

## God Sends His Best

△ “To be” united with Him (vv.11-13)

△ Trinity grace, love and fellowship (v.14)

In the name of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dearly beloved of God:

One Bible passage that troubled me as a boy was this Psalm: *“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”* (Psalm 126:5f NIV) I thought it meant you had to cry to be forgiven. Over the years I’ve learned that Jesus cried and suffered in our place. Now we are forgiven. That’s the Good News Gospel. When we share the seeds of the Gospel by telling others, the *tears* find us. But so does the *joy*. Like that night, deeply distressed, I ran across another Psalm that soothed like an ice cube on a sweltering summer day. It nearly jumped off the page: *“God sends his love and his faithfulness.”* (Psalm 57:3) While we *sow in tears*, we *reap with songs of joy* because **God Sends His Best** for us...

△ “To be” united with Him (vv.11-13)

You’ve often heard the Apostolic Blessing. But have you ever considered the verses before it? This comes at the end of Paul’s second letter to the troubled congregation in Corinth. Some of you have suffered in churches where strife between pastor and members has left you wondering, “What ever happened to Christian love?” From the very first epistle Paul has been dealing with divisions in Corinth ultimately caused by false doctrine, i.e., false teaching. Where members focus on personalities rather than Christ, or let their own talents overshadow God’s love and faithfulness, the devil stirs up everyone. God’s Word of truth calms us down because, *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.”* (Isaiah 26:3). The Corinthian congregation improved by God’s grace in Word and sacrament.

Paul ends his Second Epistle with these God-inspired words: *“Finally, brothers, rejoice! Let God line you up for service. Be encouraged. Be of the same heartfelt mind. Be at peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”* (MC literal) **God Sends His Best – “To be” united with Him.**

Who hasn’t come to church stressed out and weary? But then you see an old man hobbling along on his cane and realize Christ gives us strength far beyond this failing body and life. You see a young couple with their babies and your heart lifts up as God is passing on the wonders of His grace to the next generation. A middle aged couple comes hand-in-hand to worship and you enjoy their love flowing from God’s love. You know what just happened to you? You were *encouraged*. By the power of God’s Word in the life of fellow Christians, God is raising you above the slimy muck out there. And the sermon hasn’t even started. That’s when God dries our tears caused by our sin and the world around us. God’s holy Law turns over the soil of our hearts so the seeds of the Gospel can sprout while the water of life makes them grow. God’s Gospel love in Christ gives you joy even when happiness seems to run away.

Weary fishermen have to mend their nets. As Christ’s “fishers of men,” we catch them, so Christ can clean them. In the process things can get torn up and out of line. Sometimes our pride or hurt feelings forget how *“Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps..”* (1 Peter 2:21 NIV). We need the dear Holy Spirit to tie everything back together in our minds and hearts so that divisions die and Christ lives in us. God wants our hearts wrapped up in this soul-saving service. He wants us to *“be at peace”* and enjoy *“the God of love and peace...with you.”*

So why don’t we hug and kiss more? The Bible says: *“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”* Years ago an unmarried sister belonged to a church that did this. But after a while the man who kept coming from the far side of the sanctuary didn’t really seem to be giving her *“a holy kiss.”*

My grandma, Nani, was a hugger. Every pastor, hers or visiting, got a big hug and sometimes a kiss at the door from Nani. It seemed perfectly natural to everyone. But in this sinful world of sinful hearts it's not what you thought or felt that matters to the public. So when I served as a campus pastor, I asked my young bride to tell me if anything seemed questionable in my ministry to college women. Better to hear from someone who loves you than to read lies in the paper as happened to one of my fellow pastors. He was finally vindicated, but the damage was done. To the media it only mattered what she said. The pastor immediately called his elders and her husband about the false accusations. He just laughed. "She does that to doctors, lawyers, airline pilots – anyone in a suit and tie."

"A *holy kiss*" can be hard to find in a sinful world. One man dying of cancer could not say thanks after my devotion. Shaking my hand, he gripped tighter and pulled me toward him. He kissed me on the cheek, an old man I barely knew. Many times I've been "kissed" in another way, as Paul says, "*All the saints send their greetings.*" At Christmas, Easter, sometimes in between, greeting cards from God's people remind me that **God Sends His Best**. He makes you *rejoice, be encouraged, of the same heartfelt mind...at peace.* "*The God of love and peace*" wants you "**To be**" united with Him.

### △ **Trinity grace, love and fellowship (v.14)**

One old man said that if he got nothing else out of the service, the Benediction at the end would be enough to keep coming. The same God who said, "*Let there be light. And there was light,*" speaks a word of blessing through His called servant, and you are blessed. The blessings you sing and pray on each other come to pass by God's power and love. When the Pastor says, "*The Lord be with you,*" and you reply, "*And also with you,*" **God Sends His Best – Trinity grace, love and fellowship.**

Some people won't come to church until they "get their life together." But Jesus says, "*The healthy do not need a physician.*" (Matthew 9:12 MC) He wants us to bring our heart griefs, doubts, fears for Him to heal way down deep in our souls. He wants us to admit that because of our sins in thought, word and deed, we do not deserve His blessing. He wants us to confess because then He can give us God's undeserved love and favor when He says, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...be with you all.*" When we confess we've been unloving, unkind and uncaring toward others, **God Sends His Best:** "*...the love of God...be with you all.*" Unconditional, self-sacrificing *αγαπη-love* comes from God the Father who willingly gave His Son into death for us all. When you feel you've lost every friend and maybe chased the last one away, **God Sends His Best:** "*...the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*" **God Sends His Best in Trinity grace, love and fellowship.**

Do you believe the Apostolic Blessing? Or are you like the old farmer in our family devotion last night? He never wanted to fly, but finally had to for a family emergency. Relatives met him asking, "How was it?" "Okay," he said. "But I'll tell you one thing," he continued in obstinate self-justification. "I never let my full weight down on that seat." As if the jet needed help from him! As if our God needs help from us! The Triune God commands, "*Cast all your anxieties on him for he cares for you,*" (1 Peter 5:7), but we tie a string to our hearts with worry and care. Lord, forgive us for every time we've fretted as if you need us to help you carry the load. Take our illnesses, our broken relationships, our disappointments, our financial difficulties and uncertain future – Lord, take it all, and help us to let go. Help us to rest all our weight on your **Trinity grace, love and fellowship.**

Being a Christian is a daily battle against our old sinful self, the world and the evil foe from hell. This struggle has eternal consequences. But Jesus already won the war by His innocent death and glorious resurrection. Our Brother has ascended to God's right hand where He controls all things, so that "*Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.*" (Psalm 126:5f NIV) The harvest is coming. The Triune God guarantees a bumper crop. **God Sends His Best** to dry our tears and strengthen our hearts for the sake of His dear Name. Trust God for His blessing. Amen.