



Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church  
[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

October 5, 2008  
21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Isaiah 25:6-9  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Isaiah 25:6-9  
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 23  
Second Lesson: Philippians 4:4-13  
Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

**Trust in the Lord**

Be sure that He saved you  
Be glad in His salvation

It's kind of interesting some of the different things we put our trust in, isn't it? From about the time we started to walk, we knew enough not to step on a crack for the sake of our mother's posture, right? We learned about not walking under ladders because that was going to bring us bad luck. We learned about black cats. This time of the year, some of you still probably think about black cats and goats and the curses they might bring.

We do some other silly things when it comes to what we put our trust in, right? People carry around a rabbit's foot. It worked out really well for that rabbit, didn't it? Maybe a decaying piece of vegetable matter, like a four-leaf clover—that will really bring you some good luck, right? It's kind of silly the things we put our trust in, right? Who would ever put their trust in plant matter? You'd never do that, would you?

The end of the quarter just came right? Did you get any statements from any of your investments, your mutual funds, your retirement accounts? Did you look at a piece of plant matter, that piece of paper, and have your trust shaken a little bit with all the turmoil that's been in the markets lately? It's funny what a piece of plant matter will do to you, right? It's funny how it will just shake you to your core when that's something we put our trust in for our retirement or if we are living on it now. We are worried. We are anxious.

Maybe it's not that we are looking at those statements, but it's pretty hard this last week to turn on the television or the radio and listen to the news and not hear that the sky is falling, right? The world as we know it is going to come to an end. We are all going to be standing in soup lines soon. And things are going to be terrible all over. Did you hear that message at all this last week? Did you have your trust about your future shaken a little bit this last week as the financial markets are in an upheaval? As they are in an upheaval, what do we put our trust in? Do we despair because our trust is less because our balances are less? Or at this time of the year do we look around and say, "Now if only we elect the right person, then they'll fix everything and everything will be wonderful! If only the government will bail us out instead of those people." Do we put our trust in princes as God warns us about? We sure are tempted to put our trust in a lot of different things, aren't we?

Our God puts His hands on our shoulders, looks us in the eye and says, “Remember, put your trust in me. As things around you shake you, as things around you worry you, as you look forward in your uncertainty and you are unsteadied, trust in the Lord.” Why does He say that to us? It’s pretty straight forward, right? He saved us. We can be absolutely certain our sins have been forgiven. He’s met our greatest need. And then He reminds us that this trust in the Lord tells us that we can be glad in our salvation and we can find joy no matter what our outward circumstances are—not the kind of joy that makes us giddy or things like that, like your team just won, but the kind of joy that is there in good times and in bad, the kind of joy and confidence that you and I have as Christians that so many in the world around us want. The question is, at times of uncertainty do they look at us and see it? Do we let our light shine as you and I trust in the Lord?

I don’t know how much you remember about Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet back before the Lord sent the Babylonians to carry the Southern Kingdom off into exile. He was there as the Northern Kingdom was taken away. He was there as the Assyrians threatened them again. If you’ve read the Book of Isaiah, you might have noticed there is a distinct difference. Chapters 1-39 talk a lot about his warnings, a lot about the judgment of God and how bad things are coming because the people have not trusted in the Lord, because the people were trying to set up political alliances instead of doing what the Lord said. They were putting their trust in princes and getting the right government on their side. He said “problems are coming because you don’t trust in the Lord.”

In the second half of the Book he talks about the coming Messiah over and over, and it’s like a whole different thing. He speaks in comfort to the exiles as though they are already in exile even before it happens. So it’s kind of two different purposes for his writing in the same book. But if you notice in Chapter 25, that puts us in that first section, and this section that I read to you comes in the middle of a whole bunch of judgments upon the nations, judgments upon God’s people.

It’s kind of like the other day when the rain is coming down and it’s miserable and it’s kind of cold and wet out and there’s not much sun and it’s a depressing day. The words I just read to you are like that break in the clouds that came and all of a sudden the sun started shining, right? In the middle of all this doom and gloom judgment and all those things, the people were saying, “Yeah, yeah, we don’t want to hear that.” In the middle of that, here comes God saying, “On this mountain, Jerusalem, here is what God’s going to do for you.” Then he uses two pictures that the people would have understood quickly and clearly. One is a picture of bounty and abundance—a feast and a banquet. God’s going to prepare a feast and a banquet. We aren’t talking about potluck dinners. I love our potluck dinners, but we are talking about something way beyond a potluck dinner. “The best of meats and the finest of wines”—a banquet—this is like a coronation event. This is all the bells and whistles, all the stops are pulled. God’s going to give you an abundance of incredible blessings is really the picture. And the

abundance of incredible blessings He is going to give is going to do something that is really a contrast.

He also talks about the shroud that enfolds the people, the sheet that covers the nations, and this picture that he is using is the garments they would wear for mourning, the veil they would wear over their faces, and how they would dress in times of grief and mourning. It says God is going to destroy the shroud. He's going to take away the veil. These blessings that He is going to prepare and give to you will take away your mourning and take away your grief. Why? "He will swallow up death forever."

When death has been defeated for us, He wipes away the tears from all faces. When death has been removed from us, He has removed the disgrace of His people from all the earth. The disgrace of His people was that they so often trusted in other things. They weren't a whole lot different from us.

How often don't we find ourselves trusting that if only we have the right government, everything will be better, and if we don't elect the candidate we support, the whole country will go to hell in a hand basket and everything will be terrible? Did we forget God is still in His heavens? Our blessings don't come from a government. Our blessings come from our God. The God who destroyed death forever, on that mountain, on the mountain He is talking about—Jerusalem—that's where Jesus lived in our place and died in our place. That's where He stretched out His arms and our sins nailed Him to the cross. On that mountain, the shroud of our sin, the disgrace of our sin, the disgrace of all the times we trusted in other things instead of our God, were nailed there and they were removed forever.

That's the blessing. That's the banquet. Our God has saved us. Not because of who we are, not because we are such good people, not because we work so hard or we have done things that God owes us this. He does it because He is God. His nature is to love. His nature is to bless. That's what our God has done for us. That's why He says to us, "In that day you will say, trust in the Lord. We trusted in him." We can trust in Him.

We don't have to lay awake at night wondering what's going to happen now that the market is down. We don't have to go around giddy because the market is up. Our source of confidence, our source of strength comes from our God. The sad thing is, when we start putting our trust in these things that are actually just blessings that come from our God and we don't put our trust in God himself, these blessings can be here today and gone tomorrow. They can be given to us by the Lord and they can be taken away just like that. If that's where we are putting our trust, we are setting ourselves up for a really, really big fall.

We live in a sinful world. The results of sin are going to be hard. They are going to be painful. They are going to bring hardships. The blessings that our God in love has given us will at times disappear because of the effects of sin in the world. So don't put your trust in the blessings that God gives to you. Put your trust in the Lord himself.

Trust in the Lord himself. His love for you is never going to fade away. The forgiveness He has won for you, He isn't going to change His mind and say, "You know what? You're back on your own. I'm taking it back. You haven't been declared 'not guilty' through Jesus' life and death. My Spirit hasn't given you the gift of faith through Word and Sacrament." He's not going to change His mind on that. He is certain. He is absolute.

That is why we as Christians have a joy that is certain. That's why no matter what we go through in life, we can say in good times and in bad, "Surely this is our God. We trusted in Him. He saved us. This is the Lord. We trusted in Him. Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation."

A Christian's joy is not determined by outward circumstances. We can have joy even as a tear slides down our cheek, even as we mourn the loss of a loved one, even as we face things that make our stomach churn, we have joy because we know our God is with us. He is with us in love. We aren't like sports fans that rise and fall on every pitch, who are in the dumps with teams that lose or at the heights with teams that win. The victory has already been won! We live on the heights of God's victory over sin.

There may be times that we need someone else to remind us—"the game's over! The victory has been won! Why are you acting like you lost?" That's why God puts us together as a family of believers, because there are times when we need to be reminded of the truths that we already know—that our God's love for us is not dependent upon us, that our God's love for us is certain, that our God's love is always with us. Because there will be times when we will walk through life as though we somehow must think God has left us. We mope around like our team has lost.

Look at what we read in the Second Lesson. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Paul said. "I've learned the secret of being content in any and all circumstances." These words weren't just pie in the sky from Paul. When he wrote them, he was in prison. He was speaking from an experience that he still had joy even though he couldn't do everything he wanted to do then. But he still had the knowledge that God had forgiven him. He, the one who had been a persecutor of the church, had his sins washed away in the blood of Christ. So he put his trust in God, and he continued to find joy even when there were bad things happening to him.

So as you go through life, as you go through the coming day, the coming week, the coming months, the coming year, go through it trusting in God, not in elections. Go through it trusting in God, not in your bank statements. Go through it trusting in God, not just in each other. But view each other as blessings. View your government as a blessing. View the blessings God has put into your bank account as a blessing from Him and thank Him for them and use them faithfully and wisely, but don't put your trust in them.

Put your trust in the One who lived and died in your place! God will bless you with joy.