

October 19, 2014
Sermon for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Isaiah 45:1–7

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Isaiah 45:1–7 (ESV)

¹ Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: ² “I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, ⁶ that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things.

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

When Babylon laid siege to Jerusalem and invaders ran rampant through the city, the people wondered where God was. When the gates came crashing in and the soldiers took the city for looting and slaughter, the people wondered where God was. The Lord seemed weak and unable to help.

Sometimes the Lord seems weak and unable to help us.

When the tsunami came, when the earthquake struck, when the hurricanes and floodwaters rose, people wondered where the Lord was. When the nine-year-old boy was hit by a car or the six-year-old girl was kidnapped, people wondered where God was. When the drought just seems to go on and on or when you heard the doctor say “cancer” or when a loved one died, you may have wondered where God was.

In the text from Isaiah, the Lord says, *“I am the Lord, and there is no other”* (v 5). Yet at times it may seem that if the Lord is the only God, He is pretty weak and helpless to lend us aid in our need or even that He doesn’t care.

And it can even seem as if God is the one causing our troubles.

The events that cause us to doubt the power of the Lord are ironic: we often experience a display of great power, but that very powerful force is unable to help us in our need; it may even be the source of our affliction.

This is especially true of natural disasters. In a few seconds, an earthquake can release the energy of a nuclear bomb many thousand times

over. Hardly any structure can withstand the force of tornadic winds as the invisible force levels all that it comes into contact with.

Yet that great power causes untold grief and loss for the people who experience it.

The Lord in His great power seems unable to help the people caught in these events. In these moments, the Lord seems weak to save His people.

Where is God?

In v 7 of the text, the Lord says, *“I make well-being and create calamity,”*

Now this doesn't mean that the Lord created evil, but rather that the Lord governs this world in such a way that He seemingly allows evil to run rampant all over the earth. He seems to be a troublemaker at times. He brings peace to those who do not deserve it, and He takes it away from those who should be at peace. He seems to bring trouble and evil into our lives.

In the text, the Lord says, *“I am the Lord, who does all these things”* (v 7). You might even be tempted to think that you don't need or want a god who does these sorts of things. A troublemaker god is worse than a weak god.

But the Lord allows these things into our lives to show us that He is our only source of refuge. They are here because of sin. They do not come from Him, but He can use them for our good. (Romans 8:28)

When everything of this life fails us—our friends, family, money, country, and finally our health—we have nothing to cling to but the Lord, who has promised to deliver us, who has called us by name in Holy Baptism.

We are so tempted to forget the promises our Lord has made to us. We are tempted to think that the Lord has forgotten us or turned away from us.

Then in and through weakness, the Lord saves us. Showing that He has never left us nor forsaken us.

a. When everything that could possibly help us is taken away, we have nothing to rely on but our Lord.

When everything is taken away, we can't fool ourselves into thinking we saved ourselves, nor can we imagine it was dumb luck or good fortune. We are shown how truly powerless we actually are.

Sometimes we need to have everything removed from us so that we can more clearly see our Savior. It is in our weakness that we finally realize that He never left.

Our Savior came to us in weakness Himself.

You can't get much weaker than being nailed to a cross. In the ultimate weakness of death, your Savior, Jesus, is strongest to save you.

When the Lord comes to you in His seeming weakness, in the weakness of the cross, then He is strong to save you.

It was the great weakness of your sin that sent Him to the cross in the first place. And Jesus forgives you.

It is when our Lord comes to us in weakness that we, like the centurion at the foot of the cross, can say, *"Truly this man [is] the Son of God!"* (Mk 15:39).

It is in these weak moments that we see that Jesus is the Lord and there is no other.

Though in Times of Trial the Lord Seems Weak, in Precisely These Times
He Shows Himself to Be Our Redeemer.

Therefore, when trials come . . . drought, earthly needs, loneliness,
sickness, and even death, when any of the crosses of this world come into your
life, remember that the Lord is strong to save you in weakness.

When He is crucifying our sinful flesh through trials and sufferings in this
world, He is stripping us bare of the things that would block our eyes from seeing
Him as our Savior.

When you wonder "Where is God," remember that He is removing
anything from you that would stop you from seeing Him right beside you, keeping
you from clinging to Him as your Lord.

He saves you in weakness.
In your weakness, the Lord called you by name. In the weakness of the pouring
of water, your Lord saved you in Baptism.

He has chosen you, though you are weak in the eyes of the world, so that
He can make you strong in His promises.

And as He promises, so He will do.

Amen.

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

Amen.

S. D. G - Soli Deo Gloria
To God alone be glory

*“In times of trial the Lord might seem weak,
in these times He shows Himself to be our Redeemer”*
Isaiah 45:1–7

1. The Lord seems weak and unable to help us.
2. Through our weakness, the Lord saves us.
3. Sometimes everything need to be removed so that we can see our Savior.