

Sing A New Song

Isaiah 12:1-6

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Cantate Sunday, the meaning of the name Cantate is reflected in the Introit you heard earlier. It means sing to the Lord – sing to the Lord a new son. Still basking in the resurrection glory of the Easter season, we are to sing to the Lord a new song, but too often we are bound up in the old song, bound up in the Law of God.

Did you hear the children this morning? How many of you have heard that song before? Did you know it is right out of the hymnal? Actually, it is right out of Isaiah – it is the very text that we are using for this sermon. You have heard that text on numerous occasions, but it is a new song. It is a new song partly because you have never heard it before. Some of you are probably thinking, “Oh goodness, I pray Pastor Jerabek doesn’t make us learn this one.”

It is a new song because it is a proclamation of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was God’s promise, but bound up in the law – it was given to Moses in the Ten Commandments. While God kept His promises, God’s people broke theirs. God’s law was violated at every turn.

In our lives, if left with nothing but the law, we’d be lost eternally as the poor, miserable, sinners we are. Why? Because we cannot, despite our best effort, do what the holy Law of God demands. But we sing a new song, The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation!

Do you understand what this is all about? Isaiah records God’s Word to His children, the people of Israel, 700 years before God is incarnate. And yet, it is a new song because it reflects the NEW COVENANT!

What is the New Covenant? You and I know it! You and I know that God gave to us Jesus. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We know that God enfleshed lived the sinless life all mankind, corrupted by sin, is unable to live. You and I know that He joyfully and willingly, took our sins and death into Himself. We know how He allowed Himself to endure the shame and humiliation of the most degrading form of capital punishment – that is, crucifixion for our sake. He did this to purchase our forgiveness. We know that on the third day the glory of the Father raised our Lord Christ from death to life.

You and I know that the entire history of why The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation! In Jesus Christ, our forgiveness was sealed, eternal life was obtained, and salvation was secured.

The new covenant is how those gifts come to you today when you hear the words of the Absolution, when you listen to the Gospel proclaimed in the sermon and in our liturgy, and whenever you eat Christ’s body and drink of His precious blood in the Lord’s Supper. In these means of God’s grace, you receive forgiveness and eternal life. You are blessed so that you might sing a new song, The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation! Salvation has been accomplished and it is delivered to you.

But, do you make such proclamations? Do you sing praises to the Lord, for His glorious gifts to you? Have you let this be made known in all the earth?

What do you talk about with your friends? The great meal had a great meal at Lake Aire? Maybe the new pickup, SUV, or other vehicle? Who will the Packers draft? That the Brewers look good and might have a shot this year? Maybe the new gal at the beauty salon who has real talent? And although you believe you should not talk politics, that one idiot running for president just needs to be mentioned?

So, when was the last time you invited invite your unchurched friends or neighbors to join you in hearing the Gospel? Oops, there are all kinds of excuses as to why we do not speak about the sermon from Sunday, and one of them might be that our stinkin’ pastor doesn’t have a filter, he cannot just be nice. Have you ever spoken

with friends about the Scripture reading you pondered over breakfast that morning? Maybe the Bible just sits on the shelf and does not get opened every morning?

So which of those topics we “could” talk about have the longest lasting consequences? That meal at Lake Aire held you over till breakfast. If you treat your vehicle well, you *may* get 250 thousand miles (if you don’t trade it in before then). Thompson isn’t going to listen to your ideas for the draft. The Brewers will look different after the All-star break. My hair is already long enough for another trim. And the president is only elected for four years.

But... Your salvation? That is eternal! You will enjoy the glories of heaven: no more sadness, or more tribulations, nor more sorrow, no more bodily aches or pains, and the new song of heaven – for all of eternity.

So, why is it that the things which wear out, and which may even drive us to disappointment or anger, make up such a great part of our conversations, but God’s work of salvation for you in Christ Jesus, and His coming to bestow His love upon you and strengthen you with Word and sacrament rarely get mentioned – if at all? What will happen to your friends who do not know of salvation in Christ?

Why we have such a hard time speaking of those things which bring us comfort in the midst of the struggles of life? Why is it so hard to speak of that which might bring eternal salvation and an eternal place in heaven to our friends who may be lost in sin and caught up in the temptations of this world? Why is it that we can be all religious on Sunday morning (or Wednesday evening), but the rest of the week, when we’re out in public, our faith is something we hide away in our pocket?

Why is it so easy to join in the conversation, even using the worldly language, when we’re at work and with most of our friends than to ask them to tone it down a bit and watch their language in our presence?

Every day you and I are witnesses to the brief flicker of time that is human life. Our mortality stares us in the face, and each day we hear of those whose lives have ended after only all too brief a time. We know that we walk each day in the valley of the shadow of death. You and I do do it singing a new song, for we know the truth of our eternal existence because of God’s Christ – our Lord and Savior.

Our silence about our faith often happens because of the sinfulness that still clings to us as long as we live in our flesh. We are in love with the world and the things of the world, and we are more concerned we might get laughed at – or even worse, lose a friend because of our confession of faith – that we are to boldly confess it.

Our own security in the face of our friends is a thin veneer, and our faith is compromised because of our sinful insecurity. Our unwillingness to speak with others about the things of our faith is evidence of our idolatry – that we put worldly things before God.

Thanks be to God that Christ loved you and me, and cared more about His task of purchasing our forgiveness than He did about friendship with the world. He boldly went about His task, proclaiming the message of salvation, even when it was unpopular with His closest friends. Remember the time He told His closest friends that He would suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, that He’d be crucified, and on the third day rise? Peter rebuked Him, saying such things would never happen, for He didn’t want Him to suffer and die. Yet Jesus boldly proclaimed God’s plan, even when it was evident that it would cost Him His life.

And that is exactly what happened. Although He could have, at any time, called down legions of angels to protect Him, although He could have destroyed those who arrested Him and nailed Him to the cross, He didn’t. By His own choice, He took up His life, only to lay it down on the cross for you and for me. He died to be our salvation! He is the New Song, the New Covenant!

The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation! – He is yours as well.

The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation! – He is the Word of forgiveness delivered into our ears.

The Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation! – He gives us His flesh to eat, and His holy blood to drink. And in the eating and drinking, He delivers what He purchased on the cross, forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation.

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." With joy I will draw water from the wells of salvation. And will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. "Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.