

Third Sunday in Advent: Isaiah 40:1–8 (9–11)

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We love Him because He first loved us. How could it be any other way? In this life, our Spirits love Him, to some degree, but we shouldn't be ashamed that we don't love Him as we're going to love Him. I think we go through years of it until we finally get to heaven. Usually, we fall in love with His hands, but He knows all that. This is one of the ways He draws us to His heart.

We come to Jesus as a prodigal son, or we don't come. We either come as prodigals, still having hope that we can do something, or we don't come. The father knows all about our tricks, but he doesn't let on that he knows. When your ears get opened you can start hearing things men say, and realize that they don't know what they're saying. At first we are deaf. There is no way to come to God except as a sinner, which is the whole disposition of the human heart. It is filled with sin far more than we could even know. He won't even let us know. Do you think God would let you know how selfish you are? He's far more gracious. He lets us see a little at a time, especially when we get puffed up and think we're not like other men - sinners. The temptation is to compare ourselves with others and make distinctions.

When the Lord comes to you, a sinner, he forgives you, but you don't stop being a sinner in your flesh, your natural man. The only difference between you and other sinners is that God has given you grace to be forgiven. Outwardly you don't do things other sinners do, but that is because you don't like the consequences.

We can only love Jesus because he first loved us, as we are. For years, we've tried to hide that from him and ourselves, and never received the great exchange: You get all of his righteousness, and he wants all of your sins because he bore them all.

Let every heart prepare him room. Is there no room in the inn? It depends on what it is filled up with. If there's emptiness and a hunger, there will be room.

How many know the gospel is in the Old Testament? A little later, could you please think about lunch? Can you wait about 20 minutes? The Bible is a closed book until we have good

teaching interpret for us, until we receive the gifts we've been given, not just in this building, but in good books.

Do you know that crying out loud is a good thing? Some people don't get deliverance or what they want because they don't cry out. This woman is in some dire straights.

2 Kings 4:1 (KJV) Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. The creditors in those days were serious about getting their money.

2 Kings 4:2 (KJV) And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. A pot of oil is all you have? It's getting down there, woman.

2 Kings 4:3-4 (KJV) Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. [4] And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

She went and said, "This is really stupid. What does this have to do with my situation? This makes no sense at all. I'm going to look for another prophet." No, she didn't say that.

2 Kings 4:5 (KJV) So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

She poured out. We have some problems here in this church. We have some people who don't pour out. You can hear this from a law perspective and that might be good too. They want to take more in and keep what they have. The Lord loves people like that. Recently, in the floods, some people here in Washington gave cat furniture to people who were in a very heavy situation.

What did she pour out? Oil. So she must have had something of the Holy Ghost in her, you could say. After all, she did inquire of a prophet, and her husband was with the prophets. She must have been around the Word, and when you hear the Word of God, the Spirit is present.

John 6:63 (KJV) It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

2 Kings 4:6-7 (KJV) And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. [7] Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Oil is convertible. Without being mercenary, it is convertible to money or life. Mary poured out, broke her vase, her alabaster box, and poured out a year's wages - substance. You have more than you think. There's atomic energy in you, but you don't know how to tap it until the Lord shows you. France - they run the whole country on nuclear reactors, and they have clean air. Why are we so far behind in that technology? Because we graduate droids. You have to talk. I heard a man speak the other day who said you can have good ideas, but if you can't sell them, they're worthless. He went on to speak of communication. If you're going to sell something you have to be aware of the pressures on the ones you're selling to - what they're dealing with. Those in High School have to learn to talk. If you're one of those persons who people say something to and you turn into a puddle of tears, you've been hiding out, thinking that your problems are your parents or the teachers.

This woman here, she just got the empties. Where are the empties? Where are the empties that you can pour out to? "Well, I'd like to give but I only have a little." This is law, until the cross becomes a reality. You won't have to be told to love anyone. You won't be condemned if you don't love people enough. It is the gift of God - neighbors.

POUR [7324] draw out or pour forth.

"If a man believes on me, he'll get a lot of stuff, is that what Jesus said?" No. He said out of his belly, his innermost being will flow rivers of living water (Mt. 7:38). The innermost being is your Spirit. When you believe Christ, your Spirit is joined to his Spirit, and when you're joined to his Spirit, you're joined to eternity. All your husband has is yours. This would be abstract to the young people.

Out of your bellies a river of living water will flow. Then what? Be-attitudes: Blessed are the poor. Blessed are they that empty themselves for they shall be filled. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst, they will be filled. They will have so many empties, and not a few. Our natural bent is that we want to get. But Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Here's the other side:

Jeremiah 48:11 (KJV) Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.

Do you have good vibes about Moab? When you see names in the Bible, there are spirits, hordes of spirits, demon spirits, behind them. Moab has been at ease from his youth. He's settled on his lees. He's not even lukewarm. He has no zeal for the house of God. The Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs.

Some people are captive to the Lord, to the Word of God, slaves of Jesus Christ. He did not become captive to the Lord. He stinks - of rotteness. Like a slimy pond that stinks because of dead bacteria. They are all over in Miami - swamps, backwaters where the river doesn't flow so there is no healing, like in Ez. 47's river that flows out of the throne of God, your heart. You are the temple of the Holy Ghost. This is where the river flows from - through the church - to the deserts when you're looking for empties, and not a few, a daily search for empties. Looking for them would make it a work. The empties are those who bump into you - daily.

What's the fruit of your many years of writing things down? There have been thousands of books written - good advice. Until we're brought to poverty we still rely on our own resources. God loves us. We love him, but not like we're going to love him. We still have some options, we think. We don't realize that each time we rely on our own understanding it is an idolatrous situation.

Moab, he stinks. His taste remains in him. In whom? The man who is not poured out, but who is turned inward.

Jeremiah 48:12 (KJV) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.

Have you ever been a wanderer, seeking rest, seeking someone to rest in, some human being? Our hope is in the Lord. Moab sure stinks. He refuses to be emptied.

2 Cor. 4:7 (KJV) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

You are an earthen vessel. The widow is looking for vessels. Are you looking for some? "I'd like to, but I don't have much time, I'm kind of busy and I've got my own problems. I'd like to

give a couple of dollars, but I don't have any." This is just the kind of person Jesus loves. Who told you that you had to work harder? You still have hope in the law that you would actually do it. What a hard life to lead; to be under that. Christ came to deliver you from that. "You need to be loving more." You can't. You're actually forbidden to. Jesus commanded us to love God and love our neighbor, and no human being has ever fulfilled either one. You go to the one who fulfills every commandment and gives more than \$20, more than a new hospital wing. The church always seems weird to the world. The church is despised. The church doesn't do any works. In the world, who gets glory? Those who do works - those who are successful. I still love the pastor who said he had never done one good work and that was why he knew he was going to heaven. Was he on some trip? Yes - dead to approaching God or anyone else on the basis of his works. "What are you saying then? Should we just do nothing?" Yes. If you're dead you can't do anything good or bad. This is an eschatological realm, but we enter into it today.

Mary, the Mother of our Lord said the rich, the full, go away empty. This is the gospel to some, but to another, this will be law. The same word can be both. "You're trying to condemn me." I can't condemn anyone, that's the law's job.

We have examples of Mary who poured her vase out, and the house was filled with the odor, the fragrance of the spices, the myrrh. The most expensive thing in the world is perfume, more than gold or diamonds. You get the most expensive from the oil of musk ox, from their gland. To get that, you have to go to the Himalayan Mountains. As soon as you kill an ox, the odor is spread for miles and miles - just a pin drop. They use it as a catalyst in perfume. When she broke a year's wages, of course the reasonable man said, "What's the meaning of this waste." The song says, "Don't give your life away." All the voices in my ears, my carnal mind say, "Don't give your life away because you only have enough for you. You have to make sure you have it around because there's a depression coming." I'm not saying don't save. But I'm talking about being stingy.

We have an abstraction called sinners. Who else is God going to save, deliver? Good people don't want to hear it because they are full, full of their own righteousness. The rich go away empty. But we, by the mercy of God, when we come to Jesus, we come as beggars. All of our aspirations, our god-projects, have failed. Tell someone, "That's why I came to this church, because I failed." Maybe you came to help them out. Read about the chosen - they have nowhere else to go. They heard there was a wedding and you know what happened at the

banquet. I just have a feeling Mary told Jesus, "Jesus, we had a lot until you showed up, you and your disciples. Now, will you do something, Son?"

We only come to Jesus in desperation. You may shoot up an Our Father just like I do, but before you're done, you've spaced out. Do you believe in God the Father, Almighty, the Creator? Or, do you have a naturalistic view of the universe? You still think the universe is stars, and that Galileo was right. He deserved to be excommunicated because he made man so insignificant. God wouldn't die for us, because after all, we're just one species among billions. We think we know something because we read a book on stars, or something else.

God says in Acts 2, "I'm going to pour out My Spirit." It is interesting that the people he is going to pour out on are sinners. Is anyone not qualified to be filled with the Holy Ghost seven times? If so, if you're feeling condemned or disqualified, turn to Luke 11:13.

Luke 11:13 (KJV) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Who is he going to give it to? The people who are the un-together, the sinners, the forgiven, the thankful? Yes.

Jesus is talking about asking. Lord, I'm asking now, "Fill me up again, and again and again." I hear a voice saying, "Pour out again, and again and again." When you hear the real Holy Ghost coming out of a man, he will not be talking about himself. He will only speak of the Father and of Jesus. "Well, I still have a few issues with God today about the way he's been treating me. As far as I'm concerned, my vending machine broke down this last week and is not doing what I want." Remember shaking vending machines, when they were smaller?

People love the hands of God, but not his heart. We don't come until God has broken us, or allowed our own choices to break us. The prodigal son is an interesting story that I've never heard. How does God get at him? He gives him an inheritance: Life, limbs, breath. Do what you want with it. The son goes out and wastes it. Hopefully, he'll wake up before he's 40 - get a famine before he's 40. Hopefully, he'll see the futility of the life he's been leading. But there's a conspiracy among the friends who want something he has, or those who have something he wants. He joined himself with a pig farmer. Slop the pigs and eat the husks - the perversions, the lusts of this world. But God...who is rich in mercy.

Luke 11:13 (KJV) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

He gives the Holy Ghost to you in people too, in others. The church is where the fullness of God fills all in all. Where does the Lord dwell? You can read about it all through the Bible. Ezekiel was among the captives. The Lord dwells among the captives - the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind. So God fills us through the church, in the presence of another person. He does. Where is he? Where two or more are gathered in his name, there he will be in the midst of them. What is his name (Rev. 19:13)? If you gather in his name, there he will be, the Word of God. "What's that, Don?" Well, it's more than letters on paper. It is inexhaustible, eternal, immortal, etc. We get a little taste of it here in this life. There I will be. Where the presence of the Lord is, there is joy.

By the way, sometimes other things come into the presence of God. People possessed with devils he does not kick out right away. He delivers them. Look at Legion. He didn't kick him out. Legion had 6000 devils. Devils - where are they at? In your flesh. Tom Baker - your flesh, your devil. Why is Tom Baker on KFUD? To confuse and offend. He understands that sometimes Jesus shows up and offends a whole crowd. "Well, I don't like what he said. I'm getting a new God." He doesn't mind that. Where does he speak? Can he speak through you?

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall be continually in my mouth. Don't tell me this about you. You don't think I believe that do you? Yes. It is absolutely true, because Christ is in you. "The law - my gossip, my lying, and my blame are continually in my mouth". But God is not seeing you that way. How does he see you?

I pray that God would open the eyes of your understanding, the eyes of your hearts, that you would see something.

2 Cor. 3:6 (KJV) Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

The law reminds me of the statues in Narnia - they turn into ice - stony hearts. Do you know what I mean? How many of you ever had a hard heart? How do you know you don't have one today, seven of them? Aslan, the Holy Spirit, is on the move.

2 Cor. 3:11 (KJV) For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

The law was glorious, but you're not under the law. You're under grace. "Well, let's go out and sin more, if we're under grace." You can do that, but...

2 Cor. 3:11-13 (KJV) For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. [12] Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: [13] And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

They couldn't look to the end of what has been abolished for you, the keeping of the law for righteousness. You used to be under that. You used to lie to yourself; you couldn't help it. "Well, I'm doing some good things. I'm relatively good. Thank God, I'm not like those people out there, shooting up, or whatever they do." We took consolation in the fact that we never did outward things, but you never looked in your heart. If you let the law shine in your heart, you'll realize you never did love God or your neighbor.

2 Cor. 3:14 (KJV) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

Why? Because they don't see the gospel in the Old Testament. They continually focus on law; doing it or not doing it.

2 Cor. 3:15-16 (KJV) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. [16] Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

My granddaughter cannot see herself in the mirror, yet. There's something to be learned in this. Can you see yourself yet? Did you see yourself this morning, when you were fluffing and buffing? No. My granddaughter is not conscious of her image, and she's better off than you. When you look in a mirror, you're not seeing you; you're seeing an image - a photograph. My granddaughter is not even conscious of herself. If you look in the mirror all you see is the outward, it takes the Holy Ghost to show you what and who you really are.

2 Cor. 3:16-17 (KJV) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. [17] Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

LIBERTY - Lev 25 - God had mercy. He ordained the 50th year to be the year of jubilee - all debts cancelled, everything forgiven. In fact, you could have 3 years off, every 50 years. Proclaim liberty throughout the land - the Liberty Bell in Independence Hall has this written on it. America has fallen on slavery. There are worse bondages today. Taxation - just crank out

more money - give everyone more money. Were here to show sin, the gospel, and the sacraments. LIBERTY - Spontaneity of outflow, no longer a statue, condemned, reduced down so you can't move. Liberty repeat movement, clarity. derowr, Hebrew 1865, Strong's from an unused root (meaning to move rapidly); freedom; hence spontaneity of outflow, and so clear: - liberty, pure.

Is there spontaneity of outflow? She poured her oil out. People who won't receive the grace of God, the mercy of God, the prosperity and the peace of God, they think they only have a little, not enough to give. I'm talking about the abundance of Christ in your heart. You have Christ to give. I can't prescribe a specific way that is done. Christ can be given in listening to someone and then commenting, not from your own heart, but giving Christ. There are tens of thousands of ways. Who is your neighbor?

You're moving, not because you have to love anyone, but because you're been given the gift of neighbor. The river flows out of your bellies. When Jesus said this, it is an indicative. If you believe, this will be - out of your bellies, your innermost being, flows the Spirit of God. The greatest way of all the ways you can do that is through the proclamation of the Gospel - to your own children, to who you're around. Most school children don't know.

Walther: There's nothing more delightful or lovable on earth than one's neighbor.

What do you mean? The reason we're turned to stone, turned inward and can't move is fear. We fear because we're looking in the wrong mirror. We only see an image. The law paints an image that isn't so hot. When you turn to Christ, look to him, then you'll see your heart and what he's given to you, and your neighbor will no longer be a threat. NEIGHBOR = interruption, what I don't do, trouble, inconvenience. This may all be true, but I don't think you realize what an inconvenience you were to Jesus or to other people close to home. Go ahead, live for yourself like no one exists but you and people are just useful to you. Go ahead - that will work.

Once you ask, receive this give then your neighbor is what is more delightful and lovable than anyone else on earth. "You don't mean the weaker members, do you, Don?" Yes, those who have fallen asleep right now. This can't even happen, except after the cross. It is nothing you work up. What I'm saying is that you can't love your neighbor. You're too selfish - too far gone in Adam. Neighbors are useful. Our greatest bummer is turning inward. Neighbors, particularly empties, turn you outward. Who is in captivity around you, some form of fear or

bondage every day? They have more hope than someone who is secure. The secure have no need. They've got a plan for this week.

Let this suffice concerning works in general and at the same time concerning the works which a Christian does for himself. Lastly, we shall also speak of the things which he does toward his neighbor. A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body to work for it alone, but he lives also for all men on earth; rather, he lives only for others and not for himself. To this end he brings his body into subjection that he may the more sincerely and freely serve others, as Paul says in Rom. 14[:7–8], “None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.” He cannot ever in this life be idle and without works toward his neighbors, for he will necessarily speak, deal with, and exchange views with men, as Christ also, being made in the likeness of men [Phil. 2:7], was found in form as a man and conversed with men, as Baruch 3[:38] says.

Christ even emptied himself of the reputation he had with God. He poured it all out. A Christian, like Christ, his head, is filled and made rich by faith. How many times throughout the day, day in and day out, is he filled/

The Christian life, after the cross, after the gift is received, is nothing more than one of receiving gift, pouring out, and receiving more every time you pour out. No one has to, for righteousness, but so that your joy would be full in that you love one another. Remember, love isn't something you do; it is fruit that comes from abiding in faith, in Christ. It isn't even something you do, but what Christ does. The Love of God is shed abroad; his love is shed abroad, in your empty heart. It is not static and indifferent, but is always looking for empties. Without pouring out, we can't become full.

You receive justification, righteousness that enables us to stand before God, plus nothing we could ever do, only what God has done, and this is where our boasting is. The gospel is me telling you what God has done. He first of all made a decision about you. You'll run into some warfare too. People are bound up. Spirits don't want them free. They like them staying as stone statues. They don't want them spontaneous; rivers flowing out into the deserts. The deserts will blossom. The streams will be in the desert, the people of God are the streams. The person closest to you needs watering all day long. Marriage - washing your wife with the water of the Word.

Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him. This he should do freely, having regard for nothing but divine approval.

Now that a Christian has received everything from God, he doesn't want to be turned inward. The proclamation is praise. The gospel, the living gospel being spoken, praises what Jesus Christ has done. To praise is to speak well of someone. Have you ever been praised? Did you do something for someone, and they were your raving fan? We are the biggest raving fans for eternity because of what Jesus has done for us. He just did what was owed to you, right? "He is God, after all, and he does owe me some things. Why should I be his raving fan?"

If I tell you to do something, don't do it. Love your neighbor. I cannot. But to believe God; that he has shed abroad in our hearts the love of his Son, yes. Like the widow woman, we are always in a situation. We always meet things that need to be poured into. The Lord puts us into situations where the deserts will draw the water of life out of us. The opposite of that is to be curved in on oneself. He gives us neighbors daily.

It is not good for you to be alone, off in your own world, in your own head. Nowhere in the Bible does God say this is good. Satan wants you to be a loner. You can be in a crowd. "What time is the game on?" What a joke - the glory of man - cheap entertainment.

So God puts things in front of you to go to, to give to, to make things better. We are continually receiving, continually living by gift. The water flow out, but before that happens, someone has to be made poor enough. You're wasting your cartloads, until the law makes someone poor. They need the wages of broken law. The law is more severe even than you could be. It brings us to Christ - humbles us.

Who do you love? Do you fall short there? Christ doesn't.

We're made poor so we can live in a gift. Also, he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. Do you know anyone who loves his neighbor? What is his name? Jesus. If you love your neighbor perfectly according to 1 Cor. 13, not using your neighbor which is the most obvious travesty, it is Jesus loving them. Using your neighbors would be the love of man. You can love people so you can be a martyr and say you love them. He who loves his neighbor fulfills the law. How does God put that love in us? First he makes us sinners, poor.

After Christ, after the cross, we can love our neighbor because we don't have to. "Oh good! Then I won't." What you have will dwindle - you'll live in fear. God in you means to live an abundant, creative life, eternal life, the life of Jesus Christ.

I believe we have a lively hope. We are not like those who have no hope. But when we turn inward, our great enemy is seen. There could be a devil in that flesh who hates you, hates you so much that he wants to torment you and bring you into fear. None of us lives unto himself, but unto Christ.

She's quite a woman, that one who listened to the prophet. She pours out. Her sons are saved. Moab had another god – Chemosh. The people would sacrifice their children to him. In America, have you ever seen anyone sacrificing their children to their idols: the view in the mirror, the image they want to make of themselves? The baby girl before the mirror was so dumb; she was like Adam and Eve before the fall - innocent, but not pure yet. Purity comes by fire, the baptism Jesus gives us every day in fire. The Holy Ghost is leading us and guiding us into all truth. Truth has fallen in the church. Truth can be intrusive, against me, so that I would actually face things - look into the mirror of the Word of God, the face of Jesus.

2 Cor. 4:8-9 (KJV) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; These are all things the Christian goes through. There are days when we're cast down, but that's when we need empties.

2 Cor. 4:10 (KJV) Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. Who can understand this, what levels there are in this? Only the Holy Ghost can reveal these things to our hearts.

2 Cor. 4:11-12 (KJV) For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. [12] So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Is that an indictment?

2 Cor. 4:13 (KJV) We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Do you believe? Then out of your bellies will flow; and not because you have to. If you go to Mount Rainier, you'll see rivers coming out of the mountain, and the waters will end up in the Lewis River, or the

Cowlitz. No one has to tell the river to start being the river and flow. No, the reservoirs are bursting.

You speak because you believe; you believe you have an answer for the person next to you, maybe one they can't get on their own. You speak because people next to you are in captivity. You could be the Levite or the priest who walked by. The Samaritan, the outcast, the mixed up Samaritan, got off his horse. This is law. Remember what I said. You're forbidden. You can't get off of your horse. You'd be too afraid of the robbers. Where is the man who has been beat up and left for dead? Everywhere, starting here. They've been beat up - left in their carnal mind - off on their own - filled with carnality, sin, lust, jealousies, etc. They are left pretending; coming to Church today smiling and singing. This is a good place for hypocrites to be. If you came in a hypocrite, you shouldn't go out being one. There's no point.

Regarding honesty, I heard of a man who had a chemical company and he made a deal to sell 40% of his company to another man. They shook hands on it. But after the owner left, his company attorneys did not make out the contract for a good period of time. In the meantime, the company prospered incredibly. When it came time to close the deal, the owner said, in essence, "My attorneys didn't get to the contract, so let's split the difference in the cost between then and now." The man he sold it to said, "No, we shook on it and made a deal, so that's all I want." This man's natural integrity and honesty in business, to where he would not do anything other than what he shook hands on, would not do anything dishonest, was praised.

2 Cor. 4:14-15 (KJV) Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. [15] For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

You can't be dishonest and say you are doing your vocation to the glory of God. You have to make a decision some day, if you'd like. God gets us out of our situations daily. We are sheep.

2 Cor. 4:16-18 (KJV) For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Everything is changing. The universe doesn't stand still. But there is one thing that endures forever: The Word of the Lord.

What mirror do you want to look in? Do you want to look to Jesus, not as a vending machine god, but as a Savior, today? Or do you want to look into a natural mirror and just see law? Look to Him and see his forgiveness, and then your life will be a praise to his glory. You will be his raving fan. I'd like to see some more radical people, people who are bonkers for Jesus. They used to be around in the 70's. A lot of them have turned inward, and have become good people.

1 John - perfect love casts out fear. Okay, do you have any fears? Where there is fear there is torment. Perfect love casts out fear. Are you loving your neighbor perfectly? What is perfect love? Jesus Christ is perfect love. When he is given preeminence, by the mercy of God, then we love our neighbors perfectly, but it is Christ, his love, we rely on. How many of you have seen in your own lives, that to be caught up in the Body, in the cares of others more than your own, is joyous. The more I turn inward, the more fear I have. It is a battle, and we're not dealing with flesh and blood here. Christ, perfect love in you, always loves the neighbor. You are to rely on Christ. He has done it. It is finished. Nothing more than the love of Christ in our hearts; or as it says in Thesis 28, the love of God that lives in man loves sinners, evil persons, fools, and weaklings in order to make them righteous, good wise and strong. Who is this talking to?

Comfort people who are perfect? Comfort people who don't sin? No.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (KJV) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. [2] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

What's comforting is when the Holy Ghost, the Gospel, the Word of God, is coming out of your belly. Those who believe, out of their belly, their innermost being, shall flow, the Holy Spirit, the one who guides us to truth, the one who comforts us in all of our tribulations. Let the Holy Spirit flow out of your belly. God's Word is spirit and life. Not because you have to. It is so important that you hear the words, he that believes. He that believes what? Believes the gospel. There is a flow, the reservoirs area packed. Get moving, move rapidly. If there's anything to be repented of it is unbelief in what God has done for us. God has forgiven all of

your iniquities. Only a holy God can be a high priest. A Lamb without spot or wrinkle, unblemished goes before the Father and makes intercession as we fail daily.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (KJV) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. [2] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

You were fighting with the weapons of flesh, reason. The enemy had you tricked. But God gives you the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and covers you with the gospel, the blood of his Son, and nothing can penetrate that armor. Nothing can cover you like Jesus' blood, his cross. He so covers us in grace and in mercy that we no longer have to do anything to be righteous before him. He's made the exchange. It is an affront, an offence to Adam because it is gift. The purpose of the law is to lead Adam to Christ, the blood of the Lamb. We speak law, but we know the secret, don't we? We know we've never kept it and that no man can keep it. We're not that bothered, but we should keep it. In the world, if you don't keep it, there are consequences. The wages of your sins has been taken away, but not in the temporal realm. If you eat 6 cheeseburgers every day for a week, there might be some temporal reaping in your life.

Before God, you are justified, holy, and you've been given the righteousness of Christ as a garment, like the garment given to the high priest. We have a greater than a high priest, we have The High Priest, whoever lives for us in case our garments become soiled every day.

"Oh, these people have been mocking you, lord, taking your name in vain, comparing you to other gods." Jehoshaphat knows how to get God's dander up. When you started comparing me to other gods, God told Jehoshaphat, you do not need to fight the battle, the battle is the Lord's.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (KJV) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. [2] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

"Well, I'm in a fight every day, Don. Are you crazy?" The fight is over faith. On any given day, my big problem is that I start thinking God needs my help. They're just not shaping up quick enough. I still think I can control things. You can give your problems to the Lord, which are you or other people – take them up the mountain.

Isaiah said, "Woe unto me. My eyes have seen the Lord. I am a man of unclean lips and am in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Don't stop there, on law, ever. Realize you will be baptized with water (Holy Ghost), and with fire.

An angel was told to go to the altar and bring down a hot coal and put it on Isaiah's tongue. Fire purifies. Jesus came to baptize with Spirit and fire. Fire burns up all the dross until there is nothing left but pure gold. All the alloys are out now, in the crucible. People think they can avoid this by running from God, or by doing good things, and God gets glory either way.

Sing O Barren! "Well, there's no fruit in my life. All I see is winter." If this is winter, can spring be far away? No. Believe the Lord. See the harvest now. Read Isa. 35 sometime if you want to see the harvest.

Isaiah 40:1-2 (KJV) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. [2] Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Proclaim to empties, people who don't know their warfare is accomplished. Speak of what God has done for you. Boast in what the Lord has done and praise Him. He has undertaken and overcome all of your enemies, every one of them. "Yes, but we know..." "Well, I still have a problem with lust, with this, or with that, with money, etc." Everybody does. What do you think brings you to the Lord? Song: I've got confidence. If I never had a problem I wouldn't know that God could solve them, I'd never know what faith in God could do.

God makes us poor, but only so we can come to Jesus. We would not come to Him in our richness. The woman with the sons had debts. She was poor. She was so poor she went and talked to a prophet, and heard the testimony of Jesus. The prophet didn't give her much law except to find empties. But he knew the end from the beginning, the prophet Elisha. Consider the value of finding empties, looking for them. Consider, even from your perspective, what happens when you stop looking for empties. How many of you don't have to look far? I don't think you have to look that far. If you thought you did, don't worry. What are people empty of?

Sing O Barren. Tell them; tell the church, her warfare is accomplished. This means we live in a watery grave. We are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live, yet not us, but Christ.

Tell her that she will receive from the Lord double for her sins. I used to think it was double payment. But now, I think it means that for all your sins, you'll receive double inheritance

(gift). "Well, I've been working all day, and they're getting a wife, money, a house, gold, and they've only worked for 1 hour." There, is where you're called to trust God. Job's whole trip was that he wanted to know why. "Why have you forsaken me?" Jesus cried from the cross. And the only answer was God's silence.

This is for today. It is only by God's grace. You may have money this week as a stumbling stone; either a lot of money, or no money. Beware when you come into the Land that you forget the Lord your God - that you forget to tell your children you were a slave. Beware; your children will end up as ungrateful as you. Neither were they thankful (grateful). They think everything in your house just floats down from the sky. Fathers are reduced to vending machines, and they can never give enough. What is given is expected. On the other hand, God loves ungrateful children. Aren't you glad?

Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Make way for someone who has fulfilled the law for you.

Isaiah 40:3-5 (KJV) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. [4] Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: [5] And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Prepare the way for the one who says: "I've put my spirit in you. I've shed abroad my love into your hearts." But it is not another law. My love in your heart is not a law for you to love your neighbor. It is a gift.

Thesis 28 – Martin Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518

From, Gerhard O. Forde's, On Being a Theologian Of The Cross

Page 112-115

The love of God does not first discover but creates what is pleasing to it.

If you meet someone who is not pleasing to you, what should you do? Not a thing. Rely on Christ, and not on your love. The love of man comes into being through attraction to what pleases it.

Now we have arrived at the opposite side of the great arch described by the Disputation. All else has been shorn away, put to death. What remains is simply the creative love of God. The innermost nature of the operation of the previous thesis is now announced. It is love, the love of God that creates out of nothing, calls into being that which is from that which is not.

Love can only be announced after the cross - after all that the cross means - because if it is announced before that, we'll think it is another command, a command neither you nor your fathers could bear. Although, a secure sinner should be told, should be made to see that he doesn't love anyone but himself. "Suffering all these years for my art." Don't ever become an existentialist; anything but that. You don't need the pain of being an existentialist.

It is love, the love of God that creates out of nothing, calls into being that which is from that which is not.

The love of God creates new creatures out of nothing - vanity. We should know. Has God created you anew? Are you a new creation he created out of nothing? "Wait a minute. I was something." What are you doing here then? "Well, I was a little winner. I could've been somebody."

Here we have reached the other side, God is not, as in the theology of glory, one who waits to approve those who have improved themselves, made themselves acceptable, or merited approval, but one who bestows good on the bad and needy. The great reversal is complete. Indeed, the final sentences of the proof touch in interesting fashion on a reversal in the very question of being itself:

Has Christ turned to you? What did he find there? A little goodness, relative goodness, perceived goodness? Yes, that was the worst part of you. At least your outward sins you knew about. If you join any clique you have law.

This is the love of the cross, born of the cross, which turns in the direction where it does not find good that it may enjoy, but where it may confer good upon the bad and needy persons. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" [Acts 20:35], says the Apostle.

Sing O Barren. Go Tell Jerusalem, "Jerusalem, Christ has finished your warfare." By faith that he has given you, you could believe it and receive it today... It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Here we have reached the other side, God is not, as in the theology of glory, one who waits to approve those who have improved themselves, made themselves acceptable, or merited approval, but one who bestows good on the bad and needy. The great reversal is complete. Indeed, the final sentences of the proof touch in interesting fashion on a reversal in the very question of being itself:

There are people that would not even exist on your radar screen. God doesn't wait until they improve themselves to confer good upon them.

The love of God born of the cross, the love of God that lives in man, loves sinners, fools, weaklings, hypocrites, greedy people, you name it. He loves Pharisees, actually, but they're not poor enough to receive him. He loves hypocrites but sometimes they're not poor enough either. The woman was made poor, and we're the woman, the church. God came to her with good news: Believe the gospel. Believe that your warfare is complete. And, if you'd like to, love your neighbor, but not in your own strength. Believe me that I am with you until the end of the world, and that I've poured my love into your heart, and it will flow out of you, if you believe. You believe through hearing.

It is my duty, my job to tell you that I forgive all your sins for Christ's sake, even the ones you might have done today and that you don't even know about. There is not one sin. Whether or not you receive it, it is still true. It has already been true for every person on this earth. There has never been one person it was not true for.

We receivers of all Christ had done and given us and so we sing, even when it appears we're barren, no sheep, no cattle in the stall, and no fruit on the vine. In our boasting of what Christ has done, he is present. When he is present, every other spirit must leave because he casts them out.

Thank you Lord, for what you've done. We would be your raving fans, Lord, by the mercy of Jesus Christ.

AMEN

SOURCE

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 2/3/08

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)