

"The Son of God"

Luke 1:26-38

December 18, 2013

3rd Advent Service

If you play golf, then you are familiar with the term MULLIGAN. It means that if you hit a bad shot off to the right, off to the left, or a few feet in front of you, then you get to have a “do over” and hit it again and make it right, hopefully.

Do you ever wish you could get a “mulligan” when you do something wrong? For example, we lose our temper and say or do bad things. We see someone doing something bad and just can't wait to gossip about it. We stop doing our devotions, reading the Word of God, and praying. We feel bad when we do these things. We wish we could have a “mulligan” so we could change the wrong, do it over again and make it right.

But we can't have a “do over” so, instead, we make excuses as to why our sin is not our fault. I lost my temper, but it wasn't my fault. That person made me angry. Sure, I talked negatively about someone's actions, but I was not “gossiping”. I was simply sharing. Yeah, I don't have devotions or read the Bible. Sometimes I don't even go to church. But God has to understand that I am busy and just don't have the time.

Excuses may make us feel better and justified in our actions, but they don't work with God. Adam and Eve tried making excuses in our first lesson. They broke God's Law and ate the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. When the Lord asked Adam, “have you eaten the fruit from that tree?”, Adam replied, “It was that woman YOU gave me – she gave me the fruit and I ate.” In other words, it's not my fault. It is Eve's fault for giving me the fruit and it is Your fault for giving me her.” When the Lord asked Eve, “What have you done?” she replied, “It was the serpent that deceived me and I ate the fruit.” In other words, it's not my fault. It is the serpent's fault for deceiving me.

Adam and Eve's excuses did not keep (protect) them from God's anger and punishment. And they didn't get a mulligan. They couldn't do things over again. God expelled them from the garden

with the punishment of death to come. The same is true for us. Our excuses mean nothing before God and do not keep (protect) us from God's anger and punishment. We cannot do things over and make them right. Since the time of Adam and Eve, all humanity has been at enmity with the devil and his offspring. We will fall into sin again and again. We can't have a mulligan, do it over, and make it right. We don't even want to make things right most of the time. God expels us from His presence with punishment of death and hell to come.

Our Gospel lesson for tonight shows us that God planned a huge mulligan – a massive “do over” for humanity. All people since Adam and Eve have been born sinners with a sinful nature. God would send Someone to do that over and make it right. But it would not be an angel, not a very good person. As we sang, “God's own Son was born a child.” God sent His Son to be born of a virgin, born holy, pure, without a sinful nature. He would take our place before God.

We have failed to obey God's Law perfectly. We have not even come close to obeying that. We have sinned often. We have sinned grievously. God sent Jesus to do it over for humanity and make it right. Baby Jesus grew up to become a man and perfectly obey all of God's Law perfectly. He did it, but we get the credit (profit). God gives us Jesus' holiness.

We justly deserve God's wrath and punishment for our sinful nature and for our sinful actions. God sent Jesus as a “do over” for us and make it right. Jesus takes our sin upon Himself. Jesus left the manger and went to a cross, accepting God's wrath and enduring God's punishment for our sin. He did it, but we get the benefit. God gives us forgiveness for all of our sins for Jesus' sake.

Most importantly, God created us to live forever, but we have earned death because of our sin. God sent Jesus as a “do over” for us and make that right. Jesus took on (accepted) death for us and overcame death. He died, but became alive again. He rose from the dead and we share in His resurrection. We will live forever in heaven because of Jesus.

Everything we have failed to do or did wrong, Jesus did over again successfully. Jesus did more than forgive sin. He became sin itself. We become more than forgiven. We become holy in

God's eyes. Our second lesson said that Jesus, who had no sin, God made to be sin so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God.

God did more than change us or improve us. God has made us completely new creatures (people) through His Son. Our second lesson says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." When you were baptized, Christ joined Himself to you. You are a new person in Him.

All of the enmity between humanity and Satan is over. God kept His promise to Adam and Eve. Jesus has defeated Satan and taken away all of His weapons to hurt us – sin, death, and hell. All of the enmity between people and God is finished. The words of the Christmas angels have come true: peace on earth, goodwill toward men. God has made peace with us through His Son, Jesus Christ. As the old hymn says, "Peace on earth and mercy mild; God and sinners reconciled."

God cannot do much to help your golf game and make it better, no matter how much you pray while out on the golf course. He can't give you a mulligan. Your golfing buddies will have to do that. But God can help your life and, in fact, has given you a completely new life and standing (place) before Him. God sent His Son to be born of a virgin. Jesus came to do over everything we did wrong and do it right. The Babe of Bethlehem is also the Savior from Calvary (cross). He took on sin. He became sin. He took our punishment and our death. He made peace between God and humanity. We are now sons and daughters of God. We share His holiness. We share His life. We will share His heaven. What a magnificent "do-over"! Amen.