

November 15, 2015
Sermon for the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Faith@Home series
Isaiah 32:14-18

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Isaiah 32:14–18 (ESV)

¹⁴ For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; ¹⁵ until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. ¹⁶ Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. ¹⁷ And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. ¹⁸ My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

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

Amen.

Last week we looked at two different families, today, we are twisting that a little bit by taking a look at two people in our favorite professions, dentists. I'm going to tell you about two different dentists.

Dentist A has dirty fingernails. He wears dentures and asks you countless questions while your mouth is propped open and you can't talk. His piped-in music is comprised of loud rap songs. This dentist uses lead for fillings and on the side he sells used cars. When he sends you a Christmas card, he charges you for it.

Dentist B has never chewed gum, or tobacco. He uses a laser instead of a drill, pipes in soft rock and has great-tasting mouthwash. This dentist joyfully takes your dental insurance, gives you first preference in his schedule and always promises to put you to sleep for root canals.

Probably none of us wants rap music loving Dentist A. We all want Dentist B with the great mouthwash. Right?

What is true about our desire for good dentists is also true about our desire for good doctors, good nurses and good hospitals.

But where do we go when we have a non-medical problem? Where do we go when our self-esteem takes a hit? When our confidence collapses? When our hearts break?

Wouldn't it be great if we could go to a 24-hour emotional trauma center? That doesn't have a wait time? That doesn't charge us for its services? That is friendly and outgoing and full of compassion?

God's design – is that our homes function as trauma centers. That's what Isaiah says.

“For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isaiah 32:14–18).

The Holy Spirit is poured out to create homes where every family member receives prompt, loving care when they experience life's bumps and bruises.

But what happens when the family doesn't function this way? When it doesn't have a competent staff? When family members are more like Dentist A with his rap music and used cars? What happens when the Holy Spirit is not welcome? What does it look like when a family doesn't function like a trauma center?

I don't think you want to be reminded of the answer because many of us have found out, firsthand, what family members do when the home isn't a place of peace, a place of healing and hope.

Some hang out at the local bar to drink their troubles away. Others go on achievement binges, whether it be sports or business. Going all out to show how good they really are. Some get consumed in recreational sports. It is tempting to establish adulterous relationships with people outside the family who offer a listening ear, a loving touch ... or more.

When children find out that the trauma center is closed, they turn to their friends who often offer bad advice, bad ideas, bad answers and bad diversions. Can't find love at home? Well there is a gang or a false cult ready to show them that they have a place to belong if they don't feel like they belong at home.

Other children bury their hurts deep down until their insides get infected and later on, in their twenties and thirties, this terrible emotional sickness rears its ugly head; and then their entire lives are up for grabs.

An effective trauma center has a qualified staff who listen, accept and affirm.

Listen

"Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19).

Time Magazine published a remarkable article some time ago that was simply signed "A College Student." It reads in part, "Thank you, sirs, for your excellent essay titled 'On Being a Good Parent.' I wish every parent and future parent would read it and take it to heart. I love my parents and they love me, but I could never tell them anything. They were always too busy, too tired, too condescending. By the time I became a teenager all honest communication

ceased. I'm 18 years old, drink whenever I get the chance, smoke pot and long ago lost my virginity. My heart is broken. But who can I talk to? Not my parents. So I plead with all of the parents out there to listen, listen, listen. Please, I know the consequences because I'm in hell."

"The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but a person of understanding draws them out" (Proverbs 20:5).

"How was your day?"

"Fine."

"Tell me more."

A little girl recently asked her mom, "Mommy, if the stork brings babies and Santa Claus brings presents and the Lord gives us daily bread and Uncle Sam gives Social Security, then why do we keep Daddy around?"

Even though mothers are better listeners, in general, than fathers, dads need to stay around to listen! If you won't talk to them, trust me, they will find someone else to listen to.

Jesus listened to His disciples, even when they asked strange questions or made the most ignorant statements.

Accept

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you" (Romans 15:7).

I know some people who rejoice over their childhood because their parents accepted them, valued them and treasured them. I also know others who recall their childhood with tears because they were expected to be masters at

cleaning their rooms at age 5, adults at age 7, math whizzes at age 10, Eagle Scouts at age 13 and major college scholarship recipients at age 17.

And when they didn't measure up, their parents called them names like dumb. lazy. stupid. uncoordinated. no good. Unlike the old rhyme, words hurt much more than sticks and stones.

Strike the words clumsy, messy, slow, dumb and the like. I can barely contain myself on this point because I've witnessed, firsthand, what negative names do to the hearts of little children. They spend a lifetime trying to recover.

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt"

(Colossians 4:6).

Sadly, you may hear the same names you call your children from their mouths as they talk to their children.

How would Jesus handle this? What would Jesus do? Find me a place in God's Word where He ever belittled any of His followers or called them names and then you can do the same.

Affirm

"But encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13).

It is good to be reminded every day of our lives that we have an advocate, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, always looking out for us.

And we need an advocate right now as we see just how much we have failed in our lives.

The apostle John encourages us with these words, *“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”* (1 John 2:1).

The word for advocate here come from the Greek word para-ka-le-o, which means “to call to one’s side, call for, summon.”

We can always call Christ to our side in any crisis in which we may find ourselves. He is always there to strengthen and support us, much like a friend or relative would do if we were in the hospital and needed someone to let the doctors and nurses know what we need if we were too sick to talk.

Christ is there to talk to God on our behalf and to calm our troubled hearts. And we can be advocates for one another as well, when we pray for others to Christ on their behalf. In this way, we are affirming the power of Christ within us and the power of Christ to accomplish great things in others.

We thank God as well that his trauma center is always open. Jesus said, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”* (Matthew 11:28-29).

He gives shalom, peace, at all times. As Isaiah tells us, *“Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this”* in your house and mine from everlasting to everlasting (Isaiah 9:7).
Amen.

Only in Christ can you find peace...peace in His Word, forgiveness and peace at His table.

Amen.

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

Amen.

S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria

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