

## GOD IS OUR REAL SUPERHERO

Iron Man, Captain America, the Incredible Hulk, X Men, Spiderman, Superman. These are examples of superheroes making a return over the past number of years. The story line in all superhero movies is basically the same. You have a villain out to conquer the world and you have the superhero out to stop him. You have the damsel in distress like Lois Lane in Superman or Mary Jane in Spiderman, or a group of people whose lives are on the line. The movie gets to the climactic finish when it looks like the girl or some people are going to get killed and the villain is going to win when suddenly the superhero swoops in, rescues the people and in the process, conquers and kills the villain. They make for fun, action packed movies.

Have you ever thought of God as being a superhero? Probably not but when you think about it, couldn't we consider him to be the greatest superhero ever, first of all, because he is real, he is alive? Secondly, because of what he has done and continues to do that is impossible for anyone else to do. The picture we have in our text is one of God swooping in on eagle's wings to come to our rescue. What a neat and reassuring picture as we were reminded of in the hymn we just sang. From this picture we can't help but see that **God is Our Real Superhero**. He is our superhero who came to our rescue and makes loving promises.

The Israelites had finally reached Mt. Sinai, their years of slavery in Egypt having come to an end. What had the Israelites done to free themselves? Nothing but send out an SOS to God crying for deliverance. After that, they just sat back and enjoyed the fireworks, an awesome and magnificent display of God's power in the form of the 10 plagues that devastated the land of Egypt, with the grand finale being the destruction of the Egyptian army when the walls of the Red Sea came crashing down on them. Talk about a superhero. Now as they gathered at Mt. Sinai about to receive the 10 Commandments, God reminded them of how they got there. ***You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.*** God compares his loving actions to that of an eagle watching over, protecting and providing for her babies, swooping under them when they were falling and carrying them safely on her wings back to their nest. This is what God had done to free them from Egypt and get them to Mt. Sinai. This is what God would also do for them in the future. Talk about a superhero.

As if God had not done enough for them already, He also made them this promise. ***Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole world is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*** If the Israelites followed the Lord and remained loyal to him, he promised they would be his treasured possession, a nation he would dearly love and bless. Look what he had already promised earlier. Out of all the nations on earth, God had chosen them to be the nation from which the Savior would come. Was it because they were the model of perfection? Nothing could be further from the truth. After God had freed them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea for them to cross and drowned Pharaoh's army, they complained as they made their way to Mt. Sinai that they had no food or water; that God had brought them out of Egypt so they could die in the desert. Are you kidding me? God could have destroyed them right then and there. They

would have deserved it. Yet God didn't do that. In spite of their ingratitude and unworthiness, God had chosen them to be his people, completely an act of grace on his part.

What a blessing, but a blessing that came with responsibility. They were to be a kingdom of priests, people who would serve God by telling and showing others that their God was the only true God. They were also to be a holy nation, a nation set apart from their ungodly neighbors; a nation dedicated to worshiping their God and to following and living by the commandments God was about to give them. If they would do this, God would continue to carry them on eagles' wings. Yet, how could God consider the Israelites to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation? Being holy means being perfect, without sin. They couldn't make that claim. No one could. God also makes it clear that nothing impure will enter the kingdom of heaven. Since they were impure, they didn't deserve to be in heaven. They deserved to be in hell and on their own, had no way out. They needed someone to rescue them. They needed a superhero.

God, in his grace, sent one, the superhero being his son Jesus! He came to defeat our archenemy, the worst villain the world has even seen, the devil. Whose lives does the villain want to destroy? Yours, mine and all people. The devil had us, in a sense, hanging over the pit of hell, holding on to a rope covered with oil and burning. God could have let that rope burn up and let us fall straight into hell. God's love would not allow that to happen so he sent his Son and had him swoop into our lives and grab on to that burning rope with us. He allowed his perfect life to be sacrificed on the cross, to fall down that pit and suffer the pain of hell, and then die on the battlefield of Calvary. When this happened, Jesus didn't look like a superhero. It looked like the bad guy won and the bad guy thought he won. He thought that he had defeated our superhero and all the world was now his. He was wrong. The living Jesus swooped into hell to show the devil that he had not won the battle; that Jesus was not the conquered but the conqueror; that the people of the world were not lost and doomed forever but saved. On Easter morning, the risen Jesus shared the same message with the world. This is what Paul meant when he wrote. ***At just the right time when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.***

My friends, this is what our superhero has done for us and for all people. He also did something else for us. In spite of our ingratitude and unworthiness, he swooped into our lives not only at the moment we were baptized but even before he created the world. Listen to what Paul wrote in the first chapter of Ephesians. ***For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.*** Mind-boggling but why did he choose us? Paul tells us why. ***To the praise of his glorious grace.*** God's grace and no other reason but his grace moved him to choose us and then call us to faith in Jesus. In doing so, God has made us his treasured possessions, covered us with the robe of Christ's righteousness, making us his kingdom of priests and a holy people. He has set us apart from this ungodly world and has given us the responsibility to show that we are children of the true God and not children of this world. This should be evident to those around us when it comes to our worship life, our priorities, our morals and values, our willingness to structure our lives around the 10 Commandments, our willingness to confess that we are sinners who find comfort in knowing that Jesus lived and died to pay for our sins, our eagerness to share the news with others that Jesus is the Savior of the world and the only way to heaven.

God expects, in fact, demands obedience and loyalty from the people he has chosen and called to be his own, people he shows love to every day of their lives. Think back for a moment to some of the most difficult times in your life; the hardest and saddest experiences where you didn't know what to do or how you were going to cope and get through them. What happened? God carried you on eagles' wings. This superhero swooped under you and assured you that he was with you; that everything would be okay; that he would get you through it and he did. How many times hasn't he done that in the past and how many times won't He do that in the future? How many times haven't you really messed up and sinned against God? What happened? God, your superhero, swooped under you and carried you on eagles' wings to the cross of Christ to show you that Jesus shed his blood to wash away your sins and then carried you away with renewed strength to follow him. How many times won't he have to do that in the future? When death comes knocking at your door, will you have to be afraid or nervous? No! Your superhero will be right there to carry you on eagles' wings to your beautiful home in heaven that Jesus has prepared for you. God is our real superhero who lovingly promises that through his Word and Sacrament, he will keep us as his treasured possessions, his kingdom of priests and a holy people until that day he carries us home.

Spiderman, Ironman, Superman, Captain America can make for some fun entertainment as we watch what they can do on the screen. Yet, in reality, we know they aren't real. They are superheroes that someone has made up for our entertainment. The Bible reveals to us a superhero who is very real, who has done what no one else possibly could. Not only did he create the world by the almighty power of his word, he also saved the world by making the perfect sacrifice to pay for the sins of the world. He is our superhero who came to our rescue and will continue to come to our rescue until the day he takes us out of this world of sin to our home in heaven. This superhero deserves our attention as well as our worship, our praise and our service. As kingdom of priests and a holy people, let's give our God what he deserves. Amen.