, together you and I offer our praise to the LORD God, who alone does marvelous things!

In Psalm 72 we read phrases such as, “All generations...All kings...All nations...May the whole earth be filled with his glory.” Did you have to hide any presents this past Christmas? If we want a gift to be a surprise for someone, we often times have to work hard to make sure the gift stays hidden.

But the Good News about Jesus is not to be a gift that you and I are to keep tucked away somewhere and hidden. Psalm 72 tells us that you and I are to share the message of forgiveness that Jesus won with the generations that come after us. This is why our congregation is committed to supporting our First Steps Childcare Center and our Lutheran Elementary School. This is why we offer our financial support to those students who attend Lakeside Lutheran High School, Luther Prep School, Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. This why we as a congregation conduct our mid-week classes and our Sunday Morning classes for our young people. It is in the words of Psalm 78 that you and I promise, “We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.”

Rather than keeping the greatest Christmas gift a secret, you and I are to share the Good News about Jesus with our family, our friends and our neighbors. You and I are even able to share the Good News about Jesus with people we aren't able to see, in places where you and I are not able to go, as we support the ministry of our Wisconsin Synod with our gifts and with our prayers. As we read a moment ago from Ephesians chapter 3, “His [that is, the LORD God] intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...” The events of this past week make it all the more clear that you and I need to go out and share the Light of the Gospel so that many more might come to believe in Jesus as their one and only Savior; so that many more might enjoy the peace and comfort that only Jesus is able to provide; so that many more might join us and praise the LORD God, who alone does marvelous things.

What a loving Savior-God you and I have! He freely provides the forgiveness of all sins that you and I so desperately need through our one and only Savior, Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus, you I have the promise of a life that never ends at his side in heaven. And the Lord promises to bless all our faithful efforts as individuals, as a congregation and as a Synod to share the Good of Jesus with others. For all the gifts and blessings that our gracious Lord showers upon us, you and I join our voices together and say, **Praise be to the LORD God, Who Alone Does Marvelous Deeds!** Amen.