



On page 6 of The Lutheran Hymnal (The Order of Morning Service) is the announcement of God's Absolution (Forgiveness) spoken by the Pastor. The second sentence reads **"To them that believe**

on His name He giveth power to become the sons of God..." These words of absolution spoken in the liturgy of the Word are taken from **St. John 1:12, "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God..."** Faith is a gift from God by which He declares us righteous. Our righteousness is credited to us through the work of salvation by Jesus Christ. Our works and merit do not win righteousness or faith for us. Rather, faith is pure gift from God's grace through Christ. St. Paul writes in **Galatians 2:16 "We also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law."** In **Ephesians 2:8-9** Paul writes, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."**

These words spoken each week in The Divine Service (The Order of Morning Service, TLH) speak God's grace and forgiveness to you. On Communion Sundays, The Divine Service (The Order of Holy Communion, TLH, pg. 15) speaks the same absolution to you; God's forgiveness with different words. Your sins are forgiven by God's grace through Jesus Christ. The Divine Services of the church, with or without Communion, are celebrated to bestow God's grace and forgiveness through the work of salvation accomplished by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Each of us faces temptations of the flesh, problems in relationships, financial difficulties, the uncertainty of a chaotic world today, health concerns and many other tribulations which often feel like too much. But God offers forgiveness of sins and comfort in our difficulties. We cannot control the circumstances around us, nor can we change the struggles of life. We are called to learn that when we pray to God for help and guidance, we must let go of the problem or sin, leaving it in His hands, at the foot of the cross and understand that God never leaves nor forsakes us but always has our spiritual needs in His hands. God does not desire our suffering, nor does He wish for our

relationships to be difficult. Yet, He gives comfort in every circumstance in life through his Word and Sacraments to us, that enables us to bear the burdens we are carrying, for He carries them for us.

Each week, we attend The Divine Service, we come burdened with the troubles of this world and life. We come weighed down by our failures, sins, the trouble of broken relationships, hopes and dreams dashed by our own grievous faults as well as the hurts inflicted from others. But God comes to us in His Word and gives the great blessings of the cross of Christ on which He died to restore our broken relationship with God the Father, that we would not be overwhelmed by our sins and burdens. We are assured of His grace and mercy being told we are the sons of God through Christ.

What may seem like simple words, which often are taken for granted, are really the announcement and the giving of God's pure grace, love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness from Christ our Savior. His work of salvation is bestowed to us through His Word. The Word of God delivers to us Christ our Savior; who Himself delivers us from the power of sin, death and the devil. He has overcome our every enemy; He has resisted our temptations; He has borne our every burden; He has endured the struggle of our broken relationships and won for us **"the right to be called the sons of God."** The hymn writer puts it well in these words.

*Blessed are the sons of God, They are bought with Christ's own blood;
They are ransomed from the grave, Life eternal they shall have:
With them numbered may we be Here and in eternity!*

*They are justified by grace, They enjoy the Savior's peace;
All their sins are washed away, They shall stand in God's great Day:
With them numbered may we be Here and in eternity!*

*They are lights upon the earth, Children of a heavenly birth;
One with God, with Jesus one; Glory is in them begun:
With them numbered may we be Here and in eternity!*

(TLH 391, verses 1-3) To God be all the glory!

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt