

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
www.lutheranlccf.org
Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 19, 2023

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 62, 235:1, 325, 375, 515.

Lessons: Isaiah 52:13-53:12, 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Passion History, Part 4.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 12:1-6.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

NOTE: The Passion History is found on the LCCF website on the WEEKLY SERMON page.
<http://www.lutheranlccf.org/MinistrybyMail.html>

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Isaiah lived and prophesied at a very difficult time for the Jews, the descendants of Abraham. If you were to begin reading the book, and read it up to the chapter of our text, you would find the following kind of events recorded. God gives multiple warnings for the sinful nation, and of judgment to come upon God's people. We do see several descriptions of the Savior who will come but the overall picture is one of warnings and judgment against a sinful people, of a people who will be conquered by the nation of Assyria.

But this chapter gives words of comfort, trust, joy and thankfulness. Please listen carefully as Isaiah gives us in this chapter

A SONG OF SALVATION

1. We shall praise God, and
2. You will tell of his salvation.

In these words of Hebrew poetry, God tells us ***“In that day you will say: ‘I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.’”***

When is ***“that day”***? We can find several answers. When Isaiah first wrote these words, the physical descendants of Abraham were about to be carried off into captivity. ***“That day”*** would be when they return to the Promised Land.

Another answer is ‘the day when Jesus has accomplished his work, when the redemption of all mankind has been completed.’ That happened when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Another answer is the day when we have come to faith, when the Savior literally comes into your heart. That is the day when one comes to believe in Jesus as Savior. You have heard that message from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit has worked faith in all who believe. Believers are called out of the bondage of sin and death by the cross of Christ. This happens whenever God calls believers through the Gospel. For many of you, that happened when you were baptized as infants, so you don't remember that day.

And finally, that day is when we recognize God's goodness – and that happens in many ways and at many times. Doesn't that happen every day, like this very day right now, today, when you as a child of God who believes that Jesus paid for all your sins woke up, and remembered and recognized that Jesus Christ has redeemed you?

So what are you going to do today? ***“In that day you will say: ‘I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.’”***

“In that day”, today, we will praise, honor and glorify the Lord God of our salvation.

God has good reason to be angry with us because of our sins. But Isaiah writes ***“although you [O Lord] were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.”*** Because Christ has atoned for

your sins and paid the price for them, the fact of the salvation and forgiveness of sins gained through faith in Christ is the highest consolation and comfort for believers each day we are on earth, and will continue into eternity.

Isaiah recognizes God's anger over sin. Every human being deserves punishment. Believers are not exempt. They, too, deserve the punishment of God for their sins. But believers are those who have come to believe in the forgiveness of sins which Jesus earned for us.

As believers come to worship God in his house, they individually and together with other sinners acknowledge their sins. We use words in which we confess that 'I am by nature sinful. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.' In our worship services, we even make those confessions together.

But God's anger has turned away from mankind. God turned his anger toward his Son and punished his Son in the place of every sinner.

This idea is found repeatedly in Scripture. In our Old Testament lesson, you heard about the Servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who ***"will be raised and lifted up He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*** Isaiah 52:13, 53:3-7, 9, 12 (NIV)

Believers praise God for punishing his Son in their place. The words of our text echo the words of Moses and the people of Israel after God led them across the Red Sea on dry land as we read from Exodus 15: ***"The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him."*** Exodus 15:2 (ESV)

God gives us comfort because of his great love for the people of the world. We can and do confidently say ***"Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."***

We will praise, honor and glorify the Lord God who has redeemed us and made us his.

As a redeemed child of God, you can joyfully say these things. The God who planned and carried out the redemption of a world lost in sin gives us reason to not be afraid. We will trust in him, and place full reliance upon his promises.

We, as beloved children of God brought to faith by the work of the Holy Spirit, have nothing to fear, not even eternal death in hell because God ***"has become my salvation."***

Isaiah says ***"The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song."*** He repeats the sacred name of the Lord God, the Lord Jehovah.

Without the Lord God walking with us, we have no strength to face the day. Oh yes, we may have some strength and encouragement for each of our days from the people and events surrounding us, but the greatest strength we can have comes from the Lord God who ***"has become my salvation."***

The Psalmist teaches us to praise the Lord in Psalm 146 and not to trust even in powerful men. ***"Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help."*** Psalm 146:1-3 (NKJV) Our greatest strength comes from the Lord God.

In the first part of the song of our text we see the word "I", as in the words ***"I will praise you, O LORD."*** The second part speaks of what you will do, starting with the words ***"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."*** We know that water is essential for life, and here we read about ***"the wells of salvation."*** Salvation comes only from God, and we learn it from the deep wells of the pure Word of God.

The song of our text goes on to what you, O child of God, ***"will say: 'Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to***

the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

God’s name is to be exalted. We will proclaim the miracles of God’s mercy, telling them to those closest to us and to the world. We will give all glory to him and to him alone. You know what the Lord has done, not only for you, but also for all mankind. And this proclaiming, telling, teaching what God has done for you and for mankind is to be done throughout the world! We read Jesus’ command ***“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”*** Mark 16:15 (NIV) and wonder “How can we do that?” Well, it starts right where you are, as Jesus told his followers just before he ascended into heaven: ***“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** Acts 1:8 (NIV) They were telling about Jesus first of all right where they were: in their home town.

And what is the message that believers will make known? ***“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”***

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” We know that the water God gives us from his Word is pure. It is the water of eternal life. Drinking from such wells is what God wants us to do, and lets us do, and leads us to.

You are told to ***“Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name.”*** So when do you give thanks? When are you thankful? Maybe you say a quick prayer before you eat. Maybe you say a prayer when you wake in the morning. Maybe you say a prayer when you go to bed at night. But we can pray at any and every time. Paul writes in Thessalonians ***“Pray without ceasing!” “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

We want to ***“Shout aloud and sing for joy, [because we are included in the spiritual] people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”*** We have opportunity to do that in our worship services. But there are even other times when we will tell and even sing about the great things God has done for us. You can tell anyone at any time about the great things God has done for you!

Have you seen how the words of thankfulness, praise and joyfulness are emphasized in the words of our text? Give Thanks! Proclaim and declare the praises of your God! Shout out loud and let this message be known to others! Truly, ***“great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”***

So even though the first eleven chapters of the book of Isaiah give warnings and terrible predictions for God’s people, we can still see the Savior.

Yes, truly we can say, sing, and shout out loud: ***“O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth forever.”*** Psalm 118:1 (KJV) Amen.