

Sermon - 16th Week After Pentecost 09/07/2024

Pastor Staehr

Sermon Text: Isaiah 35:4-7

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

### BUT HE WILL SAVE YOU

The Prophet Isaiah lived during a time that was difficult for a follower of the Lord God. The kings of Israel were from the line of David, but David is used as a foul word by Isaiah. The kings had fallen away from faith in The Lord God of Israel. The people pursued after their own desires. Those who called on the name of the Lord were shunned. Isaiah's mission was to prophecy about the coming destruction of Israel. He did this by sharing his prophecy with the kings and rulers of the nations. The prophecy was that the people of Israel should repent and turn back to The Lord their God and be saved from the destruction that is to come. The destruction of Israel was knocking on the doors with the Assyrian army. Yet, they were delivered for a time until Babylon came along and destroyed the Assyrians and finished the job by sieging Jerusalem and carrying off the Israelites to Babylon which is in present day Syria. So God allowed the people of Israel to be given over to their own sinful ways and the punishment was distributed to the whole nation of Israel by the captivity of the people of God to Babylon.

That which captivates our minds is so often an evil that besieges our very selves. Given over to such captivity, we find ourselves snared in a trap. We find ourselves blaming God for every misfortune in our lives or with every separation of our own families. Being separated from one another hurts, and being isolated is misery. Yet, something even worse happened to the Israelites as they were carried off from their land; the promised land in which the Messiah would come. Being separated from this land, their hope for deliverance was gone and they didn't know whether God would keep His word or not.

We have made it altogether too easy for our minds to be held captive by the things which lead us to captivity. Those things which bring disappointment and hurt and anxiety and isolation and fear and even to death. We find ourselves taken unwillingly from the promised land and being given over to a debased mind that cannot discern the truth. The promised land is the location the Messiah would come to set His people free. However, the Temple in Jerusalem was torn down by Babylon. Do not let yourselves be given over to the captivity of your own sinful desires. Do not let yourselves be given over to the captivity of separation from the place where the Messiah promises to be. Do not let your hearts be given over to the captivity of anxiety.

Isaiah prophesied these things writing, "Say to those with an anxious heart, 'Be strong, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance' the recompense of God will come. He will come and save you.'" Imagine you were anxious or maybe a friend or your spouse were anxious and the one who was the comforter said, "you'll be alright! Hang in there! You don't need to be anxious!" I would suspect that you wouldn't feel much better as the anxious person.

However, the words of Isaiah suggest that the anxious heart needs to hear the words, "Be strong, fear not." accompanied by a promise that God would come with vengeance. He would come with

recompense. So we have vengeance and recompense. The two words put together are like saying, "You will get what you deserve." My question is this: "What do you deserve?" Have you allowed yourself to be carried off into captivity away from the promised land where Christ our Lord has promised to be? Christ has promised to be with His bride, the Church. What I am asking in plain words is this: "Do you come to church, or have you been taken captive by the world?" What is more important to you, to watch the Cy-Hawk game or to be in the promised land with your brothers and sisters and being fed by Christ Himself who fulfills the word of Isaiah "He will come and save you." For in these words, the name of Jesus is hidden (Y•IV) there is the words save.

If you've ever watched in movies, when you are taken captive, then you often can't free yourself as long as the captor has the right tools to keep you there. And sadly, our enemy uses every tool possible to keep us captive. We need someone to come and rescue us to make us strong and to make us fearless. And as we sit there in our prison of captivity. Our heads are raised up as we hear a commotion. Jesus, the Son of God, on whom the Spirit of God descended like a dove at His Baptism is bearing our sin. He is taking from us the very things that hold us captive. We see Him casting out demons from the daughter of the Syrophenician woman. We notice the power of the Son of God to speak a word to a deaf man "Ephphatha" and his ears are opened and he listens to His creator.

By the very death of Christ our Lord, the Son of God reveals the way for the prisoners in captivity to be set free. At the end of the Gospel of Mark in chapter 15, Christ was counted among the transgressors. His name which means "to save" was used as a mockery. "You saved others; save yourself." And our Lord, the Son of God, Jesus the anointed one of the Holy Spirit denied Himself, took up the sins of the world and died so that those believing in Him might be saved and the prophecy of Isaiah would be fulfilled that He would come and save you. This salvation causes new life to become a reality. Isaiah says, "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy." This new life is accompanied by a new birth of water and the Word as Isaiah continues, "For waters shall break forth in the wilderness And streams in the desert. Then the scorched land will become a pool And the thirsty ground, springs of water,"

For where Christ has promised Himself to be, there is an oasis, a paradise, a glimpse of the new life and the refreshment of freedom from captivity. Here in the hearing of God's Word, our new man is invigorated in faith and responds with such joy that good works naturally result as our Epistle reading in James so accurately displays.

Let your every blindness be changed to sight. Let your deaf ears hear the Word of God. Let your lame souls leap like a deer. Let your mute tongues, proclaim aloud the great joy you have in Christ Jesus, the Son of God. The trials and hardships in life shall be bearable because of such faith. The thirsty ground shall be satisfied with the living waters which flow from the side Of Christ. For the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness shall be satisfied. Amen.