

Sin Separates and Divides
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"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized everyone one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 2:37-38

Sin separates. Sin divides. Sin stirs up anger and hatred and envy and strife. Paul would call these sorts of things "the works of the flesh" - they are open and obvious for all to see. The flesh does its wicked work first and foremost because sin separates and divides. We live in a day and age where we LIKE to be separated and divided. We can't even stay united in disgust at an atrocity - we've got to divide ourselves up and split ourselves over how to fix, how to lament, how to protest. We are driven by our flesh and our passions and our fears to blame, break, and destroy. Break and destroy people, and society, and reputations.

Sin separates and divides. It was a divided crowd that first Pentecost morning - people from all over the world, with different factions and standings. And Peter preached, and the response was one of unity. What shall we do? We. Together. But even then the question was slightly off. The solution was not going to be our action.

We receive. We are united in Christ Jesus by His Word, by Baptism, and we even are united in One in His Supper. We receive forgiveness. Together. Forgiveness to be brought back together and reconciled. And we are people of forgiveness.

Yes, we know God's Law. We know how to see sin, how to spot it. But the point of this gift of being able to know sin for what it is isn't so that we can cast blame on them or wring our hands or thank God that we aren't like them... it's so that we would know when and where to proclaim forgiveness in Jesus' Name. That we would know to break through all this division and declare that we together are forgiven in Christ.

Satan sees sin and revels in it. He loves to accuse -- that's what Satan means - it means Accuser. Christ Jesus seeks to save and forgive. The Spirit gives life, for He is the Lord of life. This is the will of the Father, who still gives daily bread.

This week, you will see sin break out. You'll see it break out in the world and in yourself. Remember who you are: You are the Baptized. You are forgiven in the name of Christ Jesus, and you forgive others in the name of Christ Jesus. This is what we pray for in the Lord's Prayer. Christ Jesus will be with you this week - His Word spoken to you to forgive you, His Word spoken to forgive your neighbors.