



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

May 23, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

School Graduation

Lesson: [Deuteronomy 6:1-6](#)

Sermon Text: [Isaiah 12:2](#)

### **Salvation: My Strength, My Song**

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.

***“Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.  
The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense;  
He has become my salvation.”***

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

What would you say is your strongest sense? Do you have a strong sense of smell? If you need contacts like me, your sight is maybe not the best. There are certain things that they say about senses that can bring you back to different things. Sight—some people have a really good memory. Smell is actually a uniquely strong sense that connects you with the past, with a certain place or time. Taste—you can taste something that reminds you of an old occasion. This afternoon my wife and I had dumplings. They weren't the soup dumplings. They were the pot stickers, the Chinese dumplings, and it took us back to our days in China.

One of the greatest things I think that connects us to the past, though, is our hearing, like when we hear a song. If you've ever been driving, maybe for the parents here and grandparents, if you hear a song that is dear to you, maybe it's the song you had at your wedding and it takes you back to that first dance. Or a song that was a favorite in high school or college or was a favorite of a friend or a loved one and it can take you instantly back to that occasion. For the 8<sup>th</sup> graders here, I don't know if you have a ton of those, but I think you can think of a song that gets you excited and reminds you of a favorite time.

For Isaiah, as he is writing he is remembering something that had happened. In the verses before, in [Chapter 11](#), he is talking about the Exodus and how God had delivered His people. He is remembering these amazing things and he breaks out into singing

and saying all these great things that God has done. Then we get to our verse for today. But in order to get to that, he says something first in [Verse 1](#). He says, ***“O Lord, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.”*** Notice before we get to our theme here of **Salvation**, we have to first see what had happened in the Exodus and as the people strayed away from God. God’s people had not done what God wanted. They had fallen away many, many times. God was angry with them. When Isaiah is called (we are going to hear that on Sunday), he says he is a man of unclean lips among a people of unclean lips. We are sinful. Each and every one of us is sinful and we have to understand that and see that God isn’t happy with just who we are and how we are because we fall short. But notice what he says right away is that he has comforted us and his anger has turned away.

So what comes after that deliverance is a song. It’s a song of salvation; that God is our salvation, our strength, and our song. The translation in the New International Version ([NIV](#)) is our salvation and my “defense,” but in the Old NIV and in the [EHV](#) and many other translations, it is “song.” Yes, God is your defense and your strength, but think about your salvation. That Jesus has died and has risen for you. He is your salvation, your strength and your song. This is really what Isaiah is doing. He is connecting the Exodus and that salvation that happened as God took them out of Egypt and saved them from captivity and brought them to a new promised land and then he is connecting it to what God is doing for us spiritually. He is your strength, your song, your salvation.

We know that Jesus is our salvation. We can’t do anything on our own to save us. He has cleansed us from our sins. But what does it mean that He is our strength and our song? For all of you, what does that mean?

You guys (Graduation Class) are a very bright class, a very gifted class. In class, you guys would always ask great questions. If you weren’t satisfied with what answer I gave, you would challenge me in a very good way. It’s a good thing! That’s a lot like what I was at your age, trust me. But, as much as you have grown in these years here, where is your real strength? You’ve only grown a few years. You’re going to grow a lot more in high school and in college, but you need to continue to lean on your true strength. Where is that? It’s in your Lord because you know that there are going to be times when you fall short. There are going to be times when you make mistakes or even times when you try to please everyone and it just doesn’t work. You can get down on yourself and the world will say, “Look to yourself! Find strength in yourself!” What happens? Sometimes we feel pretty empty. We need to look to our Lord for our strength. He is your salvation and your strength. He gives you strength to use your gifts and talents in so many different ways—in school, in sports, in your family, in this church, in the community. You can serve God in so many different ways. There are many gifted students here that I think could use their talents and gifts to serve God full-time, in the future. But even if you don’t do that, you can serve God all the time in all of your different vocations. We

know that. We have talked about that. And as you know of His love and forgiveness, you can go out and serve.

What does it mean then when we know that He is our strength, but also that He is our song? There are all sorts of different songs that you can think of and sing. When you think about your time here at Morrison Zion, what type of song will you think of? What will be the most memorable things? For each of you, there will probably be different things. But isn't it kind of amazing how, as you get further away from things, certain small things stand out.

Again, my wife and I had been talking. We've been in Morrison now for five years. I was in China for eight years. My wife was in China for six years. She was saying, "Man, I've almost been here as long as my time in China and it feels like it's just a few memories, just a few things."

You were here how many years? So you're Eighth Grade—some of you since/all of you since 4K; quite a few of you since 4K—a long time? Not all of you, right, but many of you. But no matter what, you've been here quite a few years. As you go on from this school, it might be easy to remember some of the frustrations, some of the difficulties. You might not have always gotten along with some of the teachers or the pastors. But an important thing to remember is those teachers and pastors were sinful. We're not perfect. Notice when we talk about this and who your strength and salvation is, we're not saying a pastor or a teacher. The whole purpose of this school and church is to point you to Jesus. THAT is your strength. THAT is your salvation. So, yes, it could be easy to pick and point at failings of teachers, failings of classmates, or just a difficulty from time to time, but my encouragement to you is to remember and to sing a joyful song. Songs are not just things that we remember. Songs are also things that we go out and sing, as well.

One of the greatest things we do as we see God as our salvation and our strength, here he says, "The Lord, the Lord is my strength and my defense, or my song," so we go and share that. As you go out these doors, my prayer is that you continue to sing that song of praise; to sing that song of praise of your Savior, of your salvation knowing who your Lord is, knowing that you are forgiven. Dealing with one another with the song of joy and peace and singing a song, coming back here to be in the Word, and to go out into the world sharing that Word. Your song isn't ending today.

We talked about what you do as you go forward. I even asked, "What do you do with this book (the Bible) now?" You go forward and you take all those things that you learned and you carry it with you. It's your song. It's your song of joy and peace and salvation; knowing that the Lord is salvation.

On that theme, it says **Salvation: My Strength, My Song**, one thing I want to remind you as you sing that song is it's not just salvation but something that is repeated in your verse twice. ***"Surely God is my salvation... he has become my salvation."*** Never forget that.

In the beginning of Seventh Grade, we talked about your identity and hopefully talked about that this year enough that you remember what your identity is. You are a redeemed child of God. It's not just salvation out there for the world. It's your salvation; salvation that is yours; that though you've learned so many things at this school, in many different subjects, what we want you to walk away and remember today and in the many years to come is that you are a loved, redeemed child of God, and Jesus is your salvation, and that is your strength and your song as you go forth. Amen.

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