Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Your God Will Come**

**With Vengeance**

**Isaiah 35:3-7**

Quinquagesima

02.27.2022

What do you think of when you hear the word vengeance? Normally, we agree with Webster – that vengeance is punishment inflicted in retaliation for an injury or offense. We might not phrase in such a highfalutin manner, simply saying that vengeance is payback or revenge taken against someone for their poor treatment of us.

With the definition we have in our minds of revenge and payback, we immediately begin to think, “God is going to punish those who have treated me poorly – He’s going to give it to them good.” ***AND*** then, as we know full well that God can send people to hell to suffer for all eternity, we begin to think that is what He will do with all those who have done us dirt.

How much do we desire that those who have in some way done us bad – done to us what we believe is some unforgivable sin – get what we, in our anger and rage, feel they deserve. We full know what they deserve, and that is to suffer as badly as we have suffered because of what they have done.

Do we want them to suffer as badly as we have? Or worse? Let’s face it, when you are wanting vengeance, you do not want to get even, you want them to shed their pound of blood – and then some.

Too be fair and honest, while someone may indeed have hurt us in some way, we have spent more time in thought agonizing over it in our own heart and minds. Much of the pain that we have endured since the day it happened is of our own doing – our own thoughts as we cling viciously to that initial hurt are by far a more vehement torturing of our heart and mind than the initial harm done to us by another ever did.

Satan gleefully loves us to do this, he sits upon our shoulder and whispers to us, fanning the flames of our desires for revenge. Heaven forbid that we should ever forgive and trust Christ’s death upon the cross for our neighbor’s sin.

With such thoughts raging in our minds, we come to our text, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” (vs. 4) We think to ourselves, “Oh how great that day when He comes will be, when He punishes them, then my vengeance will be complete.” And we laugh with sardonic, almost demonic glee, as we consider this.

Dearly beloved of God, what do you deserve from God for your obedience to His will for your lives? What do you deserve from God for the thoughts in your heart and mind in accordance with His desire for what would reign there?

I will pause here for a moment and prayerful repentance as I ponder those questions, especially as I consider them in regard to love of my neighbor. I will shamefully hang my head wondering, “How many are looking forward to this text being fulfill with me as the one upon whom they are praying God wreaks His promise of vengeance?”

My greatest enemies are the same as yours. My greatest enemies, those against whom this text is addressed, are the same as yours. They are not fleshly enemies! They are the enemies which themselves could bring us to eternal ruin and destruction – sin, death, and the power of the devil.

Yes, the day of God’s vengeance will indeed fall upon all the wicked of mankind, but who exactly are the wicked upon which God’s eternal vengeance will fall? If it falls upon all sinners, then truly we must fear for it will then fall upon you and me as well, for we too are sinners.

When awareness of our place before God as sinners, we can only do as was done so many times throughout the record of Scripture – bow our heads in repentance. Today, maybe it is good that we look at our attitude toward others in true repentance, specifically our desires for God’s vengeance to fall upon those who “we know deserve God’s wrath” because of their sinfulness against us.

When we fully understand that when we point at them, there are three fingers pointing back at us, that our sinfulness is as grievous as theirs – if not worse – then we can come to our text. With such understanding we come as the text describes us.

Hear again our text. *Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.*

It is in fear of God’s wrath, that we are the ones who have weak hand and feeble knees. We join the disciples in the boat after Jesus has calmed the storm. We join the shepherds on the Judean hillside at the appearance of the angel. We join Peter, James, and John when the voice comes from the bright cloud on the mount of Jesus’ Transfiguration. We join them with an anxious heart, a heart fearing that the vengeance of the Lord may come upon us for we surely deserve it.

But then the voice of the Lord cries out to us, “Be strong! Fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance,” we wonder what that vengeance will be like? The text says that He will come and save you.

His vengeance falls upon your enemies! His recompense, His perfect and holy justice against evil, falls upon sin and death. He comes to save you by wreaking His wrath upon the One who stands in your stead – and in the stead of all those who have sinned against you – Jesus, His Christ.

God’s vengeance saves sinners from His wrath. Yes, there will be those who bear in themselves that wrath, but it is only those who deny the One who endured God’s wrath for their sakes.

God’s vengeance, meted out upon Christ, comes to you. Do you see it? *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,* and with the eyes of faith you behold the cross and see there God’s wrath against your sin covered in the blood of the Lamb.

God’s vengeance, meter out upon Christ, comes to you. Do you hear it? As our text declares, *and the ears of the deaf unstopped?* It was spoken upon you in that clear declaration of your sins forgiven. Your ears are opened to hear the Good News of your recompense paid by Christ as the Word of Christ is proclaimed.

God’s vengeance, meted out upon Christ is fed into your mouth as you gather at the table where it is delivered to you in a most holy meal of the Lamb’s body given to you and His blood shed into your mouths.

When by faith you see, hear, eat, and drink of God’s vengeance to save you who had been made lame by sinfulness leap like a deer with joy and the exuberance of life, and your tongue, previously silent before God, sings for joy at the glory of the Lord.

God’s vengeance has come, and it has freed you to live in joy and peace.

But God’s vengeance will come to you. On that day, when Christ returns with great glory, His recompense will be to grant you a place in His eternal kingdom with a resurrected and glorious body like unto His. We await that glorious day – we do it without fear, strong in the Lord and the glory of His might. Amen.