

# “The Drought is Over”

Isaiah 35:4-7

I don't know if you were aware of it, but we had really dry summer. Did any of you notice that? Brown grass, burnt up corn, cracks in the ground – did you notice that? Of course you did, it was the reality everywhere in this part of our country. Then the rains came. What a beautiful rain. It was a perfect rain. And in a matter of days, the world turned green once again. The drought is over.

When you drive through the wilderness of Israel, there are miles and miles where nothing is green. There is no water. There is not even a blade of grass. There aren't even weeds. And the Lord says through Isaiah, “waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.” Where there was once no life, the fullness of life shall appear. God promises that, when Christ comes, the drought is over.

I didn't know if you were aware of it, but we live in a really difficult, sinful world. Have any of you noticed that? Violence, deceit, immorality, all those things Jesus listed in last week's Gospel lesson, troubling (even broken) relationships – have you noticed that?

The sinful world is a dry wilderness without the hope of life. Not even a weed can survive. The sad thing is that most people go seeking life where there is no life. There are false teachers and those who twist or dismiss the Word of God. In the Bible, Jude describes those who corrupt the Gospel of God as being “waterless clouds.”

How many times this summer did we see clouds on the horizon, and received no rain. Empty promises; that is what the sinful world loves to offer. The promise of riches leaves you always wanting more. How often we hear someone say, “If I just had ‘this’, I would be so happy.” If I just had the newest ipad or iphone, I will be so happy, until a newer one comes along.

This is nothing new. Back in his youth, my dad use to spend the summers at my aunt Lena’s house in Iowa. Her husband Uncle Henry Burghofer and his brother were the largest land owners in the county. If one bought a new tractor, the other had to get something bigger and better. One Sunday, Uncle Henry came rolling up to church in his new Buick. It was a three-holer. If you know cars, you know what his brother came to church in the very next week. It was a four-holer. (True story)

All that God gave them did not bring contentment as it should. How many items do you have in your home or garage that brought you great joy at the moment you purchased it, but no longer brings contentment?

All sin boils down to a lack of being content with what God has given you. If you steal what does not belong to you, why do you do this? You

are not content with what God has given. Adultery in its many forms happens because you are not content with whom God has given you.

Coveting, by definition, is a lack of contentment. Bearing false witness, slander, gossip, speaking ill of others happens why? You think that you are getting the short end of the stick and these others need to be knocked down a peg (to where they belong). You are not content with what God has given you.

Living in this dry, dead, wilderness of resentment and discontentment, it is difficult to imagine the fullness of joy that we will see. It is difficult to appreciate the great gifts we have already received. We see a world of anger and resentment. It seems everyone holds a grudge. This why it is hard to understand what it means for your sins to be completely forgiven in Christ. The reality is that your sins are completely forgiven. It is the joy of Baptism. The drought is over. God provides true reality. The so-called “real world” out there – outside of the church – that is just an aimless dry wilderness.

During our summer of drought, it seemed as if the skies would never rain again. The Lord provides. The drought is over. He has not abandoned us or forgotten about us. When your life seems like a parched wilderness and the drought goes on and on – remember that the Lord provides. He has not abandoned you. He has not forgotten about you.

The Lord tells Isaiah, “Say to those who have an anxious heart, ‘Be strong; fear not!’ Behold, your God will come with vengeance . . . He will come and save you.”

When Christ comes into your life, it is like streams of water breaking forth in the desert; it is like three days of gentle rain on our drought-stricken land. The change is dramatic. Where there seemed to be no hope, where all that we had were waterless clouds, where all around us was burnt up and dead, life appears.

Having Christ in your life doesn't fix all of your problems. Last week's rain didn't make the corn pop out an extra 100 bushel an acre. There is a different harvest to come. Having Christ and His church come to you doesn't mean that all of your relationships will be perfect. It doesn't mean that trouble and sin will not affect you anymore. Having Christ in your life means that the trouble and sin is forgiven, forgotten, and you stand before you Father in heaven as a righteous child of God.

Having Christ come to you means that you are prepared for the harvest – the final harvest.

Life outside of Christ and His church is a lifeless desert full of empty promises. You live in the waters of Baptism. “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance . . . He will come and save you.” Amen.