

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
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Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
August 30, 2020

Live in Yahweh's compassion. Avoid misguided *compassion*.

- Today's Gospel is an awesome reading. I'd love to address that today.
- But a number of current events and trends compel me to lead us into the green pastures of Isaiah 56 to explore and be enriched together.
 - ◆ This text has been misused by liberal Christians to promote interfaith coziness
 - ◆ Texts like this have been misused by legalistic Christians to pursue legislation to impose Christian morality on society.
 - ◆ Texts like this have been ignored by conservative Christians trying to prove that they are not *liberal social justice Christians*.
- The narrow Biblical Lutheran middle compels us to walk the path of this text.

Live in Yahweh's compassion. Avoid misguided *compassion*.

❖ Marvel over Yahweh's stunning compassion. *This is what the LORD says.*

- First notice **who** is chiefly active here.
 - ◆ *...my salvation is coming very soon. My righteousness is ready to be revealed*
 - ◆ **I will bring them to my holy mountain, and I will make them glad in my house of prayer.**
 - ◆ *This is the declaration of God the LORD, who gathers Israel's dispersed people: "I will gather still more people to my house besides the ones already gathered."*
- The Lord has a passion to gather people into his household. **Why?**
 - ◆ No one is born gathered to him. Our *sin-thinking* separates us from Yahweh.
 - Sin resents his just exclusive claim: *You shall have no other gods besides me*
 - We insist on our own way, not his. We reject his authority. We reject him.
 - Our sin is self-willed and self-worshipping.
 - By rejecting his authority we separate ourselves from the Source of Life.
 - Seeking self-fulfillment we are actually pursuing self-destruction.
 - Only Yahweh can save us from ourselves - from our eternal self-destruction.
 - ◆ Why would he do that? **Compassion.** His heart hurts for us. Undeserved care.
 - God made us for himself. He has a passion to lavish love on us.
 - Our sin interferes with the good that he has prepared for us.
 - *my salvation is coming very soon. My righteousness is ready to be revealed*
 - Yahweh further revealed his rescue back in Isa. 53:4-5
 - *Surely he was taking up our weaknesses, and he was carrying our sufferings. We thought it was because of God that he was stricken, smitten, and afflicted, ⁵ but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced. He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*
 - Yahweh showed compassion for every human being by having his Son be the Servant who paid for the guilt of our sins that made us repulsive to God.
 - He rescued us from ourselves. This is **the news that gathers people** to him.
 - His *righteousness* found the *right* (it works) way to *rightly* (justly) make us *right* (fix us) freeing us from sin's control, gathering us to worship him.

- On top of this **stunning** revelation he adds another.
 - ⁶ *Then the **foreigners** who **join themselves** to the LORD, to minister to him and to love the name of the LORD and to become his servants,*
 - ♦ Yahweh would welcome outsiders into his house, accept their worship.
 - ♦ That non-Jews would want to. Yahweh's compassion would draw them.
 - Pentecost, Acts, church history, us, mission - just as Yahweh declared.
 - ♦ His compassion rescued us and all believers. It made us alive.

❖ **God's people live in Yahweh's compassion.**

- Yahweh's compassion changes the lives of his people.
 - ♦ *...every one of them who **keeps the Sabbath** and **does not profane** it, those who **take hold of my covenant** - I will bring them to my holy mountain,*
 - ♦ Faith - our new relationship with Yahweh - changes how we live.
 - No longer worshiping our self, our stuff, our lifestyle preference - we devote time to worship him. In other words: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*
 - He deserves it. We need to worship him. Worship is an expression of our new life. In worship his word renews us and centers our rest in him.
 - In worship we treasure his new covenant in word and sacrament.
 - Devoted to him we are devoted to his word and to those it gathers.
 - God's people worship him. What you worship is your god.
 - No time, no interest in worship = no time, no interest in the Living God
 - We live to worship because worship is living in his compassion.
- Live in Yahweh's compassion: *Protect justice, and carry out righteousness*
 - ♦ In other words: *Love your neighbor as yourself.*
 - ♦ Compassion looks at every human being, seeing them as God sees them.
 - We respect each one as a person - a person Jesus cares about.
 - Yahweh's compassion cares like the Good Samaritan w/o regard to status
 - It is not *liberal social justice* to **protect justice, and carry out righteousness,**
 - We're called to listen - to care about *injustice, misuse, oppression, fraud, suppression, manipulation, abuse vs. being respected, valued, built up*
 - *People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.*
 - Genuinely care about each as a person. They may ask where it comes from.
- It is **misguided compassion** to promote or encourage a false religion.
 - ♦ *A house of prayer for all nations* (NIV) - an interfaith devotional space
 - With compassion we respect the civil right of others to practice their faith.
 - We know that enforcing Christianity with law doesn't change hearts
 - In compassion we care knowing they are lost, separated from the Living God.
 - It is false compassion to promote or facilitate the worship of a false god.
 - ♦ Main line denominations are rushing to prove they are open minded by welcoming all religions as good and equal paths to God. They missed: *those who take hold of my covenant ...I will make ...glad in my house of prayer.*
 - After an unbeliever dies, dwelling in the outer darkness of hell, they will recognize the false compassion of interfaith *Christians* after it is too late.
- Listen to God's word, hold to what he says, not what others try to make him say.
 - ♦ Love every human being as God has loved you. See that they are treated justly. Share God's righteousness - his compassion that will gather them to him.

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