

A Follow Up Bible Study

Building on the Messages of the Lessons from the 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Warm Up

Share - What is your favorite and least favorite thing about rain? ...about snow?

How do you work through the negative reactions to either?

1. Sermon for July 26, 2020

Text: Isaiah 55:10-11

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

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon.

Share your questions or comments regarding Sunday's sermon **text**.

2. Compare these 3 translations of this text. Share your impressions. What language strikes you, and why?

NIV

¹⁰ 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,
so that it yields seed for the
sower and bread for the
eater,
¹¹ 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.

EHV

¹⁰ Just as the rain and the snow
come down from the sky
and do not return there
unless they first water the
earth, make it give birth,
and cause it to sprout,
so that it gives seed to the
sower and bread to the
eater,
¹¹ in the same way my word that
goes out from my mouth
will not return to me
empty.
Rather, it will accomplish
whatever I please,
and it will succeed in the
purpose for which I sent it.

CSB

¹⁰ For just as rain and snow fall
from heaven
and do not return there
without saturating the earth
and making it germinate and
sprout,
and providing seed to sow
and food to eat,
¹¹ so my word that comes from
my mouth
will not return to me empty,
but it will accomplish what I
please
and will prosper in what I
send it to do.”

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3. District President Tollefson usually uses these verses with his laying on of hands at an installation of a Pastor. What comfort, encouragement, and reminder is he offering?

4. Christian parenting is a calling to make disciples with this same word of God. Faithfulness calls for parents to work at it - to grow wiser in the use of God's word. But just as parents can't take pride in favorable outcomes, after all they were merely God's servants, they also should not blame themselves when a child turns their back on God. And even if you didn't let as much of God's rain and snow of the word fall in your home, car rides, and time together, as long as you are alive these words are a call to mission with boldness and hope. **Explain why.**

5. Note how the rain and snow don't facilitate the germination and sprouting. The precipitation causes it. What is God teaching about human *free will and cooperation* with God's word?

6. Yahweh promises: *...it will accomplish whatever I please, and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.* In the sermon we noted God's chief purpose and his other just purpose. What are these 2 purposes?
 - ❖ Why do we refer to the one as his *chief purpose*?

 - ❖ Here it's clear why Luther teaches us: *We should fear (revere) and love God so we do not despise preachig and his word, but to regard it as holy, gladly hear and learn it.* **Explain.**

A Follow Up Bible Study

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Gospel Lesson: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

10. Why did Jesus start teaching with parables? Jesus answers that question, but it is also helpful to start with context. He's a brief look at 2 key parts of Matthew 12 and part of Matthew 13:

12:13 Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as healthy as the other one. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, considering how they might put him to death.

15 Since Jesus was aware of this, he withdrew from that place. Large crowds followed him and he healed them all. 16 He ordered them not to tell others about him.

46 While he was still speaking to the crowd, his mother and his brothers happened to be standing outside, wanting to talk to him. 47 Someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to talk to you."

48 But he replied to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" 49 He reached out his hand toward his disciples and said, "See, my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

13:10 The disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered them, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but it has not been given to them. 12 For whoever has will be given even more, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because even though they see, they do not see; and even though they hear, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled which says,

You will hear clearly, but you will never understand. You will see clearly, but you will never perceive. 15 Because this people's heart has grown callous, their ears are hard of hearing. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, turn, and I would heal them.

16 "But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. 17 Amen I tell you: Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you are seeing, but they did not see it. They longed to hear what you are hearing, but they did not hear it.

- ❖ So how would you briefly explain why Jesus taught in parables?

- ❖ There will be times when God's word seems so simple and clear, but others - especially those who don't know Jesus - dismiss it as nonsense or unintelligible. What do you now understand from these words? How does this help you have compassion for those who can't see? How would you offer to help them?

A Follow Up Bible Study

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11. This is Jesus' first parable. Jesus' explanation seems to identify a meaning for nearly every detail in the parable. This often leads Christians to try and do that with every parable. Don't! In fact each parable is about one key point or teaching. So **what is the key point** to the Parable of the Sower and the Seed?
12. Since parables are illustrations, it is not wise to use parables to establish doctrine, even though they may illustrate doctrines taught elsewhere. But Jesus' explanation of a parable does teach doctrine. Jesus said, ²⁰ *The seed that was sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,* ²¹ *yet he is not deeply rooted and does not endure. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away.* These words powerfully teach that people can come to faith and lose it. In other words, the idea of *once saved, always saved* is unbiblical. **Explain how this passage teaches this.**
13. What about those illustrated by the seed in the thorn patch? Is this faith? Are they saved, but barely? ²² *The seed that was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the word, but the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it produces no fruit.*

Consider these teachings of Jesus.

¹ *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he is going to cut off. And he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear more fruit.* John 15

⁶ *He told them this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it, but he did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the gardener, 'Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down. Why even let it use up the soil?' ⁸ But the gardener replied to him, 'Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it.*

⁹ *If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down.'"* Luke 13

- ❖ Some think that all that matters is bringing people to faith - *getting saved*. And since we are not saved by works, fruits of faith are nice, but not important. Is that God's view? **Explain** on the basis of these verses. **Then explain** why it is important to God, if works don't save.

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Second Lesson: Romans 8:18-25

15. What is causing all of creation and God's people to groan?

16. What are all of creation and God's people waiting for with anticipation?

17. Don't miss the opening 2 verses of this text!

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

❖ The NIV follows the KJV in translating: *revealed **in** us*. While an acceptable translation most others translate: *revealed **to** us*. In view of v. 19 how would we understand *revealed **in** us*?

18. If all of creation is waiting with baited breath for his revelation, what's wrong with us? How can we work on keeping his hope as our focus in our day to day life?