

“Delivered and Transferred”

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is that you have been “delivered” and “transferred.” St. Paul writes that God the Father “has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”

As the Rite of Holy Baptism states, “The Word of God teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own.”

The truth is that we all once lived in the “domain of darkness” – in the kingdom of the devil – who ruled over us with his lies, fed us with false hope, delivering us over to an eternal death. It was a life of slavery, bound by our sin.

But God the Father has “transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” – to live in a new kingdom, with a new ruler, a new Lord. And how did this deliverance and transfer take place? Through Jesus Christ, “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Dr. Luther speaks of this in his meaning of the Second Article of the Creed. Having confessed that Jesus Christ “is my Lord” – he goes on to describe how our Lord rules in His kingdom.

“[He] has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.”

We confess that we are “lost and condemned” – bound by our sin, spiritually dead, and living under the devil’s rule – but we also confess that Christ’s RDEMPTION has “purchased and won” us – transferred us to live under Him in His kingdom.

To be redeemed is to be “bought back.” Jesus Christ has paid our ransom price with His holy precious blood – and with His innocent sufferings and death, He has delivered us from the power of the devil.

The Lord’s deliverance and transfer is seen throughout the Scriptures. Noah and his family were delivered from a wicked world and transferred into a new world, a new creation, washed clean, when the Lord brought them out of the Ark.

God’s chosen people Israel lived as slaves under their harsh taskmasters (the Egyptians) – but through the blood of the Passover lamb the Lord delivered them – transferring them from slavery and bondage to freedom and the Promised Land.

Israel again was taken hostage – taken into exile by the Babylonian invaders. They lived under the Babylonians until they too were delivered and transferred – released from captivity and returned to Jerusalem.

So also, the Lord has redeemed and delivered you. You are united to Christ by faith – “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” In Christ the bonds of your sins are severed. With His blood shed for you, He leads you out of captivity and into the safety of His kingdom – a kingdom of righteousness, innocence and blessedness.

So, what is it like to live in His kingdom – what does it mean that Jesus Christ “is my Lord” – and how does He rule over me? All very good questions – and all are answered in Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

St. Paul says that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.” If you want to see God, who He is, and how He rules – you have to look at His icon, His image, Jesus Christ – and especially, Christ crucified.

Through this One, hanging on the tree of the cross – “all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible ... all things were created through Him and for Him ... and in Him all things hold together.”

Everything in heaven and on earth are under the rule of this Christ, this crucified One. Hanging on the cross, He's ruling and reigning over all things – especially your sin and death. He is the “head of the body, the church” – a church that is characterized above all by the redemption won by His suffering and death.

“He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.” His resurrection is just the first of many resurrections – for where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation – or, to use the language of the Creed, the forgiveness of sins brings forth the resurrection of the body which brings forth the life everlasting.

Jesus is the Head of the body, His Church. As one theologian has said, in reference to the birth of a child – where the head goes, the body will follow. So also, with reference to death and the grave – where Jesus our Head goes, we too will follow.

“For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.”

All that was thrown into chaos by the sin of the one man Adam – is reconciled in the blood of Jesus Christ. ALL of creation is redeemed. Sinners are reconciled to our heavenly Father. The Father and His children at peace – for the blood of Jesus Christ has taken away our sin.

To preach Christ crucified is to preach that Christ has redeemed us through His blood – delivering us from the devil's hellish rule and reign – and transferring us into the kingdom of the beloved Son – the gracious, merciful, and forgiving Son – so that we may live in peace, now and forevermore. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.