

September 30, 2015  
Sermon The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Isaiah 35:4–7a

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Isaiah 35:4–7 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> 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.” <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> 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; <sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; ...

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

When we look at Dr. Martin Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Apostles: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures," it is a comforting and true statement. However, we can also experience Divine creation as threat.

We live in a fallen world and this means that it can be a fearful place. Dr. Luther believed that after the fall into sin, Adam and Eve would have been terrified by something as harmless as a leaf rustling in the breeze. Suddenly, after sin, the loving environment that they knew, created by God their Father, became a strange, scary place after sin entered into the world.

They now hid from their loving Father that they used to walk and talk with. Yet it is into this world that God, first promised and then sent His Son to save us and, in doing so, to restore us to life with Him in his creation.

So fear not, for God comes to save His fallen creation. Even today, anxious hearts abound.

Life in this world is marked by anxiety and fear for our sin has subjected creation to futility. We try to do right, but the evil one seems to be winning all around us.

There are the uncertainties of life itself. Disease seems to seek out healthy bodies. Hearing, eyesight, and independence can, and are lost to accident, disease, or old age.

Neither health nor wealth can be guaranteed. If it's not taxes or a poor economy, it is scam artists preying on the elderly and innocent. Taking savings through deceit or outright theft.

The Lord speaks of these last days as times of stress, perplexity, and anxiety. *“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”* (Lk 21:25–26).

Far from evolving toward a state of harmony and perfection, the earth and the life it sustains seems to be heading towards chaos. Both the environment and in human ethics.

Evil seems to triumph all around us. The righteous suffer while the wicked seem to prosper. The corporation that prospers, even though the CEO openly flaunts their own sinful lifestyle to the world.

The drug dealers who are wallowing in money while the addict and their family wallows in poverty.

The adulterer who breaks the bonds of their marriage vows, sleeping with whomever they please, while their spouse wondering what they are lacking or what they did wrong.

Injustice prevails on national and international levels. Governments make laws that benefit a select few. They trash Biblical values and even call them discriminatory and make God's law illegal.

Yet they still continue to listen to their itching ears that Paul speaks of in 2 Timothy: *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”* 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (ESV)

But still, for the just and the unjust, the end of every human biography is finally death . . . which is sin’s ultimate payoff.

And yet, into this fallen world, God comes to save.

His bold words set troubled hearts at peace: *“Be strong; fear not!”* (v 4).

When God says “fear not,” pay attention, for this is far different from an empty promise. It is more than a command; it is a word that itself casts out our fears, for God is Himself acting.

In both the Old and the New Testaments, God announces his salvific, His saving actions with a word that bids anxious hearts to *“fear not.”*

He says to his Israel, *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine”* (Is 43:1b).

Through the angel, He proclaims to Bethlehem’s astonished shepherds, *“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people”* (Lk 2:10).

To the terrified disciples in the midst of a stormy sea, He says, *“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid”* (Mk 6:50).

The risen Lord speaks to those confused women on Easter morning: *“Do not be afraid”* (Mt 28:10).

This is the message I am so happy to announce to you this morning:  
*“Be strong; fear not.”*

God’s coming in the flesh to save you...is the remedy for your fear.  
 With these words, God tenderly reminds you that He is not against you but for  
 you in every way (Rom 8:1, 31–39).

If God were your enemy, would He clothe Himself in human flesh and  
 blood and suffer and die on the cross to save you? Of course not!

His vengeance, His judgment on your enemies (sin, death, and the devil),  
 was executed in Christ, who bore your sins in His body to the cross and has  
 answered for them with His own blood.

Raised from the dead, he speaks to you the word of another happy  
 judgment. It is the absolution: *“Your sins are forgiven.”*

Jesus Christ is your Brother. He comes to do what the prophetic  
 Scriptures of the Old Testament promised.

He comes as the One who fulfills the prophecy of Is 61:1–3.  
 This good news for you and for all creation is echoed in our text.

The reconciling work of our Christ is not a rescue *from* creation but a  
 restoration *of* creation . . . that includes you.

God does not extract us from creation.  
 God created us in body and soul to live within creation.

All the creaturely gifts you receive are out of God’s fatherly, divine  
 goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness in you.

That is to say that these gifts are on account of Christ and through Him.

Sin brought disorder, disease, and death into creation. By the blood of His cross, He has reconciled all things in heaven and on earth to Himself (Col 1:18–20).

Christ has redeemed us in creation, purchasing and winning us in body and soul for himself.

In our text, the signs of redemption are bodily: the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf hear, the lame walk, the mute sing.

Through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, we receive *all* good things from our Father, including all the gifts of the body, such as sight, hearing, mobility, and speech.

Recall the blessing in the Communion liturgy: “The true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in steadfast in life everlasting. Depart in peace.”

And how do we respond? In the only way that we can. We thank our heavenly Father for His gifts.

We praise His holy name, silently and aloud so that those around us can hear and know.

And finally, to obey His commands, knowing that even still we fall short. Our response can only be one of doxology. Recall the words of the catechism: Again from the Small Catechism: “For all this it is my duty to thank, praise, serve, and obey him.”

In the meantime, we wait not with trembling at all as we continue living in this untrustworthy and uncertain in this crumbling universe, shaking at the sound of every rustling leaf in the autumn wind.

Rather, we live as those redeemed in body and soul by Christ and Him crucified. He says to you once again, *“Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come to save you.”*

That is a promise you can trust, for God is faithful, and he will do it. Amen.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus! Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

### **Sermon Outline**

Fear not, for God Comes to Save His Fallen Creation

Isaiah 35:4-7a

1. Anxious hearts abound.
2. God comes into this fallen world to save.
3. The reconciling work of Jesus is not a rescue *from* creation but a restoration *of* creation . . . which includes you.