

EPIPHANY 2

Year C

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Isaiah 62:1-5

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn
and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
³You shall be a beautiful crown in the hand of
the Lord
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her
and your land Married,
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.
⁵For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your builder^[a] marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

Commentary from Ian Ernest

This text reaffirms the perceptive promises of the last chapter and the mission which aims to restore Zion's destiny. There is, on the part of the people, a feeling that God has abandoned them but the prophet is insisting that God will not be silent. He also reminds the people of the change of their name, which means a change of fortune and a change of order. This name goes beyond human imagination and, like the new heaven and the new earth, depends upon the appointment of the Creator.

Today, as we face the harsh realities of wars, conflicts, exclusions, and discrimination, we may tend to think that God is not anymore present with us. This season of Epiphany reminds us that, from the dawn of creation, God has never been silent, revealing himself and realizing his promises through our Lord Jesus Christ, whose name is above all names. Jesus is the one who brings us to the fulfillment of life with God. He comes anew in every suffering we face, as God kept coming back to the people of Israel.

The prophet also prophesied that Jerusalem would become a place of beauty in the hands of God and for us, followers of Christ, the beauty of God is seen in Christ, the Crown of all creation. These notions challenge us to renew our faith and to share with those who are yet to know about them, that there is a new order in Christ.

Discussion Questions

Why is the prophecy of Isaiah relevant to us who live in a post-modern era?

Why is it important for us to be prophets of our time?

Psalm 36:5-10

- ⁵ Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, *
and your faithfulness to the clouds.
- ⁶ Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep; *
you save both man and beast, O Lord.
- ⁷ How priceless is your love, O God! *
your people take refuge under the shadow of
your wings.
- ⁸ They feast upon the abundance of your house; *
you give them drink from the river of your
delights.
- ⁹ For with you is the well of life, *
and in your light we see light.
- ¹⁰ Continue your loving-kindness to those who know
you, *
and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Commentary from Ian Ernest

This psalm exalts divine love in the temple and conveys rich and wise counsel to believers. It enlightens our thoughts on flatterers who conceal evil intentions through their words.

This piece of poetry is for a God-fearing person who invokes judgment on those perceived as the enemies of God. Those who have no fear of God plot in their thoughts and through their tongues; they make false statements and by their deeds they destroy.

In parallel, the loving mercy of God is proclaimed. It has no boundaries and is expressed in two images that describe divine love and mercy: “the strong mountains” and “the great deep.”

As we meditate over the words and images described in this psalm, we can feel the immensity and overwhelming power of a loving and caring God. With the reassuring words of the Psalmist who puts his trust in the steadfast love of God, we can “take refuge under the shadow” of a merciful God.

So, as we daily face the challenges of flattering words, let us cultivate an upright heart that will win for us the salvation that God in Christ offers us.

Discussion Questions

Have you ever been deceived by those whom you thought had good intentions toward you? To whom did you turn to as you faced this harsh reality?

Have you ever tasted of God’s loving mercy in your quest for his sanctifying presence? Give some examples.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were gentiles you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, ⁵and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Commentary from Ian Ernest

I wish to lay emphasis on one part of this text which refers to the unity of the Church. Being the Body of Christ, the Church is called to allow every part of it to play its role so that it can bear true witness to the love of God as revealed in Christ. There is no place for uniformity in the Church, as within it people are bestowed with different gifts and have different tasks to attend to. The gift is offered by the Holy Spirit and is designed for an interdependent life in unity and harmony which brings glory to God.

As all gifts come from God, each one is therefore invited to use his or her competence in the service of God. Unfortunately, we have an erroneous perception that the gifts we receive are limited to the spiritual or the academic realm. Thus, it would be important for us to acknowledge that no distinction is to be made regarding the gifts we freely receive. A person who is a worker in a skilled trade, for example, a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, and others, should be encouraged to see that the talent he or she possesses comes from God.

The Church would then be enriched if all were given the opportunity to dedicate their skills to serve God and his people. This teaching of Paul also gives a detailed view of the gifts graciously offered to us; from it, we learn about the work and nature of the early Church. It informs us that, as members of the Body of Christ, we have to possess the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. This means that we have to know the deep things about God and simultaneously apply them to our daily lives.

Discussion Questions

Do we have a full understanding of how we could serve God and God’s people with the potential we have?

What is the distinction between wisdom and knowledge?

John 2:1-11

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come."⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."⁶ Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim.⁸ He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet." So they took it.⁹ When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Commentary from Ian Ernest

It is at the wedding at Cana that Jesus offers his disciples the first sign of the mystery of his person. By changing water into wine, he reveals the power of God, who transforms human reality by lifting it to a higher level. John, in his own style, presents the miracles of Jesus not to establish proof but to manifest his identity. It is an invitation to believe in Christ as the Son of God.

At the heart of our life experiences, we discover by taking a step back that Jesus, through his presence, illuminates our daily lives and through faith, transforms difficult situations into authentic joy. But it is surprising to see that those who were present did not follow Jesus after such a remarkable event.

In the Word of God, the miracle is above all a sign from God; to understand it, our hearts must be willing to welcome it. Jesus aims to awaken in us an active faith that allows us to proclaim a message of hope and love that can transform hearts and minds. As a sign of God's Kingdom, Jesus teaches us that the time of preparation is over and that the Kingdom is here. We can encounter God through his Son.

Discussion Questions

This sign reminds us that God can unexpectedly enter the ordinary events of life. Would we take the opportunity of those moments to believe?

In the prophetic writings, wine was as a symbol of the joy of the messianic age. What do we learn from this sign accomplished by Jesus?