

It Is Good to Be Here

✧ In the Light of God's Love (vv. 9-11)

✧ Freed from Fear (vv. 12-18)

In the name of Christ Jesus the shining Light of the world, dear fellow lights of the earth:

Twice in as many weeks I've heard well respected Christians say, "I'm angry right now at the Christians." It seemed they were blaming "the Christians" for turmoil in our country. Sound strange for Christians to be angry at Christians? Ever been angry at yourself? Angry with a family member, maybe even your Christian spouse? Maybe it's more like hurt, but the distance between hurt and anger is barely a vapor. Honestly, sometimes it's righteous anger, like Paul admonishing Peter, Barnabas and the rest for hypocrisy and prejudice against Christian freedom, betraying justification by faith alone (Galatians 2:11-21). Wasn't Moses angry at the Israelites, so stubborn and rebellious in the wilderness? Yes, and Moses lost the Promised Land. See the problem with anger at fellow Christians and fellow sinners? The Lord counsels through Paul: "**Brothers, if a person is caught in some trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such a person in a spirit of humility, carefully watching yourself so that you are not also tempted.**" (Galatians 6:1 EHV¹) We all need correction. We all need God's grace. **It Is Good to Be Here...**

✧ In the Light of God's Love (vv. 9-11)

My plan for this sermon was to preach on one of the Gospel lessons about Jesus shining in glory before His final journey to Jerusalem and the cross. But the dear Holy Spirit overruled by a strange twist. This sermon theme and parts on our Old Testament Lesson? Amazing how well it fits. As promised in Isaiah 40: "**The glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh together will see it. Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken....Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and see who created these things....**" (Isaiah 40:5,26) You don't have to be a scientist, or do penance or pilgrimages. If your guilt is weighing heavy on your heart, just to look to Jesus: "**Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, because I am God, and there is no other.**" (Isaiah 45:22) Look and enjoy fellowship **In the Light of God's Love.**

Former Egyptian slaves, now the nomad nation of Israel are camped at Mount Sinai. They've seen the LORD Savior-God drown Pharaoh and his super-power army in the Red Sea. Miraculous meals of manna and quail, water God brought from the rock at Massah and Meribah – yet they tested the LORD and quarreled with Moses. After reminding them of deliverance, God thundered Ten Commandments in lightning and smoke on the mountain. Now kindness and mercy are promising, "**Look, I will send an angel before you to guard you on your way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Pay attention to him. Listen to his voice. Do not provoke him, because he will not pardon your disobedience, for my Name is in him. But if you carefully listen to his voice and carry out all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.**" (Exodus 23:20–22)

To seal the deal the LORD sponsored a meal on the mountain. "In the Near East, to share a meal with someone is a guarantee of peace, trust, fraternity, and forgiveness."² The LORD invited Moses and several other leaders to come up on the mountain and worship from a distance (v.1). "**Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. They saw the God of Israel. Under his feet they saw what looked like a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky. The LORD did not lay his hand on the dignitaries of the people of Israel. They gazed at God, and they ate and drank.**"

¹ Scripture quotations, EHV~ *Evangelical Heritage Version* © 2019 Wartburg Project, Inc. NPH: 1-800-662-6022

² Manning, Brennan – Christian author quoted in the sermon on Psalm 41:9 in the 2002 NPH Midweek Lenten Series.

Can you see the foreshadowing of Christ's Holy Supper? We come again and again, stained with sin, weighed down with guilt, hurting and being hurt, fighting anger, resentment, prejudice maybe even against fellow Christians. Here too we justice and holiness making a meal of **In the Light of God's Love**. See how different the God of the Bible is from all the idols formulated in the mind of man? God's awesome, terrifying power comes in *consuming* fire on top Mount Sinai. And not one of the world's religions can answer Isaiah's question, echoing the Israelites' terror there: ***"Who of us can live with a consuming fire?"*** (Isaiah 33:14) God's marvelous grace made it possible for Moses and the Israelite elders to *eat* and drink with God unharmed on Mount Sinai. That same marvelous grace sent Jesus to the summit of another mountain to meet with Moses and Elijah, talking about His suffering and death coming in Jerusalem. Peter wished to stay forever, but God the Father's has a better idea. ***A cloud appeared and overshadowed them, and a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him."*** (Mark 9:7) Too quick angry, too slow to listen and learn – **It Is Good to Be Here**.

"Often we repeat the national history of Israel in our personal lives. The Lord made many of us his own sons and daughters through Baptism so early in our lives that we have no memory of the event. Yet even then he loved us and freed us from the yoke of slavery to sin and Satan. His care and protection have gone with us from our youngest years, through the love of our Christian parents and teachers. Yet many days of our lives, we totally forget that it is the Lord who fed, protected, trained, and healed us. How can we forget to thank him for all the goodness and mercy we have experienced from little on?"³

☆ **Freed from Fear (vv. 12-18)**

What greater goodness and mercy can you find than God keeping us **Freed from Fear**? ***The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain. Wait there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands that I have written, so that you can teach them."*** God the Father created all the mountains and can reduce them to ash in minutes. God the Son reveals God's presence, perfectly keeping all the commands we break. God the Holy Spirit frees us from personal fear by taking away our guilt. ***"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."*** (Psalm 103:12-14 NIV84) What cripples marriages? The fear of being taken advantage of. But then Jesus our heavenly Bridegroom wraps us up in His loving arms with ***"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*** ***"As to the Lord....the wife must respect her husband."*** (Ephesians 5:25, 22, 33) Only by this miracle of faith in our Lord Jesus do we have the desire and the power. In Christ alone we are **Freed from Fear** to give unconditional love and respect. **It Is Good to Be Here** in God's rich blessings.

Are we **Freed from Fear**, even societal fear – what's coming on our country? Maybe we're making too much of ourselves. Maybe we're forgetting the Christmas message of Mary that echoed her ancestor David: ***"Magnify the LORD with me. Let us exalt His name together."*** (Psalm 34:3 NKJV)

"The Glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses out of the middle of the cloud. The appearance of the Glory of the LORD looked like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered into the middle of the cloud and climbed up the mountain. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." Such mercy from God who could see what was coming.

Not even Moses could stop the national disgrace of the golden calf. And God let it go unpunished until His holy Lamb came down from the Mount of Transfiguration to climb the hill called Golgotha. There ***"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"*** shed innocent blood for you, for me, for all. No one is left out. Wretched sinners here find God's glory shining most brightly in mercy. **It Is Good to Be Here** where mercy triumphs over judgment. Practice kindness and patience for Jesus. Amen.

³ Eickmann, P. E. (1989). *Hosea, Joel, Amos* (2nd ed., p. 97). Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House.
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