

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church,
Watertown, WI
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.
Schultz
August 14, 2016
Pentecost 13. Eisenach Series**



Isaiah 29:18-21

¹⁸ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. ¹⁹ Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰ The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down – ²¹ those who with a word make someone out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God – and that is what we are by grace through faith for Jesus' sake:

Earthly rejoicing! You see it if you watch the Olympics. We were watching the women's bicycle race. A lady wearing a bright yellow shirt was way out front. People were cheering for her! She increased her lead. It started to rain. I mean just the finest mist. She was pedaling. Cars were going around her! Motorcycles were going around her – one person driving – the passenger had a huge camera to record and broadcast the race. This lady was *flying* – and all of a sudden she came around a curve – the road curved – she went straight – crashed into the curb. She went flying over the handle bars – and was a twisted heap – part in the road – part in the trees and shrubs. She didn't move. People went speeding past her. It's ok! It's ok! An American woman was now in the lead. She was pedaling so fast. She was 38 seconds in the lead. She had on red, blue – with all kinds of white stars. She had this annoying little drip of sweat on the tip of her nose that wouldn't fall off. She had an energy bar on her back in a secret pocket. She pulled out the energy bar – and ate it – without missing a beat. Instant energy said the smug commentator. She was still in the lead! The only

place you don't want to be he said – was 4th place. Three people were closing in on the American – I started yelling at the TV – go faster – go *faster*. The commentator said when you are in the lead the one thing you dasn't do – is look back! *She looked back* – and one, two, three they zoomed past her! Gold, silver and bronze went past her. There is no 4th place in the Olympics! Earthly rejoicing! It doesn't last! It disappoints! Earthly rejoicing is just that – *earthly*. Today in light of the Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, God's Word says:

Rejoice In The Holy One of Israel!

- I. The wicked will be gone
- II. Every blessing is ours by grace

The Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah! The Wisconsin Synod is constantly working to grow and improve. That's what happens – by the grace – by the power of the Holy Spirit – *spiritual growth!* When you are alive you grow – you grow and grow. We need to encourage growth – look for growth – recognize growth – *acknowledge* growth! We talk about Pericopes! There are the ILCW Series A, B, C. This year we are doing the *Eisenach* Series – little pastors back in Germany back in 1892. Eisenach has Isaiah again and again. We read Isaiah 40 the 3rd Sunday in Advent. Do you remember? **Comfort, comfort my people, says you God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God..."** You know that! Christmas – Isaiah – **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."** You know that! Epiphany – Isaiah chapter 2. The Gospel will go out from Jerusalem. **They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."** You know that! With Jesus' permission – starting this October – Reformation Day – we will start the WELS Pericopes – new and improved – finishing C and then

starting A with Advent – some 21 times this first year – we will read from the Scroll of the Prophet Isaiah!

Our reading today – *Eisenach* – Isaiah chapter 29. That’s from the first part – Isaiah 1-39 mostly but not completely **Law**. Isaiah 40 through 66 mostly but not completely **Gospel**. Today – from the mostly *Law* part. Isaiah chapter 29 – in the NIV has the heading *Woe to David’s City*. Woe! That’s not good. Verse one – **Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David settled! Add year to year and let your cycle of festivals go on. Yet I will besiege Ariel; she will mourn and lament, she will be to me like an altar hearth. I will encamp against you on all sides; I will encircle you with towers and set up my siege works against you. Brought low, you will speak from the ground; your speech will mumble out of the dust. Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth; out of the dust your speech will whisper.** Ariel – sounds like the Hebrew word for *altar hearth!* Altar hearth – without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness! Altar hearth--where you bring your thank-offerings. It is a place for being painfully aware of your sins – yet filled with a child-like confidence that the ultimate Lamb of God – will take away all our sins in the end! Law – warning – judgment! That’s what Isaiah is warning about!

Isaiah chapter 29 – we read today: **²⁰ The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down –** Sometimes it seems like the nasty people do very well – while kind and gentle people always lose. Remember that famous quote from Leo Durocher – the coach of the Chicago Cubs – “*Nice guys finish last!*” That’s a very practical way of saying ruthless! It’s willing to do just about anything to beat the other guy. I was Pastor where when we arrived the Ladies Aid mostly played Sheep’s Head. I remember telling one little grandma – Eleanor – “Don’t cheat!” She said, “You mean don’t get caught cheating. It’s the responsibility of the other players to catch me if I pull a fast one! If they don’t catch me – then it’s not really cheating. It’s playing smart!” That’s not right. Ruthless is willing to do just about anything to have your way. Ruthless may seem to succeed in this world – in business – in politics – in relationships. But in the end it is surely doomed to fail. You see – you can’t trick God. You can’t fool God.

²⁰ The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear! There is no shortage of mockers! There are organized mockers who work out of an old

parsonage in Madison. A lady and her daughter – same name – different spelling – started an organization with an estimate membership just a little smaller than the population of Watertown. As Paul Harvey liked to say, “I’m sure they would want me to mention their name!” _____
The staff is made up mostly of lawyers and speakers who mock everything about God and His Word. They teach about atheists, agnostics and non-theists! They point to the sins of pastors and teachers and called workers. They mock and ridicule the Gospel of Christ Jesus. There is no lack of mockers on TV – as situation comedies mock the truths of God’s Word concerning marriage and family – about “hugs and kisses”, about lust and envy, greed and coarse and crude humor. There are movie trailers about movies that are exceedingly rude and crude. Again and again people who believe and teach and live in the light of Christ crucified are portrayed as being hypocrites – Pharisees of the most self-righteous ♥--people who are judgmental, bigoted and hateful. Jesus and his † and the truth of Judgment Day and Heaven and the flaming lake of fire in Hell are ridiculed and mocked! Only on Judgment Day – *alas too late* – they will realize the eternal consequences of their mockery!

²⁰ The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down – ²¹ those who with a word make someone out to be guilty, who ensnare the defender in court and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice. It is very easy to accuse someone – to gossip – to whisper rumors about someone behind their back! How horrible to be innocent – yet convicted of unspeakable crimes. I read about some 342 + people convicted – and serve years – decades for a crime they didn’t commit. Very often they are convicted on the basis of faulty unreliable eye witness testimony – but found to be innocent based on the science of DNA. Imagine the witness is sworn in. The lawyer asks, “Do you see the murderer in this room?” The witness says, “Yes!” The lawyer says, “Can you point them out?” The witness points at you and says, “There they are!” The lawyer says – let the record show – the witness has identified – **you** as the murderer!” – and so? And what do you say, “I didn’t do it!” And they say, “That’s what they all say – I didn’t do it! But the eye witness pointed you out! How do you get people to believe you? It is a terrible thing to be deprived of justice. And yet – more and more

lately – we hear how there seems to be two sets of standards – one for the average person – and a whole ‘nother standard for those who are very rich and very well connected! One standard for the plumber or electrician or carpenter or factory workers. And a whole different set of standards – if your last name is well known – including drunk driving – and drowning your secretary – if you are politically connected. This is not a new problem. It’s older than 600 years before baby Jesus was born. It is horribly wrong. And it will continue until finally Jesus judges the living and the dead. The sinners will be forgiven. And the unbeliever will suffer forever in the prison whose gate might as well say, “ABANDON HOPE – ALL WHO ENTER HERE!” It is only by the grace of God that we are forgiven – and heirs of Heaven by grace through faith!

¹⁸ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. This is the briefest summary of Jesus’ earthly ministry! Remember when John the Baptist was in prison – and he sent his disciples – so they would know for sure – if Jesus is the Christ. God’s Word says, **²¹ At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. ²² So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ²³ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”** Jesus fixed every physical hurt and harm. Jesus made everyone better than new. The dying flesh of a leper was made softer than that of a newborn! Eyes of blind people could see the flicker of the smallest oil lamp from way far away. That was only the gravy. That was only the sprinkles on the ice cream. Think about it! Jesus gave sight to the spiritually blind! I read the other day that your littlest toe also works to help you find furniture legs in the dark. Ouch! Know what I mean? Imagine going through life without Jesus! Sometimes you hear people ask, “How can people live – how can people go through life without Jesus?” The answer is – some people seem to do just fine. They get up in the morning – in the middle of all of God’s beautiful creation and say wow – what a miracle-the result of the big bang! They have a delicious breakfast and say – that was nourishing! They work hard – play even harder. They earn a good living and have a beautiful home – with a little

cottage up north by the lake for weekends. They have 2.8 children and a healthy 401K! They go to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower and Disney World with their grandchildren oblivious to what's going to happen when they die! They don't know what they are missing – until something happens so they realize there is a hole in their ♥ that only the ☩ can fill! When the eyes of faith open – they realize all that they have been missing. Then they understand that they were in fact stumbling in the dark and didn't even know it!

¹⁹ Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. In 1896 they started the “modern” Olympics. There is a guy named Greensfelder who has very likely the most complete collection of Olympic participant medals of anyone in the world – worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300,000! Mr. Greensfelder said the collection didn't bring him the lasting joy he thought it would. He doesn't even get to look at his collection very often because it's in a safety deposit box at the bank – lest someone break into his home and steal it! And he has 3 grandchildren who will want to go to college soon – so he's pretty much looking for a buyer! But hey, he says, he's got a 500 beer mug collection – and so? “Things and stuff”! There are some pretty amazing things and stuff in the world. You can have so many Olympic Gold swimming medals – that for now – you have more than anyone. You can have your picture taken with all the medals arranged so you can see them all – and that's pretty swell, too, I suppose. But come Judgment Day they will not matter at all. All that really matters is the joy you have because Jesus took all your sins away. The real and lasting joy you have – comes from sin forgiven and heaven won. That's why the humble will rejoice in the great I AM – the Holy One of Israel – the same yesterday and today and forever. The other day Oliver picked up a ☩ that Prof. Jeske made and said, “Cross!” That's all that matters! Thank you Jesus! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schatz

