

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.
Schultz**

March 6, 2016

4th Sunday in Lent.

Isaiah 52:7-10 Eisenach Series



⁷ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” ⁸ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. ⁹ Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

People of God—rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I read this week about a doctor named Dilip Joseph. Do you know Dilip? He is an American. He was held hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Would you risk your life to save Dilip? A Navy Seal risked his life—along with a whole bunch of Navy Seals. Dilip was held hostage in a one roomed building—with guards all around. The Navy Seals approached under cover of darkness—with about 25 yards to go when they were discovered. Two of the Seals burst into the home—the first one through the doorway was shot and killed. Edward tore down the six layers of blankets that served as a door. Another Seal came through the doorway and was fatally wounded. Edward—saw Dilip and covered him with his body in order to keep him safe in the chaos of the gun fight! Again and again Edward took out enemy soldiers! Dilip was

saved! If you were Dilip Joseph—how could you thank Edward? Would you not want to dedicate the rest of your life—to showing your appreciation? Nothing would be too small and nothing would be too great—to thank him, and so? A special forces soldier risked his life for his country and for his fellow American! Jesus gave up His life to rescue a wretched sinner like me and like you! How can we thank Him? By dedicating our self to serve and glorify Him. Today God’s Word encourages us with the Gospel truth:

Jesus Rules Our ♥s!

I. We have a message of rescue...

II. We have a reason for rejoicing!

For the last many years we have been using the ILCW Series A, B and C—and this year the Eisenach Series. All four of them include Isaiah 52. ILCW Series A and C have Isaiah 52:7 to 10 for Christmas morning! Series B has Isaiah 52 at the very end of the Church year—End Times—thinking about Jesus coming back on Judgment Day. Just before Advent—before remembering that Jesus came once in lowliness and poverty. The next time He comes it will be with power and great glory—with all His holy angels with Him! The Trinity Lutheran Church, White Rock Avenue Christmas Eve Sunday School service—preschool recitation the year of our Lord 1977 was, *“Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming soon!”* I will never forget that! *“Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming soon!”* He is coming sooner now—than when I first heard that Scripture!

Isaiah chapter 52 begins **Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. ² Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive. ³ For this is what the LORD says: “You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed.” ⁴ For**

this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them.

⁵ “And now what do I have here?” declares the LORD. “For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,” declares the LORD. “And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. ⁶ Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I.” **Awake – awake – rise up.** Do you sense a theme here? Shake off the dust – throw off the chains on your neck! This is the picture of getting up – brushing yourself off. Getting knocked down happens all the time. The question is – what’s going to happen next? Are we down for the count – or do we get back up? Do we become discouraged and stay down – or do we get back up again? On our own – we are sunk. It is when we trust in the LORD and in Him alone that we will be ok. Remember the Apostle Paul – **when I am weak – then I am strong.** It is Jesus strong in me and with me and through me. Jesus is my only hope.

⁷ **How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”** One almost cannot help but think of Pheidippides – and so? Pheidippides – who ran the long distance from Marathon to Athens to announce literally with his dying breath, “*Joy to you, we’ve won!*” That’s the good news of Isaiah – Joy to you, we’ve won! Jesus won the victory for us! We are triumphant. **“In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!”** This is not a field goal with seconds left – an extra point after time has run out. This is a crushing victory – a rout – a blow out – a massacre! Jesus crushed the serpent’s head. We are triumphant over the last enemy – the ultimate enemy death! How

beautiful on the mountains – what? The feet – the sound on the stony mountain path – announcing our victory even over death and the grave.

⁷ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” Good news – peace – good tidings – salvation. This is the Gospel of sin forgiven and Heaven won. Sometimes it’s tempting to say – my sins are forgiven – yada, yada, yada. Let’s get to the practical interesting applications. How does all this change my interaction with my spouse, my children, my in-laws, my co-workers? And suddenly it’s all about me and the constant pursuit of happiness in this world. If I could just get really really organized – with all my cans of soup in alphabetical order – all my spices on little wheels that go round and round. If I could have all my t-shirts folded and on their edges – instead of lying flat – then I could get more of them into my t-shirt drawer. And if I put my instant oatmeal in my cereal mug with my coffee and my juice cup and my spoon and my vitamins all set out the night before I will be even more efficient in the morning. And there’s nothing wrong with being organized in the morning. But the Gospel is so much more! The Gospel is about forgiveness full and free – so that I know whenever and however I die – I will come Home to Heaven – because Jesus has washed away all my sins!

⁹ Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Babylonian Army would lay siege to Jerusalem. King Zedekiah was supposed to surrender – and go off to Babylon but he resisted God’s will. Then tried to make a run for it. He was captured – in 2 Kings chapter 25. He was forced to watch his sons being put to death – then his eyes were put out.

The last thing he would ever see was unspeakable suffering and loss. Then the children of Israel were taken off into 70 years of captivity. The Babylonians – terrorists of so long ago – would put fish hooks into the cheeks of the children of Israel and literally drag them off into captivity far *far* away. Still – the LORD has not forsaken his people. Burst into songs of joy together – the broken down – crushed and trashed ruins of Jerusalem. Imagine – what would be left of your home – if you were gone for literally 70 years – then came back home? Can you imagine the squirrels and the raccoons and birds and bunnies that would move into your home? Can you imagine the mold and the flowers and the trees that would grow in your carpet – once windows were broken – and birds and bugs and butterflies came inside! Imagine the damage that would be done – once the rain and snow and wind and leaves came inside! Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for LORD has comforted his people – he has bought back Jerusalem!

¹⁰ The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. Down through the ages people have built amazing structures. If you go to Peru – follow the Inca Trail – you can see a place called Machu Pichu! It's made of stone – quarried and chiseled so precisely – there is no mortar – no cement – just stone upon stone. There are places where there are very precise spaces between stones so that on certain days – depending on the position of all the planets in our solar system – bright light illuminates the inside of buildings for just a little while – and then it's all dark again! How did they do that? The people who built Machu Pichu are all gone? Where did they go? What happened to them? We don't know! Jesus knows! The Great Pyramids of Giza are so big you can see them from outer space. Thousands upon

thousands of stones – each the size of a Prius. And the Sphinx – staring at – a Pizza Hut/Kentucky Fried Chicken – on streets full of stray dogs and little children unspeakably disfigured by their parents to become more pitiful beggars? And the earthy political and military power of the Pharaohs – long gone. See the splendor of the Parthenon – its pillars constructed on angles to give the optical illusion of their being straight. And the statues – reminiscent of the statues by the Supreme Court? Some are in Athens and some are in the British Museum of History in London. The Greeks would like their statues back. The British – not so much! Again the earthly power of the Greeks – pretty much gone. The sun never sets on the British Empire – or does it? The LORD’s power and His alone will stand the test of forever time!

All the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. When I was a little person we used to go to Sunday School and then Church. And then we would come home and listen to a Lutheran Sermon on the radio – Bringing Christ to the nations. I remember one sermon where the preacher said, “There are lots of things our Heavenly Father seems to tolerate – being ignored is not one of them.” You can’t ignore Jesus – you can’t! August 1970 was the first time I ever came to Watertown. There are steeples everywhere! There are cemeteries everywhere – full of stones topped with crosses! Go to the Piggly Wiggly – there is a cross in the front window. It will say, “He is Risen!” – come Easter morning and for weeks after that! There is Christian music on Sundays in the Piggly Wiggly. There was a sign on 4th Street little white lights that spelled out Easter morning, “Jesus Lives!” If that sign is down – a new one needs to be in the Schultz front yard. I have 21 days to finish it! I have done almost every thing on my bucket list – except for making a piece of furniture – a small

table – with three boxes on top of it – each box containing a drawer. Dr. Frazier Crane had one. And the other thing I want to do is eat a bowl of noodles by a really big wall – after telling people half the world away – about Jesus! Maybe Jesus will make that come true, too! Everyone everywhere – all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God – and know to say, “Thank you, Jesus!” Amen!

To God alone all glory!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rev. Anthony E. Schatz", is centered on a light blue rectangular background.