

Psalms 89:19-21 & 24-29 & 34-37

First lesson: Ephesians 2:1-10

Second lesson: John 1:29-34

Text: Isaiah 49:1-6

THEME: GOD WILL RESTORE HIS PEOPLE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this morning let us meditate from our text on the theme, "God will restore his people". We all experience brokenness and pain in our lives, disappointments, and sometimes frustrations. This can be due to our sins, mistakes, other circumstances or the consequences of other peoples' actions. Often we feel that the damage is too great, and that we will never be ourselves again. But the word of God assures us that He is the God of restoration.

Our text comes from the section of Isaiah that speaks of a time when many of the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon, suffering and had lost all hope of surviving. And in our text we see God's desire to restore His people. That is why in the last verse the Lord said to his servant, "I have a greater task for you, the people of Israel who have survived, will not only be restored, I will make you a light to the nations so that the entire world may be saved." The text introduces a suffering servant where he speaks to the world and not only Israel concerning his mission. He is the one who is sent out by God. God called him right from when he was conceived in the mother's womb with a special destiny. That is why in verse 5 he says, "Before I was born, the Lord appointed me his servant, he gives me honour; he is the source of my strength." Yet it was not going to be easy. This servant will go through moments of pains, disappointments, grief and frustrations. And though his mission and life on earth may seem to bear no fruit God will make sure of his reward.

My dear friends, are you going through experiences of brokenness and pains in your life? You may feel like you are beyond repair. In the time of prophet Joel, God promised to restore the years that locusts had eaten up everything in the land, to bring back what was lost and to make his people whole again. This promise is not just for the Israelites, but for all God's people including you and me today. What the locusts of this wicked world have eaten up in your life, your career and family shall be restored! Our destiny is in the hand of the Almighty God. But as we pray and look up to God there are certain things we must take note about. Restoration is not always easy or quick. It is a process that requires patience, trust and obedience in God. Restoration involves confronting our sin and brokenness and allowing God to heal and transform us. Restoration requires us to let go our past grievances, fears and anxieties, and to trust in God's goodness and sovereign power.

In the second lesson John the Baptist testifies what God spoke to him about Jesus Christ, "You will see the Spirit come down and stay on a man, he is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit" and at last John saw it and said, "He is the son of God"(Jn. 1:34).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as the son of God who is filled and empowered with the Holy Spirit, Jesus ministered to his own people, Israel faithfully. But there were times that his work seemed in vain. The religious leaders opposed him, the disciples did not always understand him and even those he helped did not always appreciate and thank him. Yet Jesus lived and laboured on by faith. He continued

to trust and look up to God in hope for a better tomorrow. And finally God blessed his ministry, gave him success and lifted him above all evil and wickedness.

In the first lesson Apostle Paul on his part testifies that in the past we were spiritually dead because of our disobedience and sin. We followed worldly evil ways and were under the control of the spiritual powers in space and the evil spirit that is in control of the disobedient people of this world. In this state God decided to save, redeem and let us free. This is how God demonstrated the extraordinary greatness of his grace for us all.

Dear friends in the lord, you might have lost a lot in your life and family. And you might have reached the level where you think that everything is working against you. Do not lose hope because our God is the God of restoration. His mercy for us is abundant and his love is so great. Job is one person in the Bible who lost all that he had. Yet at the appointed time, God restored his joy and blessed him a hundred times more. Just after our text God himself says, "Can a woman forget her baby and have no compassion on the child she bore? Even if that happens, God says, "I will never forget you, I have written your name in the palm of my hands" (Is 49:15-16).

Beloved in the Lord, leave behind your past of regret, sin and fears and trust in God's goodness and power, for he is able to restore his people. God can take our brokenness and make us whole again. With God we can experience joy and peace. God will heal our wounds; he will restore our relationships. God will give us new life and we can be able to live the life that God intended for us: a life that is full and meaningful. To God be the glory. Amen.

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