

## Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Isaiah 35:4-7a

September 4, 2016

**Be strong, do not fear; your God is coming to your rescue!**

“So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is... fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” (FDR - 1st Inaugural Address - 1933)

- He spoke to our nation in the Depression addressing their fears
- Understand debilitating and self-fulfilling character of fear

In Bible Stories & Scripture God often speaks good news saying: *Do not fear...*

- Christmas angels, Resurrection appearance, walking on water, here...

❖ He addresses the source of our fears - the curse of sin

- The curse of sin - the source of fear
  - ♦ The curse: *you will surely die* = separated from God and his blessings
  - ♦ Afflictions under the curse: blind, deaf, lame, mute - health afflictions
  - ♦ The creation is under the curse for the sake of people - Roman 8:22
  - ♦ The curse of sin and all its impacts is the source of all fear - real, imagined, or anticipated (feared)
- The only One who can save us from the curse - the LORD God
  - ♦ The who can defeat death. But that takes more than power!
  - ♦ His mission is to undo the curse - through the blood of the Lamb

❖ His real promises provide real relief.

- The prophet paints a picture of a world rescued from the curse
- Understand what God is promising - to correctly address your fears
- False prophets love to misuse Prophetic Poetry
  - ♦ Force it into literalism - robbing God of a rich linguistic tool
  - ♦ Twisting Scripture to make it say what they want it to say.
- How do we avoid making it say what we want or think it says?
  - ♦ Identify the style of literature by its form and context: prophetic poetry uses figures of speech - linguistic imagery
  - ♦ Understand its role in the book and in the Bible
  - ♦ See if Scripture quotes the passage, interpreting it for us
  - ♦ Understand it in the light of all the rest of Scripture.
    - ID the Messiah as one who **can** heal all these - has the power
    - But the role of the Messiah is not to cure all ailments now
    - God even rescues us through ailments - trials to mature trust in him

- The impact of the Curse - completely undone at the Resurrection
  - Every believer - raised to life with curse-free bodies and souls
  - All creation liberated from the curse of sin.
- The image of *the well watered land*
  - Paradise will be restored in the physical New Heaven and Earth
  - Bible also uses as a picture of the Spirit's work among a people

<sup>37</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” <sup>39</sup> By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. John 7

• Don't pit *spiritual* against *physical*

- ♦ To avoid people expecting rescue from all trouble now, it's tempting to take all such promises and limit them to spiritual rescue
  - That covers up their fulfillment at the Resurrection
  - Besides, our God can heal physically as well as spiritually.
    - Ask with the confidence he can. Ask knowing the value of trials.
- ♦ Don't think that spiritual healing is easier than physical!
  - Spiritually blind, lame, deaf, and mute - only God can rescue us
  - It's not just a matter of human understanding
  - Only the God who can raise the physically dead can raise the spiritually dead. He does it through the Gospel - word and sacrament

All who are his children through faith (his work of spiritual life) have his promise to rescue us from anything and everything that could separate us from him along with all his promises, blessings, and gift of eternal life.

In the face of scary things we need to constantly be reminded that he didn't just save us. **He vowed to keep on being our Savior** - our Rescuer - our Deliverer! When fear arises, hear his words:

**Be strong, do not fear; your God is coming to your rescue!**

Look at the source of your fear and tell it, “You'll have to deal with my God.” Fear melts and his promises make you strong, which is freedom from fear.