

## "The Rest We Share"

Psalm 62:1-8

October 7, 2018

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (LWML Sunday)

Social media is a term we hear a lot about these days. For those of you not familiar with it, it is not refer to a group of friendly newspaper reporters. Rather, it refers to those electronic devices (computers, cell phones, iPods, and iPads) and applications for those devices (websites, emails, texts, tweets, and so on) – which have allowed its users to instantly gain access to all sorts of information from anyone anywhere in the world and, at the same time, to allow its users to send information of all kinds to anyone anywhere in the world.

On the one hand, this is been a blessing to people in need. When there are disasters such as the recent hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis, social media have been a great help. People who are suffering and need help are able to send out cell calls, tweets, emails, and text messages which allow rescuers to find them and bring them what they need. Notifications, such as Amber Alerts, are able to quickly alert people of children who are missing or have been abducted and to encourage the general public to be of help in finding his children.

However, on the other hand, social media have been a real curse to many people. They have been used to raise the level of fear and uncertainty in many people. Social media can be used to plot and coordinate various acts of violence, terrorist attacks, church & school shootings, and so on. Threatening Facebook posts, Internet bullying, sexting, and other everyday uses of social media have caused countless cases of misery, depression, and even suicide.

In spite of the many positive uses of social media, these negative things and others have robbed many of ever having or finding any sense of security or peace in their lives or in the world. Where does a person go for peace and security in an uncertain world such as ours where everybody is watching what you do? Hiding doesn't help. Ignoring social media doesn't help. Every day we are all brought face-to-face with the reality of uncertainty.

These kinds of feelings are not unique to the social ministry age. Long ago, King David, the author of our text for this special day, was quite familiar with the insecurity of his world. He wrote Psalm 62 to share his own uncertainty and where he found peace and rest. The Psalm indicates that he was under a serious attack from an enemy or enemies who wanted to overthrow him. King David's confidence, faith, and sense of peace and security were shaky. David refers to himself as being "like a leaning wall, a tottering fence." One does not build a wall to lean or make a fence to totter. Such structures are made to protect those surrounded by them. However, after a long time of being battered, this could happen to a wall or fence.

Scholars think that this Psalm was written during the time when Absalom, the son of David, was attempting to overthrow his father and become king. If you remember your Sunday School lesson, Absalom would rise up early in the morning and stand by the city gate, talking to the people and telling them how much better their lives would be if only he were king. The Bible says that Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of

Israel.” He gained enough followers to declare himself King and, when that news reached King David, David had to flee Jerusalem quickly. David was certainly in a precarious position at that time.

Whatever the situation that David was in when he wrote this Psalm, he shares with us his strong response to threat and uncertainty. The Psalm is not a testimony of the pain-free and trouble-free life of David, but a testimony of his strong faith and a proclamation of where he (and we) can find rest in peace when surrounded by the threats and uncertainties of our world. Rest and peace are found in God alone. He is the rock, fortress, and salvation which David had and which we need.

Making such things happen was not easy – either in God procuring them or in us obtaining them. It cost God a lot. Recall the shooting at Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida back in February. There were several heroes in the midst of that tragedy who give us a picture of what God is like. Melissa Falkowski was a journalism and English teacher at the high school who hid 19 students in her classroom closet when she learned that there was an active shooter at the school.

There was Aaron Feis, just an assistant football coach at Douglas High School. Yet, on that fateful day, Aaron stepped in front of students to protect them from the bullets being fired by the assailant. He gave his life that the students might save theirs.

These are actions in the midst of a terrible tragedy which, in some small way, reflect the actions of God in a far more dangerous situation for a far greater number of people. As Melissa hid her students to protect them from the danger from without, so God has done for you and me and all of His people. With uncertainty, danger, and all sorts of evil surrounding us, God hides you in the shadow of his wings as David says in a couple of Psalms before this one. By His power He protects you and by His strength He fights for you.

However, simply being protected or kept safe from the evil in this world is not enough. That from which He protects us and shields us is but the result of the greater problem of sin. We may decry the evil, the violence, the crime, and man’s inhumanity to man but, as bad as these things are, it is our sin of thought, word, and deed – evil done and good left undone – contrary to the Law of God, which are far worse. Our sin against God, not only causes this evil in the world, but also guarantees us an eternity separated from God in the world which is to come.

Yet God, in His great mercy, in sending His son, Jesus, did something about that. Like Aaron who stepped directly in the line of fire to protect innocent students and save their lives, Jesus did that – only against a far greater Foe, for a far greater number of people, and for a far greater danger. Jesus stepped in the line of fire of God’s wrath against your sin. He endured the full measure of God’s anger against your sin when He was nailed to a cross, not only to die physically, but also to endure the pangs of hell. He did it in our place and for our sake. On the cross, Jesus took what would crush you and died in your place.

The only place you can find lasting rest and perpetual peace is in the One who took on your sin and died so that you might be freed from your sin and live. He accomplished that and proved it by rising from the dead to show His victory over sin, death, and the devil himself. Despite the evil swirling around us in the world,

sometimes violently and dangerously, you are safe. Your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ is always with you.

A special demonstration of that closeness is shown in the presence of Jesus in Holy Communion. Here, you are hidden in Jesus' grace, strength, and forgiveness. The world will rage. It may even injure you physically and emotionally. But Jesus, who is Lord over all, is your rock of protection and your salvation from it all.

While we may know that, what we often forget it or don't seem very confident in it. David shows us how to take it. Psalm 62 is different from most Psalms in its structure. Psalms usually describe the bad situation which the writer is experiencing and a prayer to God for help in those situations. Psalm 62 doesn't include a prayer but does make a strong statement of faith and confidence while alluding to a challenging situation.

Psalm 23 is another Psalm like that where there is no prayer or request of God. Psalm 23 simply declares God to be our Good Shepherd and though there might be challenges even to the point of death, God is present through all of the challenges as our good Shepherd. In the same way, Psalm 62 declares God to be our rock and salvation, the One who gives us rest and protection, who quiets our souls. David serves as a witness to God's grace and rescue, His strength and his protection. He is calling out to us from history that we, too, have a good Shepherd. We, too, can rest in God as our rock and our salvation.

David shows this by his use of the word in our text often translated as "rest". When David speaks of rest, he is speaking of something that goes far beyond physical and emotional rest. He uses a less familiar word which is rightly translated in the ESV as "silent" or "silence". In doing so, David is inviting us to stand in the presence of Almighty God, not saying anything and not bringing anything, but in silence receiving the peace that God our rock and salvation gives us no matter what is happening around us.

Sometimes, what is going on around us can be quite evil and harmful. A right standing with God does not mean a life free of trouble and frustration. In fact, it often means more of those things will be in our lives. People can hurt us greatly. David speaks of those who take pleasure and falsehood. These are people who bless with their mouths but inwardly they curse. Those who lie in order to hurt us or destroy our reputation can be quite hurtful or damaging. Those who speak nicely to us, but inwardly are cursing us can be frustrating.

The devil desires us to fall down from our place of honor as children of God. He will challenge us to doubt God's forgiveness and love for us. He will point out to us the evil surrounding us in this world and try to make us think that God is either impotent or evil. We are engaged in a great spiritual battle against a mighty foe, but because of who God is and His commitment to us, we say with David, "For God alone my soul waits in silence, from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken."

Our arch enemy will then like us to wonder if we are worthy of such great love and such great protection. He will try to make us believe that we must merit His love and forgiveness because of all the good which we have done. There is no rest in such

an approach to God. We are constantly wondering whether we've done enough. God invites us into His presence to stand in silence and received from him His love, based on His actions.

David reminds us of one more thing at the close of the text. With all of these great promises of God and the challenging temptations of Satan, David talks to his soul and to us as well, saying, "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."

In a turbulent and frightening world, this is the gift we've been given. We belong to God by virtue of the sacrifice of His Son's life on the cross, a reality made for us individually in our baptism. God is not only our strength and support during times of trouble, but He is also a safe refuge, or hiding place, which we can trust in any and every situation.

We and the people in our community have seen and read about the many heroic rescues during the recent hurricanes and flooding's which resulted from them. We've been moved by the accounts of love and self-sacrifice in these tragedies. But we have a far greater rescue than that. We have been saved from eternal death and hell and have been guaranteed a safe and happy life forever which has been guaranteed by Jesus' own resurrection from the dead. Jesus gives us great confidence and assurance that no matter who attacks us or what is happening around us, we stand before the Father with our soul silent, receiving life abundantly now and salvation forever from Him.

This is good news in the world which is starving for good news. This is our message to enjoy among ourselves. This is the message which we have for the world. Many congregations in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are celebrating and thanking God for the Ministry of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League today.

This is a celebration, not of the ladies involved nor of their accomplishments, but of what God has done through them to bring this message to the world. Through these women collecting their pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters in their mite boxes, God has accomplished much to bring people to the rest he has for them in Christ. Through these women encouraging one another and others to use the gifts God has given them, God has accomplished much to help people enjoy the rest which they have in Christ.

Over the past 76 years of ministry, the LWML has lived through major challenges in our world and country, and even in their own organization. Yet, through all of the challenges and uncertainties the LMWL has placed their trust in God and looked to Him for direction. As a result, many lives of been touched through their work and many people have received rest that comes from our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Therefore, let us be encouraged in our own witness by the witness of the LWML, active in our congregation, in our nation, and throughout the nations of the world. There are people all around us that struggle with insecurity and fear in this fast-changing world. We have true rest and hope to offer them in a God who loves them and gave His Son for them. Let's live in this rest here and share it with others out there. Amen