

The 7th Sunday after Pentecost, July 16, 2023

Rev. Gerald Luck

Text: Isaiah 55:10–13

Theme: Thy Strong Word

Précis: God’s Word satisfies our souls, as a blessed rain soaks dry ground.

Having thus been refreshed, we are able to bear good fruit.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Heavenly Father through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 1:2)

Isaiah 55:10–13

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

God's Word satisfies our souls as a blessed rain that soaks dry ground.

Jesus is that Word. He is the very One through whom all things were spoken into existence, who took on human flesh for our sake. As the evangelist, John, said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

His blood rained down upon us. It flowed down upon us as divine mercy, flooding our hearts with redemption and restoration. "...He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Put another way, the very purpose of God's incarnate Word was your healing. And that Word is not returning to God empty.

Immediately by faith in that Word you were justified - and continually, by faith in that same Word, you are now being sanctified. You were made holy co-heirs to God's kingdom with Christ and you are being made holy daily by by hearing, by receiving, by learning by growing and as James puts it in the epistle that bears his name, by doing. The word is heard and empowered by the Spirit, and His free gift of faith results in works.

And what might those good works be? Intercession is high on the list. Saint Peter calls you a chosen race; a royal priesthood; a holy nation and a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. (Cf. 1 Peter 2:9) Every time you find yourself on your knees lifting someone up in prayer, you know God's Word has done what it purposed to do. He said He was trustworthy and that you can

approach Him in prayer and trust every one of your petitions into His care.

Another one of those works might also be unity. This world is full of disunity. It's a world where every one wants to have his own way, up to and including preferred pronouns. But consider the word by which you are you have been named by God. Having drawn you to Himself through Christ, God has called you His child.

Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:11) Such it is, when the Word indwells your heart.

When the Word is in you, you cannot but help to agree with your Christian brother or sister. It's only when one or the other of you are NOT in the word that unity ceases to exist. Things get rough, so to speak when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," and yet another, "I am of Cephas." No one can be of one Word if they make it their practice to follow their itching ears and become adherents of men. Christ has most certainly not been divided, nor can you if you abide in Him who is the WORD.

Remember how Jesus said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me"? If you abide in a false word, you will bear false fruit. But those who abide in the True Word? "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

You shall not be cut off. My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, that's what God's

True Word has done for you. He has set a seal upon you for all eternity.

Friends, knowing that God Word has sealed you for all eternity, you can most certainly trust it to hold you now.

God's Word is raining on you. He's showing you God's compassion. He's forgiving you of the sins you've committed. He's healing your wounds. He's tearing down the old Adam in you and building you up in His own image. He's bearing good fruit, and blessing you to be united as one people with one faith and one confession. He's empowering you to be a blessing to others and helping you to offer up prayers and to give of yourself for their sake to the glory of God.

That will never change because the Word of God will never change. He who came to you will continue to bless you. May you therefore be blessed, abiding in the what you've received...

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

May the peace of God which passes all human understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen (Philippians 4:7)