

## Say It Today

‡ “God has helped me!” (vv.1-3)

‡ “God has helped you!” (vv.4-6)

In the name of Jesus, my soul’s salvation, my greatest joy, dearly redeemed of God:

Wise is the man who marries a God-fearing woman who can respectfully tell him when he’s wrong. Wise is the woman who marries a God-fearing man who can lovingly stand up to her and not cop out all the time with, “Yes, dear.” Blessed are the children whose parents love them enough to say, “No,” for the sake of their eternal good. Blessed are we to know the God of law and gospel, sin and grace.

None of this is pleasant for our proud sinful nature. My memory takes me back to a road block, and a way around through a parking lot, across a median, and down the highway where a patrol officer was waiting. He did not care that I had followed other cars. My “better half” explained to me later that I was not respectful as I should have been. We tend to think law enforcement should give us a pass. But when we try to pass this attitude off on God, we miss the heat of His wrath and the warmth of His grace.

‡ “God has helped me!” (vv.1-3)

As you read the previous chapters of Isaiah, you keep running into this expression, “*In that day....*” This is where we hit the roadblock of God’s holy law. Check it out. It means the *day* of God’s judgment. It means the *day* when God has had enough. When He is tired of watching drivers go around His barriers, ignore His road signs, and talk back to His spokesmen. He would not put up with this from kings and prophets and wayward priests. Why would we expect Him to tolerate it from pastors and lay leaders, presidents and professors, husbands and wives, students and children? “*In that day....*” God will finally show that every sin must be punished.

According to statistics, barely half of Americans believe that God punishes sin<sup>1</sup>, especially not their sin. And if you pay attention to God, then the “new atheists” like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens will criticize you mercilessly, while “new new atheists” will put you in their comedy routine. Visitors would naturally have a hard time with a sermon like this. It might not even matter that the pastor applied it first to himself. “Think what you want, preacher, but don’t tell me I deserve God’s wrath!”

This is why the LORD asks through prophets like Isaiah, “*What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help?*” (10:3 NIV84) God used the cruel Assyrians to punish His own people of Israel. Then He destroyed the Assyrian army in a single night because of its arrogance. (10:16-18; 37:36) God’s wrath is coming for coarse sins like murder and adultery, but also for seemingly insignificant sins like stealing by laziness, lack of love for God’s Word and zeal for His work, covetousness, greed and lust. “*In that day....*” every sin must be punished.

Look at God’s calendar, “*In that day....*” Remember a few weeks ago when we were singing, “Behold, a Branch is Growing”? That comes from Isaiah’s chapter right before our text: “*A shoot will come from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD – and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.*” (11:1-3) *Behold, a Branch is growing Of loveliest form and grace, As prophets sang, foreknowing; It springs from Jesse’s race And bears one little flow’r In midst of coldest winter, At deepest midnight hour. Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure, And Mary’s arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure. Through God’s eternal will This child to her is given At midnight calm and still.*” (CW 47:1,2)

<sup>1</sup> Statistics noted from articles by Bivens, Lenz, Buxa in the March 2011, issue of *Forward in Christ*.

**Say It Today: “God has helped me!”** *“To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.”* (66:2 AV adapted) For everyone who takes God seriously and trembles at His Word, *“that day”* of God’s judgment has already brought our acquittal. Long before we stood in God’s courtroom confessing our guilt, God’s own Son stepped up to suffer our penalty under God’s justice. The LORD’s Christ still bears the scars of His sacrifice: nail prints in His hands and feet, the spear scar in His side. God’s justice did punish every sin on the cross. Fully satisfied, God raised His Son from death and shouted loud and clear Easter morning: “Not guilty!” – you, me, all!

See why the LORD wants us to **Say It Today?** This is the day when *“you will say: ‘I will praise you, O LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.’ With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”*

Our first synod logo was a well because here in the WELS<sup>2</sup> we drink deeply of God’s Good-News-forgiveness. We come for relief through God’s Word, to relive our Baptism in worship, to receive Christ’s body and blood in His Holy Supper. He was angry, yes, but His anger has turned away. He paid the full penalty for our sins Himself. Since God did this without our asking, since God gave His one and only Son into death for us all, is there anything He could withhold from His dear children who need Him so much now? Instead of fearful depression, *“I will trust in Him and not be afraid.”* Life’s lemons, become God’s sweet lemonade that makes my spirit sing. The LORD’s strength shows best in my weakness. Since God’s wrath has turned away, no one needs to tell me to go to church. No one can keep me away. **Say It Today: “God has helped me!”** How sweet it is! God was not done. **Say It Today:**

✠ **“God has helped you!”** (vv.4-6)

We don’t have to formulate the most powerful arguments to silence the critics and atheists. You and I can’t convert anyone anyway, no more than we could convert ourselves. This is God’s work in His own time and His own way. But this is our work today: *“In that day you will say: ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world.’”*

In New York City a woman was on her hands and knees begging God for help. She was a strategic planner at work, but all her plans seemed to be coming apart. She begged God’s forgiveness. “I finally humbled myself and admitted that any plan I put into place would not work because I had not put God before me. I had not asked God for his help. On that day, I set aside my pride and asked God for help.” One hour later, her doorbell rang and WELS Pastor Tim Bourman was inviting her to Sure Foundation, our new mission church in Queens, New York. What she found was a whole congregation of forgiven sinners ready to wrap her up in God’s family love. Bible instruction and confirmation followed as she dug deeper into God’s Word and savored God’s grace. Her daughter was baptized and confirmed too. And when she wanted to attend Luther Preparatory School in Watertown, Wisconsin, to learn how to teach others, the whole congregation pitched in to cover her daughter’s tuition.

**“God has helped you!”** in so many ways. Can you think of one person who needs to know? Today tell what great things God has done for you. God removed all the roadblocks to heaven when He took away our sins. He opened a wide highway and paid our fines with His blood. His spokesmen announce the Way is clear through Christ. We follow Christ to that shining city on the hill, *“Zion,”* the New Jerusalem that will soon be *“coming down out of heaven from God....”* There God *“will wipe every tear from [our] eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain....”* (Revelation 21:2,4) *“Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”*

*“This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* (Psalm 118:24 NIV84) Let’s all **Say It Today: “God has helped me!” “God has helped you!”** Amen.

---

<sup>2</sup> WELS is the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email [m.cordes@comast.net](mailto:m.cordes@comast.net) .  
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at [www.wels.us/newlife](http://www.wels.us/newlife) .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church  
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126