

“Until...” Psalm 110 – Ascension 2021

The grace, mercy, and peace of Christ Jesus rest upon each and every one of you this day.

“Until” “Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool.” Not to tip the hand or steal anyone’s thunder, but you’ll hear this same word again in the Gospel lesson, when Christ commands His apostles atop that ascension mount to go back home to Jerusalem and wait until He sends the Holy Spirit, who will empower and lead them to boldly preach, teach, and confess the truth of the crucified and resurrected Christ, beginning from Jerusalem and extending to Judea, Samaria, and to the very ends of the earth. These guys are standing atop that ascension mountaintop asking Jesus, “Is now the time? Are you going to now restore the Kingdom of God to Israel?” And Jesus says, “Nope. Now is not the time. Go back and wait until it is the right time.”

Now, maybe you’ve never given it much thought, but that little word “until” has a way of not sitting well with us children of Adam. We don’t like this word. This word bespeaks and commands patience. We have to wait until the time is right, until all our ducks are in a row, until everyone and everything is properly readied and prepared. And yet...how many of us know that these are things we’re not very good at putting into practice? I will confess to God and to all of you from this pulpit that I am terrible at putting that word “until” into practice. I’m terrible at waiting until.... I tend to jump right in, headfirst and headlong, and then have to deal with the consequences of my premature leap in the aftermath. That’s me. That’s my *modus operandi*, for better or worse. It’s been said that patience is a virtue. Well...it’s not my virtue. Let someone else be virtuous. Let someone else deal with those pesky “untils.” I don’t want to wait. I don’t want to be patient.

“Until...” Psalm 110 – Ascension 2021

And if you're honest, you too will confess the same thing. We're all guilty of it, in one way or another. In fact, the guilt doesn't just rest upon us here tonight, but serves as a dark and condemning pall over our entire 21st century American culture. We are the “Burger King” culture. We want it our way, right away, whatever “it” may be. Just think about the amazing technological advances we've made in the past twenty years. We've gone from having to read ink-and-paper books at the library to now being able to “google” whatever pops into our brain at that fleeting moment. And if the two million-plus results don't come back to us in a fraction of the time that it takes to blink an eye, we lament and cry out. “O Google! O Wi-Fi connection! O 5-G connection on my I-Phone! Why have you forsaken me?!” Yes. We don't even like to wait until Google is finished loading on our handheld devices.

Of course, this same word is also used quite negatively when it's utilized as a threat. “You just wait until your father gets home!” I can tell you from personal experience that those are words that can send shivers up and down your spine. Spoken in that context, “until” takes on a very ominous and foreboding tone. And it's a mixed bag too. I want to wait and put it off the impending doom as long as I can. But by the same token, my impatience still creeps in. I don't want to wait until that time when father gets home. I don't want to wait. The waiting is torture. Get it over with now. Punish me now. Save the “until” and just drop the hammer already.

And yet...in spite of all these negative connotations that we can associate with the word “until,” this is the exact word your heavenly Father uses time and time again, not only in dealing with us, but in addressing His only-begotten Son. “Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool.” Even Jesus is told to wait; to be patient; to let the Father's whole plan of salvation play out in the fullness of His

“Until...” Psalm 110 – Ascension 2021

time. And Jesus does just that—perfectly, obediently, willingly, and joyfully.

But here is our comfort for right here, right now. You see, we don't have to wait until our Lord and Savior returns from His heavenly throne in order to receive the joy and peace and grace and mercy that He purchased for us on His cross with His own lifeblood. We don't have to wait until Judgement Day to be victorious. We are victorious, right now—present tense. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ's death were also baptized into His resurrection?” My fellow baptized children of God: We are redeemed, right now. We are victorious, right now. The enemies of sin, death, and the devil have all been vanquished. They've lost! Yes, they still bark and scare and threaten, but they have no power. They're a dog with no teeth. They've already lost. Christ Jesus closed with, met, and destroyed them all from the battleground that was His cross. It is finished! Think about that for a moment. Jesus didn't say, “Wait until Judgment Day, and then it will be finished.” He didn't even say, “Wait until Easter Sunday, and then it will be finished.” No! It is finished—now and forever.

I know that we live in a world that seems like it is coming more and more undone every day. We look around at all the things happening all around us, especially when it pertains to the Christian faith, and impatience kicks into overdrive. Given all the religious persecution happening around the world and even in America today, I understand now, more than ever, the words of St. John at the end of Revelation, “Come, Lord Jesus, Come!” And yet, until then I have peace. I am content. I am joyous and joyful. Why? Because my Lord and Savior has kept His Word. “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Behold, the Lamb of God, who comes to you this very day to

“Until...” Psalm 110 – Ascension 2021

feed you, nourish you, and comfort you with His gifts of Body, Blood, grace, mercy, and peace.

My fellow redeemed: Here is your peace that surpasses all understanding. Here is your peace and joy, right here and right now. Yes, this is the foretaste of heavenly things to come, but even these crumbs from our Master’s table are more than ample enough to cause the faithful ones to leap for joy and give thanks for the real-time presence and peace that is ours right now in Jesus Christ.

May this peace, which does surpass all human understanding, and which is only apprehended and understood in true saving faith, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus until that blessed day when He calls you home from the veil of tears to feast and recline with Him at His heavenly feast table that He has already prepared for you. Until then, rejoice. Be of good cheer, for your Lord lives and reigns with you now and into all eternity. Taste and see that the Lord is good, and is with you now and always, to the very end of the age, and into all eternity. Amen.