



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

July 12, 2007

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

1 Kings 19:14-21

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 66

Second Lesson: Galatians 6:1-10, 14-16

Gospel: Luke 10:1-12, 16-20

### **It's Good to be a Kid Again!**

When you were little and you were riding your bike and you fell and your knee was all scraped up and there was blood trickling down it and there were tears streaming down your cheek and you ran home to the house and you walked in the door and Mom was sitting on one side of the room and Dad was sitting on the other, who did you run to? I love my Dad to pieces, but not once did I ever run to Dad if I had that choice. It was always to Mom. Dad would have said, "Rub some dirt on it and go back out and play. Why are you bothering me? I'm reading the paper." Mom would wipe away the tears with her hand, wash it off, bandage it up and tell me everything was going to be alright and fuss over me until the tears stopped flowing, right? At least that is how it was when I was a kid growing up.

Dad you talk about sports with; Mom you talk about getting picked on in school when the words didn't break bones but they still hurt. That's when I talked to Mom and that's when I would find great comfort, great encouragement and great peace for my troubled little soul.

If that was your experience whatsoever, isn't this an amazing poetic picture that God uses in these words that he had the prophet Isaiah speak? He talks about a mother caring for a child, a mother feeding a child, a mother carrying a child, a mother bouncing the child up and down on her knees, a mother comforting a child. And it has two different subjects for the mother. The mother stands for two different things in this imagery. One is the church—the believers, the believers that come together and share the Word of God together and build each other up speaking really of mother church. But the other one later on in the text is God himself. God himself is pictured as a mother who takes care of us.

It's very true. God extends his power and his kingdom but he does it through people, the church, and he comforts us and encourages us at times through the church. But it is he himself who does the work through frail sinful human beings like you and me.

If you long for those days when you could run to Mom and Mom would make everything alright as you look at your checkbook balance or you think about your work situation today, sit here and recognize that it is good to be a kid again, because God is our parent and we are his children, and we can run to him for comfort. We can run to him for nourishment. We can run to him so that we keep on growing. It's a beautiful picture our God paints for us.

It's fascinating how the Book of Isaiah shifts right in the middle—Chapter 40 on—to talk to the Exiles as though they were already back from exile in Babylon. But at the very end, he even shifts farther into the future. He starts talking about the New Testament Era. It talks in the Chapter right before us in 65 about a birth that takes place that changes everything—the birth of our Savior, the birth of the New Testament church of the fulfillment of all the prophecy. And it talks about Jerusalem really as the daughters of Zion, the believers, Jerusalem being the church, Zion being the church, the believers. So rejoice with the believers. Be glad for God's church on earth because God is going to bless that church and bless his people through that church. Because through that church *“you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance”* (Isaiah 66:11).

The picture is a mother's intimate caring and love for the child. It's the exact same picture that God uses in other places in Scripture. He tells us through Peter *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good* (1 Peter 2:2, 3). God nourishes us. God feeds us with the spiritual milk of the gospel. It's not something you and I would want to feed on on our own. We would rather go off for the empty calories of whipped cream or for something like that with sugar, which is in our day to day chasing after things like work righteousness—that “I can make myself acceptable to God and if God doesn't want to take me as I am, that's too bad because that is what he is getting.” We'll chase after every other food that is out there being offered as spiritual food—the idea that “as long as it makes you happy it is okay;” “do your best and God will accept you;” and “try your hardest and God will take care of you;” or “whatever goes around comes around;” “if you are good to others, certainly God will be good to you.”

There is a lot of rat poison passing as spiritual food that is being offered up to us today. A lot of it comes from our own minds. We see our own sins and we don't want to be told that is sin so we have to come up with some excuse for it. If we find someone to tell us that it is okay, then we are eager to listen because that is what God talked about being what itching ears want to hear (2 Timothy 4:3).

We could never come up with the food God offers us on our own. The food God offers us through his church that nourishes us is grace—God's undeserved love that is poured out on us—not because we work hard, not because we try hard, not because we do things, not because we serve him, not because we love him, but because he is God and he loves us in spite of who we are. He pours out his grace on us, many of us even before we could talk at our baptism as an infant. He continues to pour his grace on us through his Word, through the wine, through the wafer and through every day when we repent and go right back to our baptismal waters. He pours his grace on us and tells us, “I have taken away your sins. I lived in your place. I died in your place. That was me, Jesus Christ, who did that for you.” Then he says, “I, the Holy Spirit, worked that faith in you because you look at it and think it is foolishness. You think it is silly. A Jewish carpenter lived 2000 years ago and died as a criminal and that means something to me?” The Spirit says, “You bet!” The Spirit leads us to see that what God demands of us—which is holiness, perfection, nothing less—he gives to us through Jesus, through his life, through his death. He gives that in Word and in Sacrament day after day, time after time, and every time we screw up and stumble and fall and thumb our nose at God

and then realize what fools we are and come back to him, he loves us. He forgives us. He has our fellow believers that lead us by the hand when we are caught in a sin bring us to find that food—the food of forgiveness, full and free in Jesus Christ and nowhere else.

Wouldn't you like to have that kind of food day after day? We get to. God is doing more than cutting the crust off our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and making it just the way we like it like Mom might have. God is wrapping the arms of his grace around us and saying, "You are forgiven. Heaven is yours. Feed on this banquet. Feed often and feed deeply." As we do so, God will do for us what he says he will do through Isaiah. *"I will extend peace to her (the church) like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem"* (Isaiah 66:12, 13)—in Jerusalem, in the church, as you hear that message.

Think of that phrase—I will extend peace to the church like a river. As a kid, did you ever take a leaf and throw it in the river and watch what happens to it? What does it do? It just keeps going and going and going. It just flows. It continues on and on and on. God's peace that comes to us is peace—the peace not between nations, but the peace between us and him. His forgiveness keeps coming to us over and over and over. It continually flows. It is not stopped up. It is not dammed up. It flows over and over. And that is where we find our comfort. That is where we find the comfort that only God can give us.

If we are honest with ourselves and we look at our lives and we see the times that we have screwed up, when we have hurt other people intentionally or unintentionally, the times when we have wandered away from God and said to God, "I know better than you. You might say that it is sin, but I don't think it is and I don't care anymore what you think God." We have thought we are better than other people that we see around us. "God must love me more because I do more for him." We've crossed over into spiritual pride and arrogance which God calls sin.

When we are honest with ourselves and we look into the mirror of God's law, we are knocked off our high horse very often. When we are honest with ourselves in that quiet place in our hearts when we think no one is listening or looking, it can be scary to see what wretched sinners we are. God comes to us with his peace that flows like a river and washes away our sins.

Then, as we face the things that come because we live in a world that is still affected by sin, we live in a world that is no longer perfect—Creation itself groans waiting for the sons of God to be revealed on the Last Day Paul tells us (Romans 8:19). The world isn't perfect. It's never going to be perfect again this side of heaven. So we are going to have heartache. We are going to have disasters. We are going to have things that just rip our insides to shreds. When we go to God, he comforts us. He picks us back up, just like a parent did, sets us on his lap, puts his arms around us, tucks our head into his shoulder—which is his love and his forgiveness—and says, "It doesn't matter what happens in this world. I still love you and I will still make sure it all works out for

your good. You don't need to see how it is going to work out for your good right now, just trust that it will."

Many times my Mom might have told me that everything was going to be alright, but she had no clue. But when God tells us it is going to work out for our good, he does have a clue, because he knows the future. He holds the present. He has orchestrated the past. He will see to it that all things work for our eternal good, not our earthly happiness, but our eternal good.

That comforts us. That helps us to dry the tears, or at least it helps us to find joy in Christ in the midst of our tears. We know the God who loved us that much to die for us isn't going to abandon us now. As our God helps us through those difficult times, as he lifts us up when we have fallen into sin and forgives us, as he helps us through the difficult times that we face as we live in a sinful world, we will do what Isaiah spoke of. *When you see this, your heart will rejoice and you will flourish like grass (Isaiah 66:14).* When we see God's love confirmed to us again and again through Word and Sacrament, through his presence and his help in our lives, through his strengthening through that Word and Sacrament so that we can face life, we rejoice. We flourish. We grow like grass. We are built up by our God and then we live for him more and more—not because we have to, not to appease him or else he will judge us and send us to hell, but we do it because we want to thank him for what he has done for us. He has given us heaven. He has helped us through the difficult times. He promises to help us through the difficulties to come.

His hand will be made known to us. He will be with us and he will bless us. There will come a day when the evidence of his hand that is with us will be made known to all people when he judges the living and the dead in the end. Then, unfortunately, his foes will see his fury. That is why you and I seek to serve God and grow in God now, so that we can build one another up, so that we can encourage one another, so that we can comfort one another, so that we can be God's knee that he bounces each other up and down upon—but also so that we can reach out to those who don't know because we want them to have the nourishment, the comfort, and the growth that you and I have experienced.

It's good to be God's kid, so when you get down, flee to his arms!