

Isaiah 44:6-11

July 19th, 2020

“Help Wanted”

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

7th S.A. Pentecost

Vicar Miguel Gonzalez-Feliciano

Grace, Mercy, and Peace are yours from God our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Help Wanted]

Help Wanted: Life has been far too difficult to bear lately. Pain has been overwhelming, people around the world seem to be going crazy. I don't think a support animal is going to cut it. Need help.

Perhaps many of us feel as though we would want to put out an ad like that. It's not that you and I can't cope with everything that's going on in the world around us, but maybe we just don't want to. There seems to be some new pain or despair around every corner. Whether it's schools deciding to begin with online learning next year, riots and protests still impacting our nation, or the fact that a disease many of us thought would last only a few weeks is still around months later. You might feel like you're in way over your head, if the year 2020 was an order in a restaurant, it would be sent back to the kitchen.

It's just too much.

But who can help? Families have been pushed far in their relationships, some family members might even be the cause for your stress or fear. Friends are helpful, but there's only so many “socially distant” meetings you feel as though you can handle before you're bursting at the seams. This all seems to contribute to the growing void that's taking up space in so many hearts around this country and around the world. Who can save us from our fear? The help wanted ad doesn't seem to list any qualifications, but the only one qualified to help is God.

[First]

What makes God qualified exactly? This is the question that comes up if it even comes to mind at all. Often, the people you and I look to for answers are: Doctors, Politicians, and our own capability to Google something. Whether we honestly do our best to find the information that helps us be informed or we merely seek things that agree with us, these days information seems to bring little comfort. God's qualifications lie not in being Doctor God or Governor God, they simply lie in His primary job: Creator.

If there was to be a help wanted ad for God it would read, "Looking for God: Must have created everything." In our reading today from Isaiah, God puts this to show in his introduction. Isaiah sets the stage, "**Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts:**" But it is God who truly introduces Himself, "**I am the first and I am the last.**" God doesn't mess around. He isn't Lord of everything because He went to a University and got his God degree, nor is He God because people chose to worship Him. Regardless of anything that occurs on this world or in this galaxy, God is God because He made it all.

Therefore God issues the challenge: Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.

The challenge is foolhardy. Who else made the heavens and the earth? Nobody else formed the dry land and the sea or created the sun, moon, and stars. God is the one who formed man from the dry land and breathed life into his nostrils. God is the one who made every plant and animal. God is the one who stood over all in the beginning and said, "Behold, it is very good."

And yet, like some kind of dope, I raise my hand and say, "Oh! Oh! OH! ME ME ME ME ME!"

[American Idols]

Truly, I know that I did not create everything, and I know that I have zero control over everything that happens around me. I can't heal the sick, end war, create peace, or even atone for my own sin. Sinful man that I am though, I tend to act as if I can. This is what it means to have the Old Adam at war in your flesh. It isn't this mild desire to steal from the cookie jar that can be trained out of you with meditation. The Old Adam isn't a force of "Negative energy" that can be cleansed with positive thinking. Our Old Adam is Sin that breaks your neck and turns you in on yourself so that all you can see is yourself. This turning in on yourself leaves little room for you to look beyond yourself. Whether you and I mean to or not, this Old Adam curves us into ourselves so that we make an idol out of us.

The hard part is: We love it.

Our society tells us to do this. Look to yourself, believe in yourself. Trust your "inner goddess" is probably the most painfully obvious one. Even Google offers the opportunity for me to search out all the information and act as if I'm now omniscient. It's only when the world slides off the rail, and you and I grow fearful that you and I realize we were never really in control. There is no "inner goddess", no benefit to looking to ourselves. You and I aren't qualified to be God.

God says, "Who is like me?"

[Who is like God?]

Over and over again, you and I need to be reminded: there is only one God and He made everything. Idolatry always leads to death. Fix your eyes on Christ. He is the one who defeated the Old Adam. Christ is the one who sent the Holy Spirit, who claimed you as an heir of God. The command that comes from our Savior is not to replace God, but to love one another. Only God has redeemed us. There is no other Rock like our God. Nothing else on this planet can even begin to compare to the overwhelming love of God. This God is one who drew so near that people could touch Him, they could speak to Him, and they were taught by Him.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ radically redefined the course of human existence bringing hope to the earth and victory over death and the grave.

Who is like God?

NOBODY.

NOTHING.

[Help Wanted]

News Flash: Life has been far too difficult to bear lately. Pain has been overwhelming, people around the world seem to be going crazy. I don't think a support animal is going to cut it. But perhaps the people of God can. Not because you and I are so incredible, but because the God you and I serve is incredible. The God you and I serve is a God who comes to us in His Word, His body is what we partake of in the bread and the wine. Our God is not distant. His love is always present in our lives. Jesus commanded you and me to love. Love one another as He loved us. If nothing else on this planet can even begin to compare to the overwhelming love of God. Then let us try to be like God in this way. Let us draw people so near that people can see Him in daily acts of kindness. Let's be available so that people can speak to us about Him, the one who is coming again to judge both the living and the dead. Brothers and Sisters in Christ let's not grow weary of teaching others about Him. The incarnation of Jesus Christ radically redefined the course of human existence bringing hope to the earth and victory over death and the grave. He also gave the world you. Isaiah 44:8 tells us: You are my witnesses!

There is no God like our God.

So be it.

Amen.

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1Pt 4:8-9)
