

**SERMON FOR MORNING PRAYER**  
**The Second Sunday in Advent**

**The Rev. Warren E. Shaw, Rector-Elect**

**Lessons:**<sup>1</sup>

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the fifty-fifth Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.<sup>2</sup>

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with

joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the third Chapter of the Second Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to Timothy.<sup>3</sup>

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes [**DZAHN-  
ez**] and Jambres<sup>4</sup> [**DZAHM-brez**] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scrip-

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<sup>3</sup> II Timothy 3:1-17 (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> According to Jewish traditions, these were the names of two of the Egyptian wise men and sorcerers whose tricks' apparent duplication of Moses and Aaron's miracles convinced Pharaoh to disregard Moses' demand to release the Hebrews from bondage, Exodus 7:11.

ture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

**Text:**

From the First Lesson: "*Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without money and without price.*" ... "*Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle Tree*". In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Homily:**

There is a secular version of Isaiah's vision and it is very popular. It consists of the environmental movement and the welfare state. The welfare state tries to provide food and drink without money and without price. The environmental movement strives for a harmony with nature that will result in the restoration of barren lands and universal primordial beauty.

The secular version, however, is lacking in one crucial element. It is an end in itself. It is not associated with God's work of salvation. In the Bible, filling the hungry with good things is not an end in itself. Jesus specifically rejected that notion in one of his temptations in the wilderness. "*Man does not live by bread alone,*" he says, "*but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" That includes the word of judgment, the word of forgiveness, the word of liberation, the word of sanctification, and the word of creation.

It is only in that context that eating and drinking have significance. The feast of the Passover, for example, celebrates

the deliverance of the Jews from slavery. The table that God spreads out in the 23rd Psalm and the cup that overflows follow the safe passage through the valley of the shadow of death.

Jesus says, “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*”. Again he says, “*He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst*”.

The heavenly banquet, which is the marriage feast of The Lamb, ushers in the messianic age. And the messianic age is not only a time of deliverance and freedom for the faithful, it is also a time of judgment and justice and of the restoration of nature to a state of harmony.

In today’s First Lesson, Isaiah talks about cypress trees and myrtle trees growing where thorns and briars are now, and all of nature rejoices in its renewal. In another famous passage he talks about the animals living in peace and harmony with each other as well as with people: “*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.*”

St. Paul picks up this theme when he writes in Romans about the whole creation being in bondage as a result of man’s sin, and waiting anxiously for the final judgment. Other New Testament writers also refer to the renewal of nature as a by-product of the ultimate elimination of sin. The book of Revelation includes a revitalized natural world as a part of the great vision of a new creation.

The environmental movement has meaning only in such a context. The provision of food and drink in the welfare state likewise lacks that context. They both stand or fall on the ability of the state to deliver what it promises. Unfortunately, despite good intentions, the state can never quite manage to do that. Since the context of salvation is lacking, sin always gets in

the way. So the psalmist says, “*Put not thy faith in princes*”. The fulfillment of the Biblical vision is guaranteed by God. Listen again to what he says in the lesson:

“*As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*”

That is God’s promise and you can absolutely depend on it. Jesus is the word of God incarnate in human flesh. In the Gospels He interprets all His miracles as victories over sin and Satan and as signs of the rule of God on earth. He came from the Father and He returns to the Father but only after He has accomplished that for which He was sent: the defeat of Satan, the remission of sin, and the conquest of death. Those who trust in Him will see Isaiah’s vision fulfilled when Jesus comes again as He has promised.

“*Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without money and without price.*” ... “*Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle Tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name and an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*”

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St. David’s Anglican Catholic Church  
Charlottesville, Virginia

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<sup>1</sup> *Psalms and Lessons for the Church Year* (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER x (PECUSA 1928, 1943).

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 55:1-13 (KJV).