

**Sunday, June 18, 2017 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**“The View from Here”**

Romans 5: 6-15

Rev. Derek S. Klemm, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV  
Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

“Stop the world, Lord, I want to get off.” It is summer time, isn’t it? Things are supposed to be slowing down a little bit aren’t they? School’s out, the kids are entertaining themselves contentedly in the backyard, ice cold lemonade in one hand, a good book in the other and a hammock stretched between two trees – isn’t that what your week has been like? “Stop the world, Lord, I want to get off.” I’ll say it again, I don’t who said it, or if anybody actually did, but I know the feeling and that’s why I am here this morning.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

With those words from our Epistle lesson this morning God reaches down from heaven to stop the world for you and for me, to let you get off and come up and sit down by Him for a little while. Things look so different from up here with Him. Be still now and let God be God and behold the kingdom and the power and glory forever and ever. Amen.

We are not so very good at it though, are we? Being still I mean and letting God be God and marveling at the miracle of salvation that’s happening all around us. We are much too busy with our own kingdom, our own power, and our own glory to notice, much less be impressed and ultimately comforted by the truth.

I have yet to run out of things to worry about. Have you? Oh, I know, I know, we’re Christians, we’re not supposed to worry, but you know what I mean. I haven’t found the switch to shut my brain off to all the thoughts that keep pouring in – on the world stage, national politics, local issues.

And to be honest that’s easy stuff. What’s really hard are all the things happening in my little world at home and church – personal plans, trying to be on top of things for my loved ones,

work stuff, trying to be a pastor, and a friend, and a leader, and co-worker. What if something goes wrong? What if my car breaks down on my 77<sup>th</sup> roadtrip to loved ones in California? What if we don't make the critical targets we've set for ourselves as a congregation?

What's on your list? Listen, "... at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly...God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He stops the world for us to get off and come up and sit down with him for a look around.

You know the author of this letter to the church in Rome, Paul, wrote to a sin-sick dying world full of people wrapped up in their own kingdoms, their own power, and their own glory. Both from them back then and for us now Paul demands the unthinkable, the undoable – he declares righteousness as the only source and standard for living. And righteousness is this – it is the spotless, holy, perfection of your every thought, your every word, your every action. And He rightly pronounces this judgment: "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

If righteousness is what it takes to survive the international, national, local, and private mess that life is in then there is no hope. That is if that spotless, holy perfection of thought word and deed must come from somewhere inside of me. But thankfully Paul didn't stop after he said "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The rest of that sentence is this – "and are justified freely by His grace."

Justified: made righteous, declared innocent, given spotless, holy perfection, not by works, not by your own effort, but by grace. The story is so old and worn out it shouldn't be allowed from the pulpit anymore but it always makes the point: a man died and went to heaven and at the gates St. Peter met him and explained that entrance required that he score 500 points on the entrance evaluation.

The man began confidently – "I was happily married and faithful to my wife for 55 years." St. Peter smiles and says, "That's good – it's worth three points." The man was a little startled, only three points, and continued on, "I was a pillar of the community I lived in, attended church

regularly, and contributed generously to many charities.” Again Peter smiled, made a check mark and said, “that’s very good, you get one more point for that.”

Now the man grew nervous – he recited the Ten Commandments and the Apostles’ Creed and Lord’s Prayer, sang a half-dozen hymns and quoted numerous key Bible verses and hearing that all of it combined was worth only one more point he shook his head in frustration and said, “At this rate the only way I’ll get in is by the grace of God.” And of course Peter smiled and said, “Now your talking – come on in.”

It makes me think of Abraham, of Old Testament fame. If ever there was a man who needed grace it was him. And God gave him grace calling him to faith in a promise – a promise that God was going to work a miracle in history of the world – one of Abraham’s descendants would be the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior. And here it is – here are the words – “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Abraham believed the promise even though he was 100 years old and his wife Sarah who was not far behind, were childless. Now, here comes the secret, the one you need to grab hold of as we come spinning back into our own time – God does not change the circumstances we are in – he did not reverse Abraham and Sarah’s age to accomplish His promise – God enters the circumstances we are in and through them He accomplishes the miracle of our salvation.

God has entered the circumstances of your life – while you were powerless – while you were still sinners – purely and solely by His grace He came down from heaven and was born into human flesh and became a man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. God pulled no punches, he did not change the circumstances of life for Jesus, he entered our circumstances suffering and dying and by His presence He changes us!

We have been justified by His blood, declared righteous, given the spotless, holy perfection required by God in order to live the real life we were created to have – a new life – a

righteous life – turning from the empty, dying kingdom and power and glory of this world, our own little world of worry and suffering, to worship Him and serve Him forever and ever.

You have been saved, Paul says – and it is not some escapist little daydream about avoiding the trouble of this world – you have been saved from God’s wrath. You have been reconciled by the death of Jesus. You know what that means? It means you get to sit by God in this worship service and survey the landscape of time from His vantage point. You get to see what He sees and from up here it looks very different than it does from down there.

Jesus looked at the crowds our Gospel lesson says, he looked at you and me and He had compassion because we were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers into the harvest field.

I don’t know what tomorrow holds in store for us internationally, nationally, locally or personally. But I know that in Jesus God has entered our circumstances to change us from timid, worried, self-preserving little people into the people of God who have the eyes of Jesus, who look at the world differently than we did at the beginning of this worship.

Be still now for a little while longer. Let God be God. Watch the mighty things He is doing through your life, through mine to accomplish the singular goal of all history – salvation! We can’t just stay here. We have to GO!

Go to your family, neighbors, colleagues, and others who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ and personally share the Good News with them. Help develop a strategy to share the love of Christ and His Good News with those in your community who need to hear it. Love and serve people, feeding the homeless, offering rides to church and visiting sick and homebound people, working with little children.

Folks we are doing these things at Mountain View not just to keep us busy or to occupy our time – we’re working with our local Mission Society to work toward getting new missions started in our city, and with Lutheran Social Services, and the Rescue Mission, and Michael

Ersland translating the Bible in Africa, and the Donofrios reaching out with the Gospel through radio and podcasting into areas of the world that have no way to gather for worship, and on and on it goes.

Rejoice, Paul says at the end of our text, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. What an amazing view there is from up here.

OK, Lord, I think I am ready – you can start the world back up and put me where you can use me best to make some salvation history for You. Amen.