

Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!** In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Dearly Beloved, It is very common to hear people call this service, a "worship" service.

And today, "worship" even happens to be part of our theme of the week, Sing! Worship.

It is not wrong or incorrect to call it that. After all, that is one of the things that we are doing here.

But there is something more that is happening, and it really is the essential thing that happens here.

In fact, it is the thing that makes our singing and worshipping actually pleasing to the Lord.

As the text is read, listen for what that essential thing really is. It will take a discerning ear.

The biggest clue will come at the very end, but it is throughout the entire text.

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*As follows in Jesus' name:*

[Jesus prayed...] I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

*This is Your Word, heavenly Father; **sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth.** Amen. (John 17:17)*

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Were you able to pick it out? What is the essential thing that we are gathered here for?

It's our sanctification, or to say it more clearly,

the primary reason we're here is to receive God's holiness.

That is what Jesus was praying for His disciples in this prayer...

that they would be sanctified by God's Word, by His truth.

But let's take a step back and consider what sanctification is.

Sanctification is "holy-fication". It is God, giving us His holiness to make us holy.

We often think of "holiness" simply as the state of being perfect... and that is true,

but there is more to the concept of "holiness."

There is also the idea of being separate, or set apart, from what is evil or even common — from sin.

We see this in how the Lord established His OT services.

In those services the Lord made it very clear what was holy... and what was common or profane.

The holy things were those things that were set apart from the common things.

The tabernacle/temple, the altars, the priestly garments, even the utensils were sanctified, that is, cleansed and set apart, by the blood of the proper sacrifices.

They were not to be profaned by common use or touched by unclean people or things.

Even the Lord's name was to be set apart, to be holy, in the minds and mouths of God's people.

In Leviticus <sup>22:32</sup> He made this abundantly clear, saying, "**And you shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you.**"

God's name was not to be profaned by common, or vain, usage.

Instead, they were to use His name to **call upon Him in every trouble**,  
and glorify Him in thanksgiving... or worship.<sup>Ps.50:15</sup>

This would set apart His name among His people and their neighbors as something very precious.

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But here we are today. We do not have the OT services of sacrifices anymore.

We do not sanctify, or set anything apart, by smearing or sprinkling blood on it.

Does this mean that God doesn't care anymore about what we say or do in His house or elsewhere?

What about "*the day of rest*"? Does He still desire that we would have such a time to keep holy?

Well, consider – very briefly – the 1st Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

***Hallowed be Thy name.***<sup>Matthew6:9</sup>

We don't use "hallowed" anywhere else, but we are basically asking, "Sanctified be Thy name."

Martin Luther correctly explained the 1st Petition saying, *God's name is certainly holy in itself, even without our prayer.*

In fact, we cannot make it holier...nor can we make it less holy.

As God's very nature is infinitely holy, so is His name is infinitely, holy.

But Luther also points out that how we misuse it, or don't use it, profanes His name among us.

And consider how precious the Lord considers His name when He would protect it

by the 2nd Commandment - **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

But why is this the case? Why would the Lord use the 2nd Comm. to protect His name so specifically?

We see why very clearly in that Leviticus passage quoted earlier: "**I am Yahweh who sanctifies you.**"

He is the Lord who sets you apart from the profane... who cleanse you from the unclean.

He is the Lord who has offered Himself as the proper sacrifice, whose blood has been spilt  
and whose blood is applied to you in Holy Baptism as you are washed clean of your sin.

Whose name was given to you, to set you apart as His own, making you His holy adopted child.

Whose blood was shed and is given to you, along with His body, for the forgiveness of your sins.

And consider then why it is that He would also have a commandment about sanctifying a *day of rest*,  
of setting apart time each week from the ordinary, common work of this world

so that you may receive His name and His Word... It's so that you may be sanctified by them.

It is common these days for the world to know 5 days of work and 2 days for sports and play  
or sleeping in.

It is extraordinary to the world, that 1 of those days would be set apart, would be sanctified, by us  
on which to be sanctified, or holy-fied by God in the Divine Service,

as He comes with His holy name and Word to cleanse and set you apart from the profane world.

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But the world has a certain pull on it, doesn't it? We are used to the common.

And what is set apart can seem like a lot of work.

Maintaining and caring for the Church building, the communionware, the paraments, etc.

It is usually fine for special occasions, for festivals and such, but each week, that seems... common.

And so there is temptation to consider and treat what God has sanctified and set apart as common.

When we do not keep ourselves separate from the world, when we think, speak, and act  
more like the world than like Christ, we are profaning ourselves.

When we join in their sins and immoralities and perversions.

When you use our holy body for unholy things.

When you profane your mouth with crude jokes, indecent talk.

When your eyes gaze upon what is impure and indecent....

When you vainly, or idly misuse His name to curse, swear falsely, practice witchcraft, or simply lie.

When you treat His word as a common thing, a word you can choose to listen to or ignore/despise.

When you do not *live holy*, or set apart, *lives according to it*.

When studying or meditating on it, let alone hearing it, becomes a bore.

When you do not keep any day for resting in and receiving His holiness,

but carelessly treat all days the same, as if you did not need His holiness,

as if He shed His blood for nothing... as if He sprinkled His blood on you for nothing...

Then are you not more like the world, than like Christ?

Then aren't you more united to the world, than united to the Triune God who has saved you and set you apart for holy things?

What happened to Judas, who went the way of the world, who treated Jesus as a common man?

He was the son of destruction, and gave himself over to the evil one.

He separated himself from God, united himself to the world and its prince, and now suffers eternally.

*From this preserve us, dear Father in heaven.*

But if you would escape this fate and seek to be holy and to consider Jesus as holy, then meditate on His prayer this week.

How highly does He regard the Father's holy name and word?

How important does He consider them to be for you?

He prays saying, **Holy Father, keep them in Your name... that they may be one, even as We are one.**

As He prayed that evening, knowing that His time walking among them was short,

He pointed out, **I kept them in Your name...I have given them Your word...**

If this was how Jesus sanctified/set apart/made His disciples holy, then take note.

God's name and God's Word, these are what sanctify you... what set you apart from the world.

He said of His disciples, **they are not of the world** (though they were to remain in the world).

And note the great distinction Jesus makes between His holy people and the world.

He was **not praying for the world but for those whom** [the Father had given Him].

A few verses later, Jesus even makes a point of praying for you:

**"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word... that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us."**

You see then that you are precious to the Lord.

(We even got to see it this evening as the Lord put His holy name upon Zack and set him apart from his sin and from this world.)

This is what the Lord has done for you.

In your baptism He cleansed you of your sin, and united Himself to you.

And in this holy service, the Lord puts His name on you, setting you apart, week after week.

He is actively serving you, making you holy by His Word

as He absolves you – forgives you – of your worldly imitations and profanings and keeps you in the Holy Father's name, teaching you His word of truth.

Indeed, we sing, we worship as a joyful and thankful response  
for the Lord's continual sanctifying and keeping us united to Himself each week.

But then the Divine Service is not merely a "worship service" that we choose to attend... or not.  
It is the place and time when the Lord comes to you, a common person to sanctify you,  
to cleanse you, set you apart from the world, and make you pure and holy, and join Himself to you.

Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**  
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**            *Soli Deo Gloria*