

Isaiah 12
"Celebrate!"
Christ the King Sunday (Last Sunday of the Church Year)

Nov. 21/22, 2015
Our Redeemer Lutheran
Vicar Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

[Intro]

Your favorite team just won a major championship. What do you do? Do you just sit with your hands under your legs and keep quiet? Do you just ignore what has happened? Your team has won the championship!

No, you don't just sit there and do nothing. You celebrate! You high five the nearest person next to you! You shout! You may jump! You may even go out to your car and honk your horn. You call a friend! You post on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram! You don't do nothing. You are a fan! You celebrate!

After that day is over, you don't just go along your life as if that championship didn't happen. You plan on going to the parade, you may buy streamers, and you may buy collectibles in celebration of that victory. You celebrate with others!

Once that parade is over, do you then go back to your life as it was prior to the championship? No, you reminisce about that great victory when talking to your family and friends about it for years to come. After all, your team vanquished the opposition. Your team delivered *you* the championship! And *you* shout and sing for joy!

Isaiah 12 is a celebration! God is our salvation! The Holy Spirit through Isaiah isn't writing that God's people should just sit down and be quiet. He is writing just the opposite.

[God's Word is divisive to the World]

At the same time, we hear over and over again, that as Christians, we are to not proclaim our faith in public. We are told that we cannot pray in school. We are told that we cannot read God's Written Word during study hall or our free time. We are told that there is a wall of separation between church and state.

Like oil and vinegar – the two shall never mix.

Where is this written? When did this come about?

Then we wonder why there could be fewer and fewer people worshiping Jesus Christ each weekend.

To illustrate, we continuously hear that Christianity in America is on the decline. Recently, in *The Des Moines Register* ran an article with the headline: "Why fewer

rural Iowans are going to church.” One lady in the article is quoted as saying, (I don’t go to church because) “it’s something I don’t need to do.” She continued, “I’ve seen them up there in church, screaming and hollering. I was raised up in the country, where they talk and don’t scream. But I look at it this way. I’m in the country. I can talk to God anywhere. I’m out on a walk, no people around, and God is out there all around me.¹”

More recently, that same paper published a letter to the editor that was titled: “People continue to use the Bible to discriminate.”

This couldn’t be further from the truth, but many people do believe that the Bible does discriminate. Many people who identify as Christian even believe this, which is why so many denominations have changed from the Biblical stance – God’s Word — on many things, from allowing women clergy to being in favor of same-sex relationships.

Anyhow, how could the Bible be interpreted as discrimination? The letter’s writer took a quote from Annie Savery, who helped on the women’s suffrage front in 1871.

The quote reads: “The enemy of all good could not do a greater service to the cause of evil, than by leading Christian men blindly to interpose the Bible as a barrier against every social reform, so that when the reform triumphs it shall seem ... to be not merely the defeat of the opposers of the reform, but the overthrow of the Bible, also ... This book is too precious ... to be thrown in the street to help form a barricade against every attempt to overthrow old dynasties of wrong.²”

Well, there is one thing that is correct in that quote – the Holy Word of God is precious. The Bible is of great value. The letter proclaims discrimination, but God is saying just the opposite! After all, it is the Written Word of God. And as the saying goes, “God is God and I’m not.” The trouble today is that so many people want their opinions to trump that of the one true God.

So, where is it written that Christians cannot share their faith in public?

It isn’t! The U.S. Constitution protects Christians and all other religions the right to publicly profess our faith. Those who say we cannot profess our faith in public typically cite the separation of church and state, but that is not found in any United

¹ <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2015/10/23/christian-churches-face-decline-rural-iowa/73993340/>

² <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/11/10/people-continue-use-bible-discriminate/75467760/>

States government document. But, by repeating that phrase “separation of church and state” over and over again, we begin to think that it is true.

That phrase is found somewhere, however. It was found in a response letter sent by then-president Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association, but Jefferson had no part in the drafting of the Constitution. The wall of separation that Jefferson noted is *not* one where religion has no place in government. The wall is that government can have *no part in religion*. So, the common belief is just the opposite.

In the public sphere, how do people come to know Jesus Christ as their savior if they do not know of Him? How are they to hear about Jesus if nobody has told them about what He has done for them? Have you told somebody about what Jesus has done for you when that opportunity arose?

[Break out in song]

Trained to be quiet, we all need to do just the opposite. Even James agrees: “*Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise!*” (James 5:14b)

Why does the person sing?

Well, check out Isaiah 12. “*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!*” Would you break out into song if you knew you were saved? The Lord’s people broke out into song, because of their salvation, in thanksgiving they began proclaiming God’s deeds to ALL people! They are celebrating!

God is our salvation, because He delivered us from all enemies: physical and spiritual! We receive this peace every weekend in holy absolution after we confess our sins unto God, the Father. We are then as white as snow. We receive this peace, every time we eat and drink Christ’s body and blood in Holy Communion.

Isaiah continues saying, “*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*” This is the joy of winning the eternal championship! God rescued Israel out of Egypt! Jesus Christ offers living water that comes from His pierced side to give us forgiveness of sins and life everlasting!

Because of this, we sing – we sing to the Lord! We “*give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted!*” How do we praise God? We celebrate like we just won the championship! We tell everyone about what God has done for us! We “*sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth!*”

[Treasure]

So, when it comes to your treasure: Do you only buy championship merchandise of worldly teams? Do you just keep your treasure stored up in the bank? Do you waste it? Do you bury it in your backyard? Do you hide it under your mattress?

No, just the opposite! We give and we share what Our Lord has given to us. As our vocation, our calling, our stewardship, we all are to serve the Lord by contributing our first fruits to the church – the bride of Christ, our victor.

But not only to the church, but to our neighbor, to our family, to our friends.

We are to be givers of money. Freely gained, freely given!

So, be good stewards of your treasure.

And be good stewards of your talents.

And be good stewards of your time.

Manage your time, talents and treasure in a God pleasing manner!

And this Wednesday or next weekend, you will have the opportunity to make a commitment. For yourselves, to God! You will have the opportunity to complete a pledge card and bring it forward to the altar of God.

[Conclusion]

To sum up, we are joyful in what Jesus has done for us! He did it all out of His love for us – even though we deserve damnation, he grants us eternal life in His Name. Jesus is our world champion over sin, death and the devil! Jesus is the champion of the universe! He alone gives us forgiveness, life and salvation!

So, let us all celebrate in that victory! Let us treasure in that victory! Break out the champagne and tell everyone what He has done! Amen!

Now, let us sing a joyful noise unto the Lord! Amen!