

## FREE ACCESS

(Romans 5: 1-5)

Intro: On a church in Jerusalem.

- Near the front door.

- Sign which reads:

  - #"No Explanations."

- Discourage tour guides.

  - #From giving their talks about:

    - \*Building.

    - \*Site.

    - #Where they might be disruptive to worshipers inside.

This is Trinity Sunday.

- In the church's calendar.

  - #Unique day.

    - \*Focused not on:

      - +Some event in the life of Jesus.

        - =Christmas.

        - =Transfiguration.

        - =Easter.

      - +Some characteristic of Jesus.

        - =Good Shepherd Sunday.

        - =Christ the King.

      - \*But on a doctrine.

        - +Who God is.

- It might be tempting to try to provide an explanation of the triune God.

  - #Father.

  - #Son.

  - #Holy Spirit.

    - \*How can three be one?

    - \*And one be three?

- But how do we begin to describe the indescribable?

  - #Imperfect metaphors.

  - #Imperfect analogies.

- Perhaps it is better.

  - #To heed the sign.

    - \*Near the front door.

      - +Of that church in Jerusalem.

        - = "No Explanations."

  - #To open the door.

    - \*To see what's inside.

I. We Can Open The Door Into The Mystery Of God Because We Have Free Access.

A. Sarah Ferguson Was Recently In The News.

1. She is perhaps better known as:
  - a. Fergie.
  - b. Duchess of York.
2. She is:
  - a. Ex-wife.
    - Prince Andrew.
    - #Second son of Queen Elizabeth of England.
  - b. Mother.
    - Princess Beatrice.
    - #Fifth in line to the British throne.
    - Princess Eugenie.
    - #Sixth in line to the British throne.
3. She was recently caught on tape.
  - a. Offering access to her ex-husband.
  - b. For the princely sum.
    - \$750,000.
    - #What kind of access that \$750,000 might buy.
    - \*Mystery to me.
    - \*Greater mystery than the doctrine of the Trinity.
    - #Fergie admitted:
    - \*She's having financial difficulties.
    - \*She needed the money.
    - Such is the way of the world.

B. But We Have Free Access To The Grace Of God.

1. At least it's free to us.
  - a. If access to Prince Andrew.
    - Costs \$750,000.
  - b. How much might access to God cost?
2. It cost:
  - a. God the Father.
    - His only begotten son.
  - b. Jesus.
    - His life on the cross.
3. But to those of us who believe.
  - a. There is no cost.
  - b. Access is free.
    - Such is the way of God.

## II. What Benefits Does Our Free Access To God Provide Us?

### A. Peace With God.

#### 1. On this Memorial Day weekend.

##### a. We are invited:

-To take time out from:

#Car races.

#Ballgames.

#BBQs.

#Trips to the lake.

#Yard work.

#Shopping.

-To remember those who have sacrificed their lives.

#For the things they believed in.

\*Democracy.

\*Freedom.

\*Peace.

##### b. But the human peace that is achieved:

-By diplomacy.

-By military action.

#Can be so:

\*Fragile.

\*Fleeting.

##### c. Peace can be a rare commodity.

-In the world.

-In relationships.

-In the church.

##### d. Access can be:

-Lost.

-Limited.

#Think about what it takes:

\*To visit the Statue of Liberty.

\*To get on an airplane.

+It was easier to get into the St. Louis County Jail.

\*To cross the border into:

+Canada.

+Mexico.

#### 2. Peace with God is different.

##### a. Our passport is faith.

##### b. Our access is free and total.

##### c. Our peace is eternal.

-Sins forgiven.

-Heaven opened.

-Salvation assured.

B. Suffering Produces Endurance Produces Character Produces Hope.

1. Who wants to suffer?
  - a. In body.
  - b. In mind.
  - c. In spirit.
2. Wouldn't it be better?
  - a. If:
    - Endurance.
    - Character.
    - Hope.
  - b. Could be produced by:
    - Success.
      - #Instead of suffering.
    - Pleasure.
      - #Instead of pain.
3. Let me tell you the story of Chris Pollock.
  - a. Story I got from an ELCA news release.
    - This past week.
    - I wouldn't be surprised.
      - #If you read this story.
      - \*In a future issue of *The Lutheran*.
  - b. Chris Pollock.
    - 41 years old.
    - Father of college-age twins.
    - National Guard mechanic.
    - Lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
    - Member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.
  - c. Year and a half ago.
    - November 2008.
      - #Thanksgiving weekend.
    - Chris had agreed to help a friend harvest corn.
      - #It was around 5 P.M.
      - #It had gotten dark in Pennsylvania.
    - Chris was driving a tractor.
      - #Pulling a one-row corn picker.
        - \*Something got jammed.
          - +In the picker's steel rollers.
      - #Chris stopped the tractor.
        - \*Left the machinery running.
        - \*Got down to check on the problem.
      - #He noticed an ear of corn stuck in the rollers.
        - \*He hit it a few times with his hand.
          - +To free:
            - =Corn.      =Rollers.

- That's when a chain inside the picker.
  - #Grabbed his coat.
    - \*Pulled his left hand inside.
  - #Chris instinctively reacted with his right hand.
    - \*That, too, got stuck in the machine.
- For the next 30 minutes.
  - #Chris stood at the machine.
    - \*Screaming for help.
  - #Three times he cried out:
    - \*"God, just let me die."
- After the third time.
  - #Someone heard Chris' screams.
    - \*Came to help.
    - \*Called 911.
- It took the emergency responders another 30 minutes.
  - #To take the rollers apart.
  - #To free Chris' hands.
- Chris was airlifted to the Hershey (PA) Medical Center.
  - #He lost both of his hands.
- d. What might such a tragedy do?
  - To you.
  - To me.
    - #Leave us feeling?
      - \*Bitter.
      - \*Angry.
      - \*Full of self-pity.
        - + "Why me?"
        - + "Poor me!"
- e. This was a life-changing event for Chris Pollock.
  - He said:
    - #"Things are different for me now."
    - #"I believe if God had wanted me to die,"
      - \*"He would have let me die."
    - #"I used to worry about things all the time."
      - \*"Now I worry very little."
      - \*"I'm just thankful to be alive."
- f. While recovering.
  - Chris read about human hand transplantation.
    - #Did more research on the web.
  - University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.
    - #Screened Chris.
      - #Accepted him as a transplant candidate.

- g. In February 2010.
  - Chris underwent 11 hours of surgery.
  - He received:
    - #Transplanted left hand.
    - #Transplanted right hand and forearm.
    - \*Among the first in the world.
    - +To receive two transplanted hands.
- 4. Suffering produces endurance produces character produces hope.
  - a. Not just for Chris Pollock.
  - b. But for:
    - His family.
    - His pastor.
    - His church.
    - #Dixie McCauley.
      - \*Member of Good Shepherd.
      - \*Said:
        - + "What happened to him was the result of human frailty, a human mistake."
        - + "What has followed has been a gift from God."
    - #Pastor Kathleen Baker.
      - \*Chris' pastor.
      - \*Said:
        - + "What I see happening: "
          - = "God's work."
          - = "Chris' work."
          - = "The church's work."
          - "All coming together."
    - #Chris' dad.
      - \*John.
      - \*Said:
        - + "Isn't it amazing what God has done?"
        - + "Sure, they talk about the doctors,"
        - + "But they still talk about how God put those hands back on."
- 5. We have free access to a God:
  - a. Who can raise Christ from the dead.
  - b. Who can put hands back on.
  - c. Who can use:
    - Suffering to produce endurance.
    - Endurance to produce character.
    - Character to produce hope.
    - #How do you explain that?

C. Hope Does Not Disappoint Us.

1. We can be disappointed by lots of things.
  - a. Corn pickers.
    - For getting jammed.
  - b. Ourselves.
    - For not turning off the machinery.
  - c. Other people.
    - For not being there more quickly to help us.
2. We will not be disappointed in our hope of sharing the glory of God.
  - a. Not our glory.
    - Which fades ever so quickly.
  - b. But God's glory.
    - Which lasts for eternity.
      - #Because the love of God.
        - \*Has been poured into our hearts.
          - +Through the Holy Spirit.
      - #Not:
        - \*Anger.
        - \*Resentment.
        - \*Recrimination.
        - \*Self-pity.
      - #But the love of God.
        - \*Poured out:
          - + In water and word.
          - + In bread and wine.
        - \*Poured out:
          - +For this life.
          - +For the next.

Concl: No explanations.

But a simple faith.

- That we have free access to God.
  - #Who gives us peace.
  - #Who can use:
    - \*Suffering to produce endurance.
    - \*Endurance to produce character.
    - \*Character to produce hope.
      - +Hope that will never disappoint us.



