



“Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, “In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation”
2 Corinthians 6:1-2.

The words of Paul come immediately following **2 Corinthians 5:21** **“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”** With these words, God shows what Christ does to accomplish our salvation. The One who was truly not sinful became sin for us in our place that we might receive the righteousness of God. This wonderful message gives the complete assurance of God's love for us in Christ. Our purpose as Baptized children of God is that we belong to Christ who has redeemed and called us to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him and His church. Paul also makes clear in **chapter 6:1-2** that we should not receive God's grace in vain but realize now is the favorable time, now is the day of salvation.

Paul, who writes under inspiration of the Holy Spirit (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**), makes clear the serious nature concerning God's offer of grace in Christ. Now is the time of God's grace offered through His Word. Even though we live in this time of uncertainty, God continues to offer grace in His Word. Our calling then, as Baptized Christians is that while we are in this world, with all its troubles, we are not to be of the world. We are called in our Baptism to be different than the world around us that ignores God's Word and lives for the moment. We are called to realize the day of salvation is now through God's continued grace given to us in the Word. We are called to share that good news with others using every opportunity The Holy Spirit sends our way. Yet, often we are discouraged by our own failures and the unbelieving world around us.

First, we need to realize the Lord is always in control. We are taught in Scripture, God can create, sustain, and extend His Kingdom without any help from us. In Baptism, God has called us to work in His Kingdom to serve Him. We are to trust God and the control He continues to give so the Gospel will flourish and His Kingdom will continue to be expanded. We also do well, to remember what Paul said in **1 Corinthians 3:6** **“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”** The Word of the Lord does endure forever and as the rain and snow do not return to heaven without watering the earth, God's Word accomplishes its purpose (**Isaiah 55:10-11**). The Lord is the One who sends His servants to work in His Kingdom while we understand it is God Himself who grows His Kingdom.

We have learned from His Word that God calls us and that now is the favorable time for salvation offered in the Word. God would have us understand the urgency of the Gospel proclamation and how important it is to continue the work of Christ's Church here on earth for many need to hear what God has done for them in Christ the Savior. There may be discouragements of every kind as the world grows more opposed to Christianity. Yet, we are called as Baptized children of God to understand the day of salvation is now and the day of salvation for those who still need to hear the Gospel is now and is as urgent as ever.

As Baptized called believers in Christ, who know the urgency of the message of salvation that people would know their Savior, Jesus Christ, we are encouraged to support and continue the work of the church to the glory of Christ's Name for the furtherance of His Kingdom. Paul writes in **Romans 10:14-15**, **“How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”** Paul says further, **“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” Romans 10:17.**

Yes, even here in rural North Dakota, we can proclaim the Gospel to a world that needs its Savior. We are faithful witnesses when we remain faithful to God's Word in all its truth and purity, standing for the truth even when it makes us unpopular or causes some to call us unloving, intolerant or that we live in the past. God's Word does not change and we are being true to His Word when we live by it and uphold it in every situation, showing true love by speaking the truth to those who are in error with the desire to show them the truth of God's Word and reveal to them Christ who has died for them. We are faithful to God's Word when we attend Bible study as offered, when we attend Divine Service, when we receive His Sacrament for our forgiveness and strength to serve Him in our vocations which He gives to us. God's blessings to all of you during this month of May as you joyfully serve your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and His Church!

“Christ is risen!...”

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt