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## Homiletics: Sermon Study on Isaiah 12 for Third Sunday After Trinity

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## HOMILETICS

### SERVICE THEMES AND TEXTS FOR JUNE

June 3	2 S. a. Tr.	Prov. 9:1-10	(The Life of Christian Prudence)
June 10	3 S. a. Tr.	Is. 12	(God's Care for the Lost)
June 17	4 S. a. Tr.	Is. 65:17-25	(The Life of Trust)
June 24	5 S. a. Tr.	Lam. 3:22-32	(God's Blessing on Christian Witness)

### *Sermon Study on Isaiah 12 for Third Sunday After Trinity*

Isaiah, the Evangelist of the Old Testament, half way between Moses and Christ, may be said to have a message for three classes of people: to Jerusalem and Judea, his own nation, in general; to the "remnant," the *sh'erith*, the pious people, the *ecclesiola* in the corrupted national church, in particular; and finally to the people of all times. His pronouncement of judgment on sin and his calls to the impenitent to repent are as valid and certain now as then, while his words of comfort and hope to the "remnant" were meant for God's people *in genere*.

The chapter under consideration is the close of the second cycle of prophetic discourses, "the consolation of the Immanuel in the judgments," chapters 7—11, called the Book of Immanuel. It is altogether fitting that this series of prophecies should close with a doxology.

To whom are these words addressed, or rather who speaks them? Stoeckhardt in his commentary states that according to the context they are to be applied to the Church Triumphant. He is followed by Kretzmann in his *Popular Commentary* and a sermon in *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1935. However, Stoeckhardt admits that according to the words and phrases the chapter may be spoken by the Church on earth and that many older commentators have taken this position. This exposition is found in a sermon in *The Concordia Pulpit* for 1948. I associate myself with the latter view.

In the preceding chapters Isaiah has his eye on the glorious



event of the coming and reign of the Messiah. He refers to the redemption to be wrought by Christ through His suffering and death. That Christ through His death has turned the anger of God away from sinners and converted it into grace, that this work of reconciliation is now being proclaimed on earth, among all nations—this is the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in chapter 12, whose very language would indicate that it is addressed to, and sung by, the members of the Kingdom of Grace, the Church of the New Testament.

V. 1. *And in that day.* This expression found frequently in the prophets always denoted a time of the special manifestation of God's power, be it in judgment or in mercy. Here it refers to the day of mercy.

In chapter 10 the doom of Assyria has been foretold. Chapter 11 describes the kingdom and reign of Christ, David's Son, from its humble beginning ("root of Jesse") to its glorious consummation. After completing His redemptive work on earth, Christ, the mighty, reascended Lord, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, pours out His Spirit on all flesh. He plants in this sinful world a kingdom of peace and love. He gathers unto Himself a people, a holy nation, from among Jew and Gentile and protects His Church with His mighty arm against the God-hating world and will finally deliver His people from all evil of body and soul and grant them victory over all their oppressors and participation in His heavenly, divine glory.

The mighty world empire Assyria, the haughty oppressor of Israel, chapter 10, is contrasted with the spiritual kingdom of Christ, chapter 11. The former symbolizes the God-hating world, continually harassing the Christian, but whose end is destruction, while the latter offers peace and rest. The one portrays the destiny of the sinner, the other the destiny of the child of God (Psalm 1). This contrast is indicated by the connective "and," chapter 11:1. The last verse of chapter 10 states that Assur, pictured as Lebanon, "shall fall by a mighty one." This is a clear reference to David's Son, of whom the following chapter treats. "In that day," then, points to the time when Christ has established His kingdom on earth, when the work of the redemption is completed and the power of the Evil One broken, when God will bring in His people



from all spiritual scatterings, bondage, and captivity — the era of the New Testament Church.

*Thou shalt say.* Thou wilt have cause to say so. God's promise is sure, and the blessings contained in it are very rich. In that day when many are brought home to Christ, thou oughtest to say. We should rejoice over the grace of God to others as well as to ourselves.

*O Lord, I will praise Thee.* This is a common opening of a hymn of praise, especially in the Psalms (75:2; 139:14; Dan. 2:23; Matt. 11:25). *Hodab* means to praise, thank, confess, acknowledge, *bekennen*. The original connotation is to throw, cast down. One who makes a public confession of something by his words and prayers, especially one who with a loud and clear voice renders praise, may be pictured as casting praise from himself into the midst of his fellow men. Whoever truly believes in Christ cannot remain silent, but must speak (Ps. 116:10; 2 Cor. 4:13). The knowledge of the magnitude and excellence of blessings received, of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, and the conviction of one's own unworthiness opens the closed mouth to proclaim the praise of God upon every occasion and especially in the congregation of the righteous (Ps. 35:18).

*Though Thou wast angry with me.* God's anger was often against Israel because it had forsaken His ways. It is against all mankind on account of the natural depravity of men. God's anger is His holiness, which demands perfect holiness (Gen. 17:1), and His justice, which makes mandatory the punishment of transgressions. These are His attributes, His *doxa*. Even though God would have cast off mankind forever, yet his anger, i. e., His holiness and justice, would be cause for praise.

*Thine anger is turned away.* This expression appears also Job 9:13; Prov. 24:18; Ps. 68:3. It means, in a broader scope, on the one hand, deliverance from the state of guilt and consequently also from the tribulations which testify of divine wrath and displeasure; on the other hand, assurance of divine favor and grace through some manifestation. In the history of Israel, God repeatedly revealed His love to His people by liberating them from their enemies after He had given them into their hands as a punishment for their transgressions. In a narrow, or spiritual, sense God's anger has really



and truly ceased through the atonement made by Christ (Hymn 237:1). The Atonement is the sign, or token, of God's love. The emphasis is not on God's anger, but rather on its being turned away.

The jussive *yashov* has been much disputed. The margin of the Revised Version has: "Let Thine anger be turned away." However, it is quite clear that the jussive is frequently used for the ordinary imperfect form, especially in poetry, and is not due so much to poetic license as rather to the rhythm. Moreover, since the jussive in many cases is not distinguished from the imperfect, one cannot always tell which of the two the writer intended. In this case it is safe to assume that it is a defective writing of the imperfect.

V. 2. *Behold, God is my Salvation.* This may also be translated: Behold the God of my salvation. The abstract "my salvation" for the concrete "my Savior" is found frequently both in Isaiah and in the Psalms (27:1; 35:3; 118:14, 21; Is. 25:9; 33:2; cf. Ex. 15:2). Salvation means divine help, complete spiritual deliverance, used mainly in the absolute (Messianic) sense. This is the climax of the psalm of praise which Isaiah puts into the mouth of the redeemed.

What are some of the blessings which accrue to the children of God because He is their Salvation? The redeemed in our text mention two: comfort and trust. Comfort they combine with the turning away of God's anger in this way: Thine anger is turned away, *and Thou comfortedst me* (v. 1 b). This comfort relates to the experiencing of divine grace and favor, which quiets the conscience. This is an operation of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the believers (Phil. 4:7). This comfort is the hope in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:8) and rests on the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 9:2), the gift of the Holy Ghost, and absolute certainty of salvation (2 Tim. 1:12).

This comfort begets trust, the second blessing. *I will trust and not be afraid.* This sentence is reminiscent of Ps. 27:1 b. *'Eytach* and *'ephchad* form a paronomasia. Trust is the characteristic Old Testament word for the New Testament "faith," "believe." It occurs 152 times in the Old Testament in various shades of meaning, e. g., "to take refuge" (Ruth 2:12), "to lean upon" (Ps. 56:3). In our passage it means to feel safe, secure, to rely on the promises of God, and this is a fruit and result of faith. Trust is a feeling of security flowing out of the knowledge of having received the adoption of



sons (Gal. 4:4). Those having such a trust are convinced in their hearts of divine grace and favor and therefore place all their hope serenely and confidently in God, to whose care they entrust themselves under all circumstances. Such assurance and confidence exclaims: "God is my Salvation—I will trust and not be afraid!" (Ps. 27:11. Rom. 8:35.)

The word here used for God is *'el*, believed by some to refer to God in His almighty, all-powerful aspect, by others as indicating God as the one true God in distinction to all other gods. The grace and love of God to sinful man revealed in the Redemption and His almighty power to save—these are the ground pillars upon which rests a Christian's trust. The Church, convinced of the truth and certainty of salvation, expresses its wonderment over the magnitude of this blessing in the word "behold."

*For the Lord JEHOVAH is my Strength and my Song.* Only four times in the King James Version have the translators retained the original name "Jehovah": here and in Ex. 6:3, Ps. 63:18, Is. 26:4. In our passage the original has *yah yehovah*. *Yah* is an abbreviation of *Yahweh*, often used for the sake of conciseness, particularly in the Psalms, e. g., "Hallelujah." In this place as well as in Is. 26:4 the name may perhaps be repeated for emphasis or to denote that Jehovah is always the same unchangeable God. In some manuscripts *Yah* is omitted in this verse, but the best manuscripts retain it.

*'Oz* means not only "strength," but also "object of praise." The glory and power of God is the object of my praise. The word may also denote strong praise. Cf. 2 Chron. 30:21: "singing with loud instruments," or, according to the American Translation (University of Chicago): [they] "praised the Lord with all their might."

*Zimrath*, a rarer feminine ending, really for *zimrathi*. The absorption of the *yodh* is not due merely to the following *yodh*, but is rather intended "to facilitate the absorption of *Yah*."

This clause is to be regarded as independent. The *ki* not being a causal conjunction connecting the clause with the previous, is to be taken in its original demonstrative sense: surely, truly. Cf. Is. 7:9; Gen. 18:20.

The verse ends with the same thought, almost the same words,



with which it began: *He also is become my Salvation*. The second part of the verse ("For the Lord Jehovah . . . my Salvation") is an exact repetition of Ex. 15:2, the triumphal song of Moses, and also of Ps. 118:14, with the exception that in these two passages the divine name occurs only once. Delitzsch calls the doubling of the name Jehovah in the Isaiah passage a *climax ascendens*, the surpassing of the type by the antitype.

V. 3. *Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*. The Prophet interrupts the song to give the Church a comforting promise, an answer, as it were, from the Lord Himself to the prayer of the foregoing verse. "Therefore," in view of God's mercies. The Hebrew connective is a simple "and." The fullness of God's mercies and the richness of His love are often pictured in Holy Writ as fountains, rivers, streams. These refresh, cheer, sustain. The language may be figurative, but the meaning is clear. Christ Himself is the Author or Source of unending salvation (Heb. 5:9). Out of the abundance of His loving-kindness and grace He has provided a supply for the spiritual necessities of men: righteousness, wisdom, comfort, strength, victory over sin, sanctification. Whatever is required for growing in grace, strengthening of faith, and the attainment of the end of faith, namely, the soul's salvation, must all be drawn from Christ as the only Source, the Well, or Fountain, of salvation (Zech. 13:1; Is. 48:8; Jer. 2:13; Ps. 23:2; Rev. 7:17). Of significance is the plural "wells." His grace and mercy are not limited to one particular time or place, but His blessings everywhere abound and His mercies are new with every morning. As our Prophet He still reveals Himself by the preaching of the Gospel as the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. Even as God miraculously supplied the Israelites with water in the desert (Numbers 20), so the God of salvation, who has become our salvation, opens many and manifold sources (the written Word, the oral proclamation, the absolution, the Sacraments, fraternal admonition, our Catechism, hymnal, prayer-book), and the blessings flowing from them, which comfort the troubled heart and still the thirst of the sinner, are inexhaustible, endless. From this well of salvation (John 4:14b) the redeemed and all comers are enjoined to draw. This is tantamount to faith, reposing one's trust for the life that now is and for that which is to come



in Him, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. Every quiet meditation, every prayerful perusal of the sacred page, is a drawing of water. This is to be done with joy. The water is free (Is. 55:1), overflowing, refreshing, filling the soul with happiness. "Duty" can be commanded, "pleasure" cannot. A person may be made to read Scripture, but only life within will lead him to draw water with joy. We listen to music so differently when we love and delight in it. Therefore draw abundantly, even as the discovery of a well in the desert fills the heart of the thirsty pilgrim with rejoicing. The words of this verse were at the time of Christ spoken at the Feast of Tabernacles, when water was drawn in a golden cup from the fountain of Siloam as a drink offering. As the priest entered the Temple, another priest would take the cup and, pouring out the water, spoke these words in remembrance of Meribah.

This water of salvation forms the basis for the second stage of the song, vv. 4-6, which continues in the strain of a psalm of praise.

*V.4. And in that day ye shall say.* This phrase is the same as in v. 1 except for the plural. The believers, they who have drawn from the wells of salvation, are now enjoined to invite and encourage one another to praise God. The verbs in this section are in the imperative—no longer the subjective confession of v. 1, but a demand that all participate in proclaiming Jehovah's name to the world.

*Praise the Lord.* Raise your happy voices, recounting the wonders of God. Do not be ashamed of the heavenly blessings which are yours, but rather consider it an honor to be the recipients of them (Ps. 75:1).

*Call upon His name.* The margin has "proclaim." This phrase occurs frequently. It embraces the whole exercise of religion, honoring, praising, worshiping, professing God as the sole Source of salvation (Ps. 79:6; Zeph. 3:9), and translating this faith into a conscientious discharge of one's duties to God. God, who is thus honored, in turn honors the believer by calling him His servant, His son, His people.

*Declare His doings among the people.* This phrase is a repetition of Ps. 105:1 b. *'alilah* means a bold deed, which really seems daring. The Prophet has chosen this word to express the magnitude



of the whole work of God's power and grace which He has shown in the redemption of His people. Isaiah foresees that when the Messiah shall have risen from the dead, then the prince of this world will be judged and the Kingdom of Christ established. This is to be made known among the people, all the people, 'amim, that they may see the glory of the Father and join in His praise.

*Make mention that His name is exalted.* Hebrew: "Cause it to be remembered." God's name is God Himself, His Being, His attributes. The fact that His name is exalted is a clear proof of His divine attributes, for which men are to honor and praise Him. It is because of the great work of God's grace in His Son and His justice in meting out punishment to His enemies and the enemies of His Church that His name is exalted, worthy to be adored by all the nations of the earth (2 Sam. 22:47; Ps. 21:13; Ps. 46:10).

V. 5. *Sing unto the Lord.* These are again words from the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:21). Pour forth your hope and trust in strains of sacred song, "singing and making melody in the heart" (Eph. 5:19). The Lord here is the Covenant God, who in the gift of His Son fulfilled His promise made to Abraham and the Church. This is evident from the content of the song:

*For He hath done excellent things.* *Genth* used with the verb "make" or "do" is ascribed to the majesty of God primarily with regard to His judgments upon the enemies of His people, through which, as King and Lord of His Church, He proves His justice and power (Ps. 93:1; Is. 26:10). Here the word refers to the greatness of the work of redemption (Ps. 77:15; Luke 1:49, 51). *This is known in all the earth.* Instead of the Pual participle *m'eyudd'ath* (Ketib) the Qere substitutes the Hofal participle *muda'ath*. The probable reason for this is that in popular parlance the former denoted an acquaintance, an intimate, who was well known. The LXX translates: "Let it be known." Isaiah here foretells that the divine work of redemption will be so great and wonderful that it shall resound throughout the whole earth (Ezek. 38:23; 39:7, 13). Thus the work of divine grace, executed by the Messiah, is known in all the world through the Word of the Gospel.

V. 6. *Cry out and shout.* *Tsa'hal*, to neigh as a horse. In a metaphorical sense it expresses an exceptional and unexpected joy or pleasure manifested by a clear and loud sound of the voice (Is.



54:1; Jer. 31:7; Esth. 8:15). In the Psalms and elsewhere in Scripture the people of God are called upon by means of this word to shout, exult, or make a noise as an expression of their joy (Psalms 148, 149; Is. 42:11).

*Thou inhabitant of Zion. Yosheveth*, an abstract idea expressed by "a feminine participle used substantively as the comprehensive designation of a number of persons" (Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, 122 e).

The source of this great joy is expressed in the final words of the chapter: *For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.* The appellation "Holy One of Israel" occurs 29 times in the Book of Isaiah, thus attesting to the authenticity of this chapter, which has frequently been disputed, mainly on linguistic grounds. The name refers to the Trisagion of chapter 6. God has made the sanctuary what it is by His presence. Note the possessive. The Holy One belongs to Israel, to all His faithful followers. The Son of God has through the unmistakable signs of His gracious presence in His Church shown Himself great and wonderful and continues to do so (Ps. 76:2; 99:2).

The theme of this song of praise is "salvation," a word found twice in v. 2 and again in the following verse. Its theme is even more—God Himself, for "God is my Salvation." Along with "salvation" the leading thought is "proclamation." The theme for the particular Sunday being "God's Care for the Lost," the following outline is suggested:

#### SUGGESTED OUTLINE

1. The natural state of the redeemed (Thou wast angry with me)
2. The salvation of the redeemed (Thine anger is turned away)
3. The blessings of salvation (comfort and trust)
4. The joy of salvation (v. 3)
5. The duty of the redeemed (proclamation: vv. 4-6)

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