

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
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Isaiah 55:10-11
July 26, 2020

Live in awe of God's Word. It works wonders.

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, ...

- My rain gauge: July 6: 2 ¾"; July 11 *Fay*: 3 ⅛"; July 25: 7/8"
- All this rain worked wonders on our lawns - dry & brown to lush and green
- More important: seeds for next year, and crops of food for this year
- This is not Mother Nature! God did this. Stand in awe of this wonder!
- God invites us to see a greater wonder - the working of his word.

❖ God's promise & chief purpose

...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- God promises: his word works. It works by God's power.
 - ◆ It **never** returns to God failing to work - a failed mission, empty, fruitless
 - ◆ God's word produces what God desires and advances his mission and purpose.
 - ◆ Any surprise? By God's word he brought into being and ordered all creation.
 - Never a need for do-overs. As he willed: perfect - first time - instantly
 - God's word brings his will into being - into reality. He is God.
 - ◆ **God's word works** just as he desires - fulfilling his purpose.
- What is God's purpose?
 - ◆ Yahweh's **chief purpose**: to turn people away from wickedness back to him.
 - ◆ ³ *Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. ...* ⁶ *Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.* ⁷ *Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.* Isa. 55
 - ◆ **God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.** ¹ Tim 2:4
 - ◆ God's word exposes sin's lies and reveals the truth of God's goodness.
 - ◆ God's purpose is to rescue from death, raising up new life in each person.
- What awesome power and purpose God has. His word works this. He promises!

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❖ Live in awe of the work God's word does.

- Awe comes naturally when you've experienced the working of God's word
 - ◆ Moved by God's word, a moment of enlightenment, deeply convicted
 - ◆ Seeing God's word work in another - bring life, light, joy, peace, hope....
 - ◆ Remember these moments. Recall them to renew your awe and wonder.
- Remember God's promise and trust it when the work of his word is not obvious
 - ◆ God's word is at work even when we can't see it - deep inside.
 - ◆ Recall the impact of God's word on and after Pentecost - on Paul's journeys
 - ◆ Based on his promise and track record, live in awe wondering what he's doing.
 - ◆ The awe and wonder of anticipation when his hidden work is revealed.
 - God's promises sustain pastors when the work of God's word is hidden.

- ❖ Those living in awe of the work of God's word **rely** on God's word.
 - Bible reading, devotions, and Worship Services are **not judged** on the basis of: *Did I learn something new? Was it interesting or exciting or impactful?*
 - Knowing God's word always works, pray: *Lord, let your word work in me.*
 - ◆ Ask yourself: *Did I behold wonders that many know nothing about?*
 - ◆ It is not God's word that is dull. It is me. Wake up and stand in awe! Marvel!
 - ◆ Return to his awesome word. Leave saying: *I met God today. Live in awe!*
 - Those who rely on God's word share it with confidence, trusting its power.
 - ◆ Faith knows the faithful word does the work, not me. Use the word faithfully.
 - ◆ Faith doesn't treat the word like magic. *Say the right words and presto!*
 - The word is words. It communicates truth, but truth with divine power.
 - ◆ Let the word equip you with its rich variety. Share this rich and full word, lest you make God's word sound 1-dimensional, flat, stale, or boring.
 - ◆ Unleash the power of the word by listening to others, then apply the word.
 - ◆ Share God's word confident that his word works his will.
- ❖ Be aware of God's other purpose and pleasure.
 - *If God's word always works, why doesn't it convert everyone?*
 - While God sincerely wants all to believe, many will die resisting him.
 - ◆ *I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from clever and learned people and have revealed them to little children.* ²⁶ *Yes, Father, because this was pleasing to you.* Matt. 11:25-26
 - ◆ *"Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving."* ¹⁰ *Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."* Isa. 6:9-10
 - ◆ God's word brings judgment on those who despise God's word, following ideas they preferred. Claiming to be their own lord, rejecting the Lord.
 - ◆ God's purpose is to demonstrate how just he is in rejecting them.
 - Stand in awe - yes, fear - over this work of God for those who despise his word.
 - ◆ In view of God's awesome saving word - it's a crime to not marvel & believe.
 - ◆ Use the word with care, lest you push someone into despising his word.
 - Avoid confrontations if possible. Speak the word when hurting and open.
- ❖ Daily marvel over how the word has worked - knowing it still does.
 - Many dismiss the Bible as a dusty old book, out of date, weak, worthless.
 - God's people know otherwise. God works powerfully and effectively through it.
 - It reveals God, his mysteries, and great wonders - with divine power.
 - God's word rescues, revives, restores, and renews - reconnecting us with God.
 - ◆ It's our umbilical cord with God, through which he feeds and works.
 - Living in awe, approach his word with eyes wide open to behold his wonders
 - ◆ Trust his promises. Know his word works in you. Sometimes in ways you experience. Other times in ways hidden, subtle, working gradually.

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