

July 22, 2018
Sermon for the 9th Sunday after Pentecost (vbs wrap-up)
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
2 Corinthians 1:18–22

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

2 Corinthians 1:18–22 (ESV)

¹⁸ As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. ²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

What do you suppose is the first word most babies learn to say? Anyone want to guess? Most of you don't have to guess. You've lived it. Although statistics show the first word a baby usually speaks is Dada. Momma usually comes in second. Not that is really shows any bias towards dads over moms. The word dada is physically a much easier word to say. Less muscles are used and it takes less coordination.

Go ahead, try it sometime and check out the different muscles and how they are used. But if you decided to do it during the sermon, just do it quietly.

So even though a baby might say dada first, they could be referring to anything from a houseplant to the family dog.

Now are there any guesses for the third word, what might that be? I didn't research this but I wouldn't be surprised if it's *NO!*

That's because by the time babies become mobile, from scooting to crawling to walking, they start getting into things that they aren't supposed to, they start hearing *NO*, over and over and over.

We know it's for their own good, though. We don't want babies to get hurt. They don't know what's dangerous. Electrical outlets are dangerous. Knives are dangerous. Glass is dangerous. Fireplaces are dangerous. So parents have to say, "NO!" And they say no so many times, *no* becomes one of baby's first words. And it doesn't stop there.

Throughout childhood, kids keep hearing "NO!" over and over and over.

“NO, you can’t ride your bike without your helmet.”

“NO, you can’t have candy until after you eat your green beans.”

“NO, you can’t go to Johnny’s house for a sleepover.

Parents say “NO!” so often, kids think it must be adults favorite word.

And not just kids, but all of us, could get the impression from what we’ve heard in church that no is God’s favorite word too.

Just look at the Ten Commandments. Of the Ten Commandments, how many of them are no’s?

Eight! “You shall have NO other God’s before me.”

“You shall NOT misuse the name of the Lord your God.”

“You shall NOT murder, commit adultery, steal, and so on.”

And just two commandments are yeses. One is “Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.” And the other is “Honor your father and your mother.”

And of course that implies when mom or dad say “NO!” we better obey. That sounds like a “No!” even though it doesn’t come right out and say it.

Are we ever going to hear “YES”?

Absolutely! In fact, I’m here to proclaim to you that today is YES-terday.

Jesus is not about “NO!” He’s all about “YES!”

In God’s Word for today, St. Paul says, “*For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory*” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

I’m ready to hear some of God’s yes-es in Jesus!

Are you? Let’s hear some yes’s from God’s Word.

The first yes in Jesus is signed with the cross.

Would you like to go to heaven someday?

Although I'm not in any rush, I'd like to go to heaven someday too.

But guess what, I can't afford the cost to get there. In fact, nobody can afford the price of admission, nobody but Jesus.

I remember once when I was a little kid, I would go to the laundry mat with my grandmother. Me and my brother would always get a few nickles, sometimes even a quarter, to spend at Richter's five & dime. Some of y'all don't remember those 5 & 10 cent stores, but in my memory they were even better than Wal-Mart, in my opinion anyway.

So anyway one day we were at the store and they had this plastic old timey phone toy. One of those where you held the earpiece up to your ear and talked into another microphone on the base. I was always fascinated by those phones I saw on TV. Oh man, I really wanted it. So I carried it up and laid down my nickels, but it wasn't enough. I don't remember the cost, but I didn't have anywhere near enough.

I was so sad, I started to cry. My brother and I walked back to the laundry mat, me crying and him trying to look like he didn't know me. When we got there, grandma was just finishing up the laundry.

She heard my story through muffled and sad words and we loaded back up into the car. Grandma said one more stop before we went home for lunch. When she came back to the car, she handed me a bad and there was my phone. So even though I only had a few nickels, I now had this wonderful plastic phone

to play with. I don't know what happened to it, but I clearly remember playing with it for many hours. I got toy I really wanted, because my grandmother paid for it.

That's kinda the way it is with eternal life.

Oh, how we would love to be good and holy people and someday spend eternity with God in heaven! But we could never afford it.

The price is too high. You see, we're sinners. ... We have a debt to pay because of our sins. It's a debt that takes forever to pay.

It's like only having a few nickels when you need a dollar.

But God loves us! He doesn't want us to be apart from Him.

He wants us to live with Him forever. So do you know what God did? He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay our debt to sin for us.

Jesus did it by dying in our place on the cross.

That's why St. Paul says God has "*forgiven us all our trespasses [our sins] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside nailing it to the cross*" (Colossians 2:13–14).

If you think about it, the cross is just a big X standing up instead of lying on its side. In Bible times, when a debt was paid, they would mark a big X through the bill and eventually just throw the bill in the trash.

That's what Jesus did for us. He paid our bill. His cross cancels the debt to sin we owed, and all our sins are just thrown away.

Now, when we stand before God asking to live with Him forever, He doesn't say no.

He says yes.

The second yes in Jesus is sealed in our Baptism. It's so good to know the price of admission to God's heavenly kingdom has been bought and paid for by Jesus! It's so good to know we're forgiven, that all our debt to sin has been canceled by the cross of Jesus! This is such good news, isn't it?

But like anything we have that's bought and paid for, there needs to be a receipt someplace that shows the bill is paid. We do have a signed and sealed receipt, you know. But it's not an actual piece of paper with an *X* drawn through it. It's our Baptism!

Here's what St. Paul says about what happens to us baptized Christians: God "*establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and . . . has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee*" (2 Corinthians 1:21–22).

In the old days—and even sometimes today—when an important agreement was signed, it was sealed with hot wax into which the insignias of the persons who signed the document were pressed.

A signed and sealed document is the guarantee that everyone who made the agreement will keep their promises.

Our Baptism is God's signed and sealed document that says He will keep His promises. When we're baptized, as a child or as an adult, we have God's promise that our debt to sin was paid by Jesus, that we are God's children, that He will never leave us, that God's Holy Spirit lives in our heart, and that sin, death, and the devil can never harm us. That's God's promise.

Can you believe it? Well it's true and backed up by God Himself!

The third yes in Jesus is delivered by faith. All the wonderful promises of God are delivered free to every baptized believer by faith. And even faith is God's gift to us. We hold out our empty hands and God fills them with salvation's blessings.

Faith is simply trust. We had so much fun with the children this past week at VBS. As they learned their Bible passages and songs, they learned of all of God's yes-es. Because when God promises, He always follows through.

We started with baby Moses floating in the Nile river, in a basket surrounded by God's love and protection. Next, we walked through the parted Jordan river and walked with God's people into the promised land. We saw Naaman healed by washing himself three times in the Jordan river, we sailed with Paul saw as he and those with him on the ship were saved by God's hand.

And finally, we were there when Jesus Himself was baptized, "*And ... the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and ..., a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

Wow! What a week! It's no wonder that Jesus Himself says that kids are the best example of faith there is. "*Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them," Jesus says, "for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 19:14). "*Unless you turn and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven,"* says Jesus (Matthew 18:3).

Why are children such wonderful examples of heaven's citizens?
Is it because they've never sinned? I don't think so.

Anyone who has ever raised a child knows better than that.

Is it because children have such a clear grasp of theology? I don't think so.

So what makes kids such good examples that Jesus says unless we, that's us adults, are like them we won't enter the kingdom of heaven?

Faith, faith is what makes kids such good examples. Faith as trust.

Faith is a gift.

A baby will squirm and cry when a stranger holds him. But give him back to his mother and he's happy. Why? He knows his mother's touch, her voice, her smell.

And in her arms, he just relaxes. The baby can't explain it, but he trusts his mother. He has faith in her. When he's in her arms all is right with his world.

What else makes little kids such good examples of faith?

They have nothing at all to offer in return for anything given them.

They have no power. They have no money.

All they can do is freely receive love from those who offer it—their parents, their grandparents, their brothers and sisters, and most importantly, God.

Having received love, they love back.

Like little children, all we do is trust in God's promises, we rest in Christ, assured that the Good News has been signed, sealed, and delivered.

What's that Good News? Its is the Good News of: "Yes!"

God says. "You are My child. You are Mine forever! Enter into My joy!"

So there you have it; God's Yes! Signed, sealed, and delivered in Jesus.

Now, if you're happy to finally hear some yes-es after a lifetime of no's.

Let's close with prayer. Just as we prayed all week in VBS, we pray again today. Repeat after me:

Thank You, God, / that You have good news for every boy, girl, man, and woman, / and that good news is YES! / You love us. / YES, You forgive us / and Yes, You welcome us into Your kingdom. / In Jesus Name, /

AMEN!

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

Sermon Outline

The Promises of God find their Yes in Him

2 Corinthians 1:18–22

- I. The first yes in Jesus is signed with the cross.
- II. The second yes in Jesus is sealed in our Baptism.
- III. The third yes in Jesus is delivered by faith.