



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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December 25, 2011  
Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord  
Sermon Text: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 98](#)  
Second Lesson: [Hebrews 1:1-9](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [John 1:1-14](#)

### The Word Became Flesh

It's kind of interesting during the winter to sit over in the gym as the grade school teams play basketball and watch some of the really little kids, the ones that are playing with all the toys, sitting the wrong way in the bleachers. It's kind of interesting to see them when everyone gets excited and jumps up and they start cheering. They don't really know why yet, right? They are just doing it because everyone else does it. Sometimes in fact when they sit too close to the other team, I've noticed they will cheer when the other team scores and mom or dad has to tell them "No. We don't cheer now." Right? The bursting into celebration, that comes natural when they see other people excited, right? They just have to learn the right time to do it.

That's kind of like how we are with our sinful nature and why our God has to come and tell us in Isaiah that when the Savior comes and redeems us, we need to burst into songs of joy together. That's how he puts it in this Isaiah song, right? The part of us that loves God, our new self, doesn't need to be told when and why to do it. We want to do it. We want to burst into joys of song together, but we still have that sinful nature, so sometimes we have to be reminded it's okay to be as excited as little kids when we praise our God because our God has done some incredible things for us. So our God comes to us and says, "Quit worrying about being all grown up. Burst into songs of joy together, because you know the message of who our Savior is and what he has done. More than that, burst into songs of joy together because you get to be the messengers." That's what he tells us 700 years before Christ is born.

Isaiah 52 is an interesting chapter in Scripture. It just introduced us to God's suffering servant who would come to redeem his people. Later in the chapter it is going to talk in detail about his suffering and death to take away our sins. But it also was written to tell God's people before they were carried off into exile that even though you think the Lord doesn't reign and the Lord isn't in control, there is going to come a day when you are going to burst into songs of joy together because God is going to send a guy named Cyrus and he is going to say, "You guys can go back home." Think of how unusual that is in the course of history. When a nation is defeated and carried off into exile, they usually don't return. We still talk about in the Bible the 10 lost tribes of Israel, the Northern Tribe, that were carried off by the Assyrians and never returned. But God is telling them before they would be taken away that they would come back. He's telling them that because it's essential for his plan of salvation. His plan of salvation was that the servant would come, the promised Messiah would come and would be in the land he had told Abraham would be Abraham's. He would come and live there and do his

ministry there. So God had to bring him back. He says that day is going to come when you are going to burst into songs of joy together because God himself will lead you back and he'll come and then he'll give the message to the messengers, and the messengers, the watchmen that are waiting to hear about the victory (that's the picture), they'll go with the message and say, "You're God reigns." That's the message that God brings to us as we come together in worship this Christmas morning.

God not only brought the Israelites back, but God kept his promise that they would come back so that God would lay bare his holy arm before all the nations, that God would show his power and his wisdom and his might and his incredible love and mercy in ways people never would have dreamed of. God himself would become flesh. God would live among his people. He would come and proclaim the message of salvation through him. Then he would send his messengers off on their task and they would proclaim that message so that all the ends of the earth would see the salvation of our God.

That's what our God did. He sent out his messengers, his apostles and his prophets. He sent them out and they went to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, and that's why we are gathered here today. This message is such an incredible message because it's one that we could never have come up with. On our own we are going to come up with the message that we have to do good and be good so that God will love us and take us to heaven. But God says "the wages of sin is death," and he says no matter how hard we try, unless we are perfect, we are guilty of sin. So this natural message that comes from our own minds could never save us. God says there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death.

That's why he had to come up with this better message. God demands holiness and perfection. Even though you and I can't give that to him, he still demands it of us. So instead of us producing it, he sent Christ, born of woman, born under the Law to redeem or buy back those under the Law. He bought us back, not only by his death on the cross, but by living perfectly in our place so that holiness that God demands, he gives to us as a gift. That's how God reveals his holy arm in the sight of all the nations. He lays bare his power. He becomes flesh. He lays bare his wisdom. He lives perfectly in our place. He lays bare his grace. He gives us that perfection and credits it to us as a gift. That's the message.

The picture that is here in Isaiah is watchmen on the wall waiting to hear about the outcome of the battle from the army that is fighting far away. When that messenger comes back, the watchmen, as soon as they hear "we've won," they are telling people, "We won." They are letting it be known throughout the city. They are raising their voices so that everyone can hear it and so that everyone can know about the victory that their army had won.

God came to earth. He won the victory. God came to us individually. He gave us the gift of faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. God has told us the results. Jesus won. Our sins are forgiven. Now we become the watchmen. We become the ones that go

and say “Your God reigns.” That’s why we burst into songs of joy together, because we are like that little kid that is finally entrusted by their parent to do something that they never thought they were big enough or old enough or strong enough to do. And now mom and dad says, “Yes, you can go do it.” There is that sense of pride and that sense of joy. Their chest puffs up and they think “I’m a big boy now. I get to do this.” That’s us now.

Our God has said “I loved you enough to save you and now I love you enough and trust you enough, you are my messenger.” That’s an amazing truth. Our God has given us the most important task in the world. He’s entrusted it to sinful wretches like you and like me. He says, “You go do it.”

But he doesn’t leave us alone. He strengthens us through his Word and through his Sacrament. He strengthens us and builds us up in the love he has shown us so that we grow in our knowledge of him so we know who he is and what he has done and what to say. And we grow in our desire to do so, because that joy that leads us to burst into song continues to grow more and more the closer we get to him and the better we know him. That’s how our God continues to rule.

He established his rule through the life and death of Christ. He extends his rule through messengers like you and like me.