

Foundations

2019, Pastor Debbie Bronkema

<http://www.pvillepresby.org>

“In an effort to reach people with different perspectives and preferences, we’re testing an automated speech to text transcription for Pastor Debbie’s sermon. This process is not 100% accurate but provides a rough transcription of the sermon Pastor Debbie preached. Pastor Debbie preaches from a manuscript but often goes off script as led by the spirit, making the original manuscript an inaccurate representation of the Sunday service.”

In this sermon, Pastor Debbie asks us to remember that God is inviting us be light bearers in the world, especially as the rest of the world goes deeper into the darkness of the age.

"Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. " --Isaiah 55:6-7

(Originally Preached on Sunday, March 24, 2019 at Pleasantville Presbyterian Church)

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-9

<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=420452168>

[0:01] From Isaiah, Chapter fifty five. Oh, everyone who thirst Come to the waters and you that have no money.
Come, buy and eat.
Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that Which is not bread and your labour For that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear and come to me.
Listen so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant. My steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to the people's a leader and commander for the peoples.
See, you call nations that you do not know And nations that do not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God, the holy one of Israel where he has glorified you.

[1:10] Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts Let them return to the Lord that he may have mercy on them and to our God.
For he will abundantly pardon for my thoughts are not your thoughts.
Nor are your ways my way, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your weights and my thoughts. Then your thought.
The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

[1:59] Please pray with me.

[2:03] Dear God. May the words of my mouth and listening ears of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight.
Oh, God, Our rock and our redeemer, Amen.

Sermon: "Accepting God'S Invitation"

[2:19] You hear about the results of aPew research center study that came out this week. It seems that when adults are asked to think about what the United States will be like in **2050**, they see the country declining in stature, a widening gap between the haves and the have nots, growing political polarization. They think health care will be less affordable. Public education will be lower quality, and retiring will be harder. They fear the growing national debt, the likelihood of an attack that's as bad or worse than any we've ever seen and another **1970s** style energy crisis. Many people also think robots will take their job.

[3:10] The bottom line is that the majority of Americans are incredibly pessimistic and fearful about the future from that place. Maybe we can relate a little to the people who first heard the passage we heard this morning. These people had been in exile in Babylon for generations. The people had been stuck in this place of perceiving themselves as wicked as unrighteous, as unworthy of God dragged away from God because of their actions. And for years they did not see a future and a hope, even when the profits told them to. Now the opportunity to go home was at hand, and the people were needing encouragement, an invitation even to take the journey. That would not be easy to travel to a place that had been decimated to find a new way to follow God when the kings from the past, we're no longer the means by which God was blessing the nation into that spirit of pessimism and fear. God's invitation.

[4:29] Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Listen carefully to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food. Why spend your money for that Which is not bread and your labour? For that which does not satisfy. Seek the Lord call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their way and the

unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them return to the Lord that he may have mercy on them.

[5:05] God is inviting them home, home, where the food they need will be provided.

It is a metaphor for sure. Their way home to Jerusalem to rebuild, to plant.

It is not going to be easy, but the food they need, the bread. The drink will be found in their renewed relationship with God.

Their opportunity to see themselves made new a clean heart created within them.

There it is, God's invitation. Telling us to look deeper for that which satisfied telling us a new time has come a time in which blessings can come to all people, all nations.

If we look around and don't see hope, we too need to hear these words of invitation that invited us into the ground on which God stands the place of spiritual food that can feed us.

We are made for relationship with God.

When we grasp at material things to fill us up, we find ourselves.

[6:31] We're missing the truth of the journey. We are on the truth of our deep need to put down the wicked things we do and pick up the joy that comes from relationship with God.

God's promises tell us the perception of scarcity is not what we need to buy into

Instead, we can stand on God's steadfast love where there is abundance enough for any of us, enough or all of us.

Listen to these words where my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my way, says the Lord, for as the heavens are higher than the Earth.

So are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts, then your thoughts.

What is the invitation you hear in these words that stay, where have you let your perception of reality move away from where God is trying to invite us to go?

Have we accepted something as true that doesn't have to be true?

[7:45] If we believed that there cannot be enough for all.

[7:52] Have we decided that there is no use in trying to care for God's creation have we told ourselves nothing we do can make a difference?

Have we believe that the sin we've been committing has so broken our relationship with God that we do not have a way out that God doesn't want us back?

None of these statements we tell ourselves are true. None of them.

Sharing what we have blesses God blesses us, blesses the people we share with. Caring for creation honors God and fills our souls.

Forgiveness, God's grace is bigger than any sin we have committed.

[8:44] When we look at life through the perspective of God's abundance, we see the world differently.

It says. If somebody has turned out the lights, to possibilities to opportunities to stand in the gaps wherever we encounter them.

[9:03] Do you know the story about Howard Thurman? You remember?

He is the prolific African American author who wrote twenty one books, who was a theologian, a civil rights activist who helped found one of the first,

multicultural churches in 1944?

[9:25] When he was a little boy, there was no school for him in his city past the seventh grade.

His parents raise the money to put him on a train and send him somewhere else to get the education they knew he needed.

So he sat at the train station, and they told him his the bag was too old, that he was not allowed to put this on the train without extra money to pay for special handling.

So this young boy sat and Reid everything he had was in the bag. He did not know what to do.

Someone came to him a man who was preparing to go to work on the train line in in overalls and and work boots, and he saw him crying and he said, What's the matter with you?

And he told him, I don't have enough money for my bag and they said, I can't take it and the man said, Why do you want to travel?

And he said, Well, I'm trying to get to school So the man went with him to the clerk and he said, How much for this bag?

If this boy wants to go to school, I think it's my job to help him today.

[10:46] And then he walked away. Then give him his name and even give him time to say thank you.

[10:55] When the opportunity comes to bless somebody on the journey, this man accepted it. He believed in abundance. Whether he did when he woke up that morning or not, he did when he saw the opportunity right in front of his face.

This is the day we are invited to this party by our Lord God, whose grace and love whose wisdom and righteousness know no bounds.

We are invited to be light bearers for Christ Jesus. We're invited to be the salt of the wisdom God's word places in us,

giving us hope for the future and joy for the present that we might find our way through reality to new life. Friends, we do not have to give up and give in to the problems of this day.

We can listen. We can discern God's call to us. We can proclaim a love that transforms and makes each day new in abundant gifts that come to us from the grace of God. In Jesus name, Amen.