



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

December 31, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

New Year's Eve

First Lesson: [1 Peter 1:22-25](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 90

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Isaiah 51:1-6](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 13:6-9](#)

God's Salvation Is On The Way

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

I think I've told you before that when I grew up I heard my dad say a thousand times if I heard it once, in good times he would say "The Lord has been good to us." And when things were tough, he would say "The Lord will take care of us." I heard that over and over and over as a kid. No doubt as you look back at the end of the year and you reflect and look back at the year gone by, you probably went through good times and you probably went through challenging times. You could be in the middle of either or both right now. So the question I have for you then is how well are you doing at remembering when things are going well, "The Lord has been good to me," and when things are a challenge, "The Lord will take care of me"? What I've found over the years is that was a lot easier for my dad to say it than it is for me to live it. That's the nature of being a fallen sinner.

That's why we need one another, as brothers and sisters in Christ, to remind us of those glorious truths. God is always there. His blessings continue. Time marches on and things change all the time, but the constant that we have in our life is that **God's Salvation is on the Way**. It's on its way in ways that comforted the Israelites. It's on its way as it brings peace to us. And it's on its way through us.

We're in the second half of the [Book of Isaiah](#). I don't know how well you know the Book of Isaiah, but the first 39 chapters are Isaiah writing with some pretty strong words, some incredibly strong warnings about "Repent and turn back to God or you're going to get carried off into captivity! The Lord's wrath is going to come down on you because you aren't listening to His prophets." His words are pretty harsh at times.

Then you get to [Chapter 40](#) and it changes. The people hadn't even been carried off into captivity yet but Isaiah writes now to the people that would be carried off into captivity. He speaks words of comfort and consolation to them. That's what we're in when we read [Chapter 51](#) here. So when he says **"Look to the rock from which you were... hewn;"** he is talking to people that are living in exile and are struggling and don't like how things have changed. They don't like the struggle they are facing. So when he says **"Look to the rock from which you were... hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah,"** what is Abraham most well-known for? Not just having a child in his old age but a man of faith who believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

So to a people that were living in exile, he is saying "Be like Abraham. Trust God's Word no matter what your outward circumstances are saying, no matter what your eyes are saying, no matter what you are going through, no matter what the difficulty is" (for them it was being in Babylon, away from home). "...look to Abraham and trust that God is going to reveal His salvation, that He will **comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.**" Those words had to sound like a pipe dream when they were sitting by the Euphrates in Babylon. He's saying "Trust God. Believe His promises." God's promises sustain us. God's promises don't change. We change. Our circumstances change. Everything changes except that God always keeps His promises, so keep looking at that.

For them salvation was on the way in the sense of deliverance from captivity and being brought back to Jerusalem so they could rebuild the temple, so the Messiah could come, so that His salvation would come and His justice would be revealed to the nations. His justice being this—instead of punishing sinners and sending them to hell for all eternity, He sends His Son, from heaven to earth, to live perfectly in the place of the world and then to die as the punishment for the world's sins. Then He says that message is going to go out. It's going to be revealed to the nations. Here is what is going to happen. **"The islands will look to me...** This message will go out. Others will hear it. They will rejoice like you rejoiced when you came back from Babylon. But know that my salvation is on the way."

Then he points them even farther ahead to the salvation that comes in its fullness at the end of the world when **"...the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies.** But know this; even when this world comes to an end, **my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.**" This is where the Israelites were to put their hope. This is where you and I are to put our hope as we mark a calendar year changing and as we look back and reflect. As we see the challenges and the blessings of a year gone by, one constant through all of them is

that God was at our side. His promises were there. They sustained us. Maybe at times we forgot Him and maybe at times we questioned Him, but God remained patient. He continued to point us back to His love in Christ. He continued to bring people in their lives to remember of these glorious truths, no matter how far we might have drifted from them. He reaches out to us to bring us back to His promises.

Did you notice yourself in what I read to you? You were kind of mentioned specifically here. When God said ***“The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations,”*** He is kind of talking about you. His law is His message, His Word. It contains both Law and Gospel. His justice is what He did to save everyone in the entire world. And His plan is that it goes out to the world through His people; that His people, no matter what their circumstances (whether their circumstances are challenging, whether their circumstances are full of joy), in any circumstance, His people point others to God as the source of their strength in crisis or the source of their joy. That remains a constant. His plan is that His message goes out so that others know it and come to rejoice in it. His plan is that it goes out through you, not the person next to you, in front of you, or behind you, not the person six feet above you in a pulpit, but YOU. He has given you faith and He has given you the ability to share your faith. So as the year turns and a new year comes, look for opportunities to remind each other to trust in God’s promises because His salvation will always be on its way. Then also look for the opportunities to share it with those who don’t know it. They are out there and they don’t have the peace and comfort that you and I have. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.