

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**Saints Triumphant November 14, 2010**  
**Isaiah 65:20-25**



<sup>20</sup> “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. <sup>21</sup> They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. <sup>23</sup> They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. <sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent’s food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

*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!*

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

Juliet was riding her bicycle – with training wheels. Juliet is 4 years old. Jacob was riding his bicycle – with training wheels. Jacob is 5 years old. Juliet and Jacob were riding their bicycles as fast as they could. It was a race – on East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan. They crashed – they crashed into an 87-year-old woman named Claire and “seriously and severely” injured her. Claire fell. Her hip was fractured and she had to have an operation! It was very painful! I always say – if you have a broken bone – you should eat string cheese – to make it mend. I’ve said that. But the fact is – I can only imagine how painful it must be – to have a broken bone! Who’s responsible? Who’s to blame? Claire’s family say – a 5 year old child – even a 4 year old child is old enough to know – you can’t ride your bike that fast. You need to be more careful. Some people say – Juliet and Jacob’s moms were there. They are responsible. They were supervising. They are to blame! I don’t know! I guess I would have to meet Juliet and Jacob and their moms. It’s too late to meet Claire. She died – not from the accident – but I’m sure the last 3 months of her life were terribly painful because of the accident. When is an accident not an *accident*? And if somebody is to blame – what should the penalty be? I really don’t know how they decide that!

I am not 4 or 5 years old. I am certainly old enough to know very much about what is right and wrong – and again and again like the Apostle Paul I must confess: **I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.** <sup>16</sup> **And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.** <sup>17</sup> **As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.** <sup>18</sup> **For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.** <sup>19</sup> **For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.** <sup>20</sup> **Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.** Romans 7:15f It is only by grace through faith that we can say we are forgiven – that

**We Are Saints Triumphant!**

- 1. We are saints today**
- 2. We will be saints forever!**

The scroll of the Prophet Isaiah begins with the words, “**The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah...** Do you remember Uzziah? King Uzziah was the one who thought it would be really swell to burn the incense by the Temple. God’s Word says: <sup>16</sup> **But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.** <sup>17</sup> **Azariah the priest with eighty**

other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. <sup>18</sup> They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God." <sup>19</sup> Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. <sup>20</sup> When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him. 2 Chronicles chapter 26 There is perhaps no sin more dangerous than pride – becoming *puffed up*. Martin Luther once said there are some sins common to youth. Like fighting – getting angry – pushing and shoving and punching people's lights out. There are sins common to youth. Drinking – fermented grain beverage – apple-tinis – wine and whiskey and bourbon and gin. There are sins common to youth – *hugs and kisses* – to think there is nothing in the whole wide world that is sweeter. But the day comes when you are older and you know that to fight hurts and to drink makes you head and your tummy hurt – and there is so much more to love than just *hugs and kisses*. But pride – to be proud of yourself and your accomplishments – or the accomplishments of your children and grandchildren! To become proud – of all that you have and all that you have become. To be proud that you are so much more than some people you know. There is danger – to think that all that you have and all that you are – are not so much gifts of God's goodness – but the result of your own hard work and dedication and incredible good looks, too! And you become proud – arrogant – *puffed up*! You fool yourself into thinking you don't need God so much – because just look what you have and what you are – all due to your own ingenuity – *genius – sheer genius!* And that's wrong – painfully incredibly wrong! Without God we are nothing!

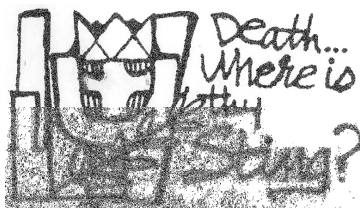
A few minutes ago – Pastor Gartner read from Isaiah chapter 65 – a few verses before the ones we are concentrating on. He read, "**Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.**" *New heaven and new earth.* That has to remind you of the Scriptures we read at practically every funeral. The Revelation to St. John – chapter 21 – the second to last chapter of all of God's Word! <sup>1</sup>Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." <sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." This, too, is law and Gospel! There are only two possible outcomes – everlasting joy, peace and rest with Jesus in Heaven – or unspeakable horror and endless grief and pain – unending forever unbearable pain!

<sup>20</sup> "**Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.** Long life already in this world – is a precious gift from God. Remember the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment? *Honor your father and mother that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or disobey our parents and those in authority over us but honor, serve and obey them and give them love and respect!* Remember--the first commandment with a promise? Long life is a gift of God's grace! Remember Frieda Knoll? 101 years, 8 months and 10 days! What a wonderful blessing that is? Then to be called home to heaven on her confirmation day – the anniversary of when her pastor put his hand on her head and read in blessing the Scriptures that say, "**Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life!**" Revelation 2:10

<sup>21</sup> **They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.** <sup>22</sup> **No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands.** This is a message of optimism and hope! Do we understand that? A message of optimism and hope! There are in this world two kinds of people – Eeyore-s and Tigger-s. Eeyore is always saying, “Oh, dear, oh my, oh, no!” Tigger is filled with an inexpressible joy. God’s Word says, **“Be joyful always. Pray continually. Give thanks under all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus!”** Only Jesus’ forgiving love can fill you with an optimism and confidence for today and tomorrow. We live in a world where the news is almost always terrible – terrible now with the genuine possibility that it is only going to get worse before it gets better! God’s Word is filled with optimism because of **Christ crucified!** That’s the essential point – **Christ crucified** and risen! When we know in our heart of hearts that Jesus took all our sins away – then we will build houses and dwell in them. We will plant vineyards and eat the grapes. We will see God’s blessing on our hard work. We have two blueberry bushes in our back yard. They are not very big – but they are protected. We have these little chicken wire baskets around them and even over them. Bunnies will not munch on our little blueberry bushes this winter. And next Spring I fully expect to take those chicken wire baskets off and before you know it – harvest fresh and tangy blueberries! I have this confidence – not because I am such an expert gardener – but because Jesus who invented blueberries – and all those powerful antioxidants in blueberries – will make them grow! I took time today to pound those little stakes into the ground beside all the little pudgy pine trees in my back yard. My brother-in-law gave us a whole bunch of little pine trees – each the size of a very fuzzy pencil! They are now each about 3 feet tall and before you know it – they will be 4 and 5 feet – and pretty soon taller than I am. And birds will come and nest in their branches when the snow is thick and deep! What matters is that Jesus died on a cross – an old dead tree – so that our sins like scarlet will be whiter than snow! When you know that Heaven is our home – then we can say with the Psalmist, **“I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD – the maker of Heaven and earth!”** The one who made everything – can repair everything! And he will – in part now – and completely in eternity!

**They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.** Did you read in the Watertown Daily Times Friday, the world’s oldest person died in St. Barts. Eugenia was her name. They called her “Sweets” because she was so kind – she was so sweet! Sweets was 114 years old. That’s pretty old. Sweets was one of 14 children. All 13 of her brothers and sisters preceded her in death. They say Sweets worked very hard when she was young – tending the garden and taking care of the animals. Everyone said Sweets devoted her life to serving Jesus and serving others. Wouldn’t that be wonderful if people would say that about us – whenever we die – that we are saints triumphant – having devoted our lives to serving Jesus and serving others – until Jesus called us home to perfect rest safe in Heaven with all the saints by grace through faith. Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**



*Rev. Anthony E. Schuttz*