

Sermon for May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

READINGS

Isaiah 12:1-6

- 1** You will say in that day:  
“I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,  
your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.
- 2** “Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation.”
- 3** With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
- 4** And you will say in that day:  
“Give thanks to the LORD,  
call upon his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that his name is exalted.
- 5** “Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be made known in all the earth.
- 6** Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

Psalm 66:1-9

[Collect verses in **bold**]

- 1 Shout for joy to God, all the earth;**  
**2 sing the glory of his name;**  
**give to him glorious praise!**
- 3 Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!**  
**So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.**
- 4** All the earth worships you  
and sings praises to you;  
they sing praises to your name.” *Selah*
- 5** Come and see what God has done:  
he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.
- 6** He turned the sea into dry land;  
they passed through the river on foot.  
There did we rejoice in him,
- 7** who rules by his might forever,  
whose eyes keep watch on the nations—  
let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*
- 8** Bless our God, O peoples;  
let the sound of his praise be heard,
- 9** who has kept our soul among the living  
and has not let our feet slip.

### James 1:19-21

**19** Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. **21** Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

### John 16:5-15

**5** But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ **6** But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. **7** Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. **8** And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: **9** concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; **10** concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; **11** concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

**12** “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. **14** He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. **15** All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Our text for meditation this Fifth Sunday after Easter is on our Old Testament reading.

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

### **Introduction**

What does salvation look like? Allow me to illustrate it with a memory of mine. When I was a young boy, we had a large back yard, and I fondly recall playing in it with my siblings. After school we had nothing better to do most days than simply hang out there in the sunshine. In fact, my parents made a point of making us go play outside as often as possible. Little did we know, there was another purpose for it. Our yard was big enough to have three separate fenced-off sections: the third section in the back, which we were forbidden from entering, was next to an abandoned road. Occasionally the bad types of people (vagabonds, gangsters, teenagers, etc.) would wander around that road, and my parents figured that if we were able to see such people around – and if they were trespassing on the property – then us kids would be able to alert them.

One day that happened...well, kind of. About thirty years ago my sibling and I were playing outside as usual one Saturday, when we saw a few men standing in the third section of the yard, having hopped the fence. They were taking pictures, writing things down, and speaking quietly to one another. Now, our parents had told us to go play outside and not bother them, but we couldn't just let these trespassers get away with whatever it was they were doing. So we did what any young dumb boys would do in such a situation: we threw rocks at them. One of the rocks landed square on a guy's forehead, and that's when chaos erupted.

Within seconds, shouting and confusion and threats filled the air, with the men telling us that they were going to tan our hides when they got close enough. We were genuinely worried that they were going to scale the taller fence and reach us as they started to get closer to it from that third section – but then my Dad showed up. He had a fierce expression and an even fiercer voice as he screamed bloody murder at the men who had trespassed. He swore the most violent, heinous threats at them, and when they complained about us throwing rocks, he shouted that he'd do far worse to them if they so much as laid a finger on us. He was holding something behind his back; I learned later that it was his Luger pistol.

Thankfully nothing drastic happened that day. The men backed down, and we learned that the men were a land survey team that our neighbor had invited to check out his property. Since they could not get a look at the back of his house normally, they went through our back fence. They apologized, the neighbor apologized, my Dad didn't press charges, and it was all water under the bridge. While me and my sibling both got in trouble for taking things into our own hands instead of letting our parents know, we never feared other people after that.

We learned that day that when Dad was home, we were safe. Sure, he punished us whenever we misbehaved. Yes, we received some harsh corporal punishment in our days. But from that moment on we understood that my father loved us enough, not just to work the hours he did to keep us fed, but he loved us enough to *take another man's life* if it meant keeping us safe from harm. And he was willing to do it even if we weren't exactly guiltless in how the situation got started. *That* is what salvation looks like – or at least, the other side of it.

### **Salvation by Mercy**

Salvation first includes mercy upon those who belong to God. When Isaiah writes our Old Testament reading, he is describing the same kind of fatherly love that God has for His people. In the preceding chapters, the prophet described how Israel was to go into captivity, and only a remnant of the people would remain.<sup>1</sup> But this is a promise of restoration both in the near future and when Messiah arrives.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime there is pain. Now this is something we can relate to, isn't it? Our own sins get us in trouble all the time, and often God is letting us feel the pain to teach us a lesson. But in His mercy, He does not destroy us, and instead promises to restore us to fellowship with Him and eternal life.

The prophet says to each believer in those times that they shall praise God for His restoration. Each one shall say, “for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.” Just as a father does not stay angry with his child forever, neither shall God always have contempt on His people. Though their sins may be heinous, after their behavior has been corrected the Lord shall comfort, provide for, and strengthen those who trust in Him. This is a Gospel promise by the way, something that proves true for us Christians today just as much as it did for Isaiah's audience. Though we have many grave sins in our lives, and though God shall correct our bad behavior, the discipline of the Lord is a sign of His love and an assurance that He will shower far greater blessings on us.

### **Salvation by Justice**

But salvation has that other side to it, one that doesn't look quite so gentle. One of the blessings we receive is how God makes sure no one ever gets away with harassing and persecuting us. Isaiah writes that we shall sing, “I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” For his original audience, do you know how the people were reassured of this strength and salvation? By God's willingness to crush all the nations who oppressed and persecuted the faithful.

Immediately after what he writes in our Old Testament reading, Isaiah is instructed by God to write twelve (12) chapters against all of Israel's enemies. Almost one fifth of the entire book of Isaiah is dedicated to this long section describing the coming vengeance of the Lord against whoever attacked His people, along with further assurance that the faithful will outlast all of their persecutors. To summarize the section: Babylon will disappear, Jacob will continue, Assyria will be broken, Philistia will be destroyed by its roots, Moab will be reduced to a remnant like Israel, Damascus will be turned to ruins, Cush will be devoured by scavengers, Egypt will be enslaved, Tyre and Sidon will be

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1 Isaiah 10

2 Isaiah 11

forgotten.<sup>3</sup> When Isaiah proclaims “make known His deeds among the peoples,” he does this himself by telling all of these countries that God will absolutely *obliterate* them.

This promise is not just for the children of Israel and Judah though. This promise of salvation by Divine judgment against God's enemies is for you and I as well, for the Church is the true Israel and loved in much the same way as she was in the Old Testament. Every group that persecutes Christians either repents or is destroyed. When Christ returns He shall destroy the true enemy of our souls, the devil, as He has satan tossed into the lake of fire.

### **Conclusion**

Christian salvation is fatherly in nature, which means that we benefit from the kindness and severity of God.<sup>4</sup> Any good father is willing to raise his children up, provide for them, deliver them from trouble, and even die for them. God has shown us this love by providing us with all our needs, sanctifying us, and sending His only Son to die on a cross for our sins. Yet this Fatherly salvation *also* includes with it a fiery desire to deliver us *from* our enemies, one which does not permit that evil should ever have a permanent victory. We are saved unto eternal life, and from the forces of eternal death. Let us then love our Heavenly Father, and forevermore recognize that we are safe with Him.

Now the peace of our Lord, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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3 Isaiah 13-23

4 Romans 11:22