

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Epiphany 7 February 20, 2011 Isaiah 12:2-4



2"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 "Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.6Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." *English Standard Version.*

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

Sundays I like to walk for 28 minutes on the tread mill at 5 p.m. watching FOX News with Chris Wallace. I like to come up and have supper precisely at 5:30 p.m. – while watching the second half of FOX News with Chris Wallace. I was just finishing my bowl of chicken soup last Sunday – when the 6 o'clock news started. They did the headlines – about Cairo and about the national budget. And then they showed a man hanging on to a railing – over the edge--on the top of a ten story building. They said people were desperately hanging on to *him*. Keep watching to see what happened! Oh, I had stuff to do. But where was this man? And what happened to him? I watched and watched and waited and waited. Almost a whole hour later they finally said this man was standing on the edge – while people tried desperately to talk him down. Fire men – a whole bunch of them – came closer and closer from the only direction they could – when all of a sudden the man jumped. Two fire fighters – close enough *lunged forward*. They each grabbed a hold of him and held on literally for dear life! Then everybody pulled – and they pulled this poor man to safety. The news lady says – this man had tried several times before – to take his own life! Something is seriously painfully wrong! But it's the rescue! Can you imagine? You run to the edge. You reach out – and grab this guy. And you hold on tight! You dasn't let go! You have to be careful he doesn't pull you over! But you hold on tight – because his life is literally in your hands! Once they pulled this guy back up over the railing – they dragged him about fifteen yards. I think I would have pulled him even farther! And then I think I would have covered him up and held him down – so he couldn't jump up and pitch himself over the edge again! We were in far worse danger than any man on a ledge. We were **dead in our trespasses and sins**. Jesus rescued us – by dying on the cross. Jesus sacrificed his life – to rescue our soul!

God Is My Salvation!

- 1. Give thanks and praise**
- 2. Make known his deeds among all peoples!**

Again let us appreciate the context. Isaiah – the name Isaiah means *the LORD is Salvation!* Again what a wonderful name for someone who proclaimed law and Gospel. The LORD is Salvation! Isaiah preached God's Word – during the reigns of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah – kings of Judah**. You remember Uzziah. He was the King who wanted to burn incense which was something only the priests were allowed and commanded by God to do!

You remember how Uzziah in sinful pride insisted – “Don’t you know who I am?” You remember how the LORD struck Uzziah with leprosy – beginning in the middle of his forehead! Uzziah had to live by himself ever after that. By grace alone – the LORD worked repentance in Uzziah’s heart. And that’s what matters most of all – his heart of faith in the end. After Uzziah died his son Jotham became king. Jotham was just 25 years old – and reigned for 16 years – like being President for 4 terms in a row. God’s Word says, **“He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done. The high places, however, were not removed, the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.”** 2 Kings 15:34,35a The high places were places of fertility cult worship – the most gross and obscene and violent and perverted sinful wickedness – done in the shadows of obscene statuary. The high places were chosen – in the blasphemous thinking that their adultery and prostitution and assaults would be more easily seen by their imaginary gods – Baal and Asherah. Their wickedness was supposed to give them babies – make their flocks and herds to grow – to make it rain so that their crops grow – to make them prosperous. This wickedness – gross and obscene idolatry was a cancer in the land of Israel! Ahaz was the 12th king of Judah. He too reigned for 16 years – like being President for 4 terms in a row. God’s Word says, **“Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel (that would be the godless wicked kings of the north – who would eventually be carried off into captivity and oblivion!) and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.** 2 Kings 16:2b-8 What a wicked King – King Ahaz! To actually throw his little baby boy into a fire – to burn him up – to what? To appease some false fertility god that doesn’t even exist? Yet again – the faithlessness of people cannot spoil the faithfulness of God! Ahaz – King Ahaz. Do you remember him? Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah was king of Judah when King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to attack Jerusalem. Ahaz was scared to death! Remember how the LORD sent Isaiah to tell Ahaz – these two kings coming out to threaten you – are like two smoldering stubs of firewood! Because I am with you – you have nothing to fear! **Again (AGAIN) the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test!” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah – he will bring the king of Assyria.”** Isaiah 7:11f The King of Assyria would come and drag the 10 northern tribes off into *oblivion*. Here was judgment as fierce and terrible as possible!

Then came *Good* King Hezekiah. Remember him? He was only 25 years old when he became King. Remember when Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem? God’s Word says **Sennacherib’s officers spoke further against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. The king also wrote letters insulting the LORD, the God of Israel and saying this against him; “Just as the gods of the peoples of the other lands did not rescue their people from my hand, so the god of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand.”** 2 Chronicles 32:16f Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the LORD for his mighty and powerful

deliverance. By grace alone the LORD granted that prayer. **Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria: "He will not enter this city or shoot *an* arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city," declares the LORD. " I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant."** That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death *a hundred and eighty-five thousand* men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with the sword... 2 Kings 19:32f

The LORD was very good to Hezekiah. God's Word says, **Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God have given him very great riches...He succeeded in everything he undertook.** 2 Chronicles 32:27f Do you know what that's like—when you succeed at everything you undertake? When blessings keep coming—one after another—it can be tempting to think—you know why this is all going so well? It must be *me!* It must be all my hard work—my skill—my dedication—I don't know—my charm and good looks? It's not! Hezekiah realized his sin of pride and by grace alone—repented! We need to pray that God would bless us with humble hearts—realizing *all we have—and all we are*—are gifts of God's grace and goodness! We are but dust and ashes—blessed by God—beyond all measure! To him alone belongs all the glory. He is the one we thank and praise and worship and share!

2"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." We were watching TV the other night—*Chicago* cops and robbers. The police superintendent and the police officer assigned to drive her and protect her got out of their car and immediately they were both shot—right in the middle of the chest. Down they went. I told Matt—not to worry—they were both wearing their bullet resistant vest. That's what they are—you know—bullet *resistant!* The lady—the superintendent got up—the guy didn't! What?! Come to find out—the guy had given his vest to the superintendent. She was wearing his vest. It saved her life—at the cost of his! Oh, no! Who would do that? Only someone who loves you—literally—more than life itself! That's how much Jesus loves us. Enough to die to be our Salvation—our eternal rescue!

4 And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Tomorrow—Friday/today—even as we speak—Uncle Terry is in Haiti. In the Dominican Republic end of the Island—people are vacationing at expensive resorts. They are drinking drinks in coconut shells—with chunks of pineapples and cherries—on little umbrellas. On the other Haiti end of the Island people are living in shelters made with tarps—those big sheets of plastic that you put over your air conditioners and piles of firewood. Except these are old and brittle and torn from being baked in the sun. On the Haiti end of the Island—people everywhere are missing hands and feet—missing arms and legs from the earthquake. There wasn't time with so many people hurt all at the same time—there wasn't time to do careful reconstructive surgery—to do vein grafts and save parts that were terribly crushed. There was nothing to do but remove limbs. Everywhere you look—there are people missing parts of their body. On the Haiti part of the Island they don't have clean water to drink. Something we take oh so for granted. Clean water?

We get water from refrigerator doors – clean cool filtered water – with ice crushed or cubed – depending on which you prefer! We run water out of the faucet – sticking our finger in it – until it’s just the right temperature – then filling a glass – drinking half of it – and dumping the rest out. We let the water run while we brush our teeth – rinse our mouth – and spit the water out. We run showers and baths forever and a day! And worse than lacking clean water – is to lack the living water – the water of the Gospel. Drink that living water – and never ever be thirsty again! This living water is what we will share – with our children and grandchildren – our co-workers and friends – our neighbors. This living water is what we will share by our mission thank-offerings. This living water is what our children prepare to share – as they come very faithfully week after week – to Sunday School, to our Trinity St. Luke’s School, to our Lakeside Lutheran High School and our Luther Preparatory School. Living water that this world cannot live without! By the grace of God we will be more and more faithful – hearing and studying God’s Word! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

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