

– **“Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come.”** –
– **August 16-17, 2008 – 14th Sunday after Pentecost – Isaiah 56:1,6-8 – Pastor Scott Hirssig –**

Isaiah 56:1,6-8 (ESV)

¹ Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. ⁶ “And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath

and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant — ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” ⁸ The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

Our Old Testament lesson comes from the book of Isaiah. The name Isaiah points to grace, and means “The LORD saves” Martin Luther said of Isaiah, “..he handles two things. First he preaches a good deal to his people and rebukes their many sins, especially ...idolatry...Second he prepares and disposes them to expect the coming kingdom of Christ, of which he prophesies more clearly and in more ways than any other prophet.”(LW 35:275)

The book is also a miniature Bible. Isaiah has 66 chapters, the Bible, 66 books. Isaiah is divided into two distinct parts, the first 39 chapters, like the Old Testament, 39 books, the 2nd , 27 chapters, like the New Testament 27 books. There are also many parallels with the Bible. The first part of Isaiah closes with the coming of the King of Righteousness, (cpts 34-35) just like the prophets in the Old Testament. The second part of Isaiah, the voice in the wilderness, which is John the Baptist in the New Testament. In Isaiah 53, the passion, death, and resurrection of the my servant, or Messiah, which is Jesus. This is a book for you, sharing the message of salvation, encouraging us with fulfilled prophecy, and strengthening us in our everyday living.

In our lesson today, the Lord proclaims salvation offered to all and speaks of the foreigner, those not part of the nation Israel. Salvation is for everyone, both Jew and Gentile. There is an urgency, since the salvation and deliverance is soon. Yes, there the future blessing of heaven, but also blessing right now in how we live. We have a action plan of living here. We are told to keep justice, do righteousness, love the Lord, keep the Sabbath, and holds fast my covenant. There is the promise of being with God on the holy mountain and joyful in His house of prayer. This life comes to those who know the Lord Jesus as He lives through us accomplishing this. We are looking at those five, keeping justice, doing righteousness, loving the Lord, keeping the Sabbath, and holding fast to my covenant, part of the message of the New Testament as well.

It is important to know, our lesson is about our Christian living, the good works that follow salvation motivated by love for the Lord Jesus. It is not our efforts but Christ in us. The religions of the world miss this, as did the Jews of Paul's day, as he wrote, **“³ For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.** (Romans 10:3-6 ESV) Righteousness, or salvation comes to those who believe. Of Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation, and all nations of faith, it says, **“...”Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”** (Romans 4:13 (ESV) and also, **“For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.”** (Romans 4:3 ESV) Are you trusting the Lord Jesus. He promised to save all who come to Him. Now as God's saved people we live for Him.

KEEPING JUSTICE

The first characteristic of living for Him is justice. We are told to keep justice. Justice has two parts, and carries the idea of penalties for breaking obligations of a society, as in the case of criminal justice, and the second, the benefits, the responsibility of caring for the needy. So justice is closely related to love and mercy. Justice involves meeting the needs of others and not taking advantage or depriving them. James tell us, **“²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”** ¹ **“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.”** (James 1:27-2:1 NIV) We serve God by serving others. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for caring more about physical aspects of the law and neglecting the people, saying, **“²³ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.** (Matthew 23:23 ESV) Justice, how you care for others.

DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Next is righteousness, doing what is right, living right. This is how as Christians we live. John says in 1st John, **“¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.** (1 John 3:10 ESV) It takes diligence in your life, forsaking the old desires, hearing and receiving the word that enriches you. Paul told the Ephesians, **“²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”** (Ephesians. 4:24 (ESV) Even though you are redeemed, the old, the flesh still remains, what the Bible calls your sin nature, the sin within you. You are called to put on the new person in Christ, living right. Paul told Timothy, **“²² So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”** (2 Timothy. 2:22 ESV) Peter says, **“²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By**

his wounds you have been healed.” 1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) We are to be receiving the word so that the power of God might live through you, doing what is right.

SABBATH LIVING

Next is keeping the Sabbath. Sabbath means spiritual rest. Yes it can refer to a specific day, but it is more than that, even though we come together on Sunday like it tells us in Acts, (Acts 20:7), on the first day of the week, focusing on the resurrection of our Lord. Yet, every day is a day for the Lord, as He is in us and goes with us. Each day is a day of worship. We live in the spiritual rest brought by Christ. He finished our redemption and we now rest in Him as He lives through us. In Hebrews 4 it says, “**9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,**” Hebrews 4:9 (ESV) Do not fail to enter to his rest, the rest of salvation, and the rest of each day resting in Him, that is where the blessing is.

LOVE THE NAME OF THE LORD

Next is loving the Lord. When asked what is the greatest commandment, “**37 Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’** **38 This is the first and greatest commandment.** **39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”** (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV) That is loving God, and loving your neighbor. In fact John says in 1st John, “**8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**” (1 John 4:8 NIV)

HOLD FAST MY COVENANT

Finally we live, holding to God’s covenant. Covenant is a treaty or agreement, and carries the idea of a promise, with the Old and New Testaments referring to God’s covenants, that rest on His character, sure to come to pass, with Jesus the fulfillment. As believers our living, as belonging to the kingdom of God, is to reflect His grace as citizens of the kingdom, holding to His covenants, knowing He faithfully keeps us, and His covenants. Hold to the covenant! Hold to the Promises! He will bring to pass. He will bring your salvation to pass. He will bring your deliverance to pass. May you continue to hear and receive the power from the word, keeping justice, doing what is right, resting in Him, loving God, holding to His precious covenant, His very true promises, for time is short, Jesus is coming soon, now is the time for salvation, soon is the end, and a new heaven and earth, where righteousness dwells, I hope you belong to Him and are living in that reality? (2 Peter 3:13 ESV)

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.