

Pastor Joe Polzin
Psalm 62:1-8
“The Rest We Share”
Year B – LWML Sunday
September 30, 2018

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

We live in an interesting time. Never before have we experienced such technological advancement. And the rate of change in technology is increasing. Back in the 60s, scientists deemed that the capabilities of computers doubles every 12-18 months, exponentially growing. That means, while the changes in technology may not have been as fast 50 years ago, now we see it getting faster and faster every year. In fact, most agree that today, technology changes faster than we can even adapt to it. Newly released technology becomes obsolete in a matter of months, not years. So, if you haven't gotten your new iPhone X yet, don't worry, they'll probably have a new one tomorrow.

But of course this affects more than computers and cell phones. It impacts how we live each day. We are more connected now than we ever had been. Social media connects us with people around the world, and across a variety of devices unlike ever before. The 24-hour news cycle gives us instant updates and opinions on whatever is going on around the globe. Security measures, both physically and digitally, have to constantly adapt to the new abilities and new threats that come up every day. Not all change is bad, of course. A lot of good can come from change and improvement. But we can also lose a lot in such a rapidly changing world.

We have unlimited access to news that increases our level of fear and uncertainty. We fear for our own safety, or the safety of our loved ones, and are unsure about our future. Cyber-bullying, church and school shootings, terrorist acts, they all seem like they're getting closer and closer to our own backyard. Instead of the world moving closer in progress, peace, and love, it seems the world is moving further away in hatred, division, and ultimately destruction.

So, where do we as Christians stand in all this? What's our place in this changing world? One thing is for sure, although it may be tempting, we cannot circle the wagons, hunker down, and isolate ourselves from the world. That's not the charge God gives us. His Church is to be in the world, proclaiming the Gospel to the world, and sharing a light that it desperately lacks. We may not be of the world, but we are in the world, despite how insecure that might make us feel.

King David was familiar with the insecurities of this world. He wrote about it in our Old Testament reading, in Psalm 62. He was under a yet another attack from an enemy or many enemies who wanted to overthrow him as king. There are hints in Psalm 62 that this psalm was written when David was later in life. He says, “How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?” One does not initially build a wall or fence to be leaning or tottering, of course. It happens over time. Which leads us to believe that David is referring to himself in his old age, having weathered many assaults and attacks that have worn him down.

This could be in reference to the time when his own son, Absalom, betrayed David. You might remember, Absalom would rise up early in the morning and stand by the city gate, engaging people and telling them how their lives would be better if he were king instead of David. The Bible tell us that Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (2 Samuel 15:6).

And after doing this for four years, he gathered his supporters at Hebron and declared himself king.

When this news came to King David, he had to flee Jerusalem quickly. And if it weren't for God's Spirit moving Absalom to believe bad advice not to pursue his father right away, David might not have survived this rebellion. Certainly it left David in a very dangerous situation, like a leaning wall or a tottering fence, about to crash.

Whatever situation David was in when he wrote this Psalm, his response to these threats and uncertainties in his life is noteworthy. He was enduring changes in his own life that were not for the better, but for the worse. And David responds not with fear, but with faith. For peace and rest, he looked to God. "For God alone my soul waits in silence," David says; "from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken" (62:1-2).

Isn't it interesting how David puts that? "For God alone my soul waits in silence." The word for "silence" there is a word that's similar yet different than the typical word for "rest." It goes beyond just physical rest, or emotional rest. It means to be completely still and silent. It invokes the image of one standing before the Almighty God, not saying anything, not bringing anything, but in silence purely receiving the peace that God our rock and salvation gives us, no matter what may be raging around us. David says he waits in silence for God, because he knows, no matter what happens, no matter what he could possibly do or say, his salvation comes from God alone.

That's quite a thing to say, especially with how uncertain David's changing world was. David says his enemies, like his son, Absalom, have plans to "attack" and "batter him," "to thrust him down from his high position," that they "take pleasure" in lying to him. He describes their actions as outwardly blessing David, assuring him falsely of peace, but inwardly cursing him and wanting to destroy him (62:3-4). But despite all that, David realizes his reality does not rest even in their hands, no matter what they might threaten. His reality, his future comes only from God.

And so David continues. He reiterates what was said in verse 1, but now he is not simply offering a faithful declaration, but rather he is faithfully invoking his own soul – speaking directly to it in verse 5, and issuing it a command – "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence." He's telling his soul to rest in God.

We too have enemies all around. Not only enemies who threaten our existence in our earthly lives – the dangers and risks of this world – but also enemies who threaten our existence in our eternal lives. It's constant that Satan is battling against us. Our own sin topples us, as we actively rebel against God by what we do and what we don't do. The sins of others cut us down and make us weary. This created world, under the curse of sin, is very evidently broken with things like war, violence, terror, natural disaster, disease, and death.

We are mortal, either our lives are cut short by sickness or tragedy, or we endure long-suffering into old age. It doesn't take long in this world to feel like *we* are leaning walls or tottering fences, about to come crashing down.

But just as David spoke in faith directly to his soul, one who is greater than David came to speak directly to our soul and to give us faith. It's the obedient Son who says to us, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find *rest* for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus doesn't promise a life without affliction from the attacks of sin, death, and the devil. After all, not even he had a life free from such things. But what he does promise us is rest,

true rest for our souls. Rest because he took our sin, he took the accusations the devil makes against us, he took the power that death had over us, and he took them to the cross. And there he gave himself up for our sake, so that we no longer have to fear the things that jeopardize our lives, either here on earth or in eternity. Jesus removed the fear of those burdens from us, so that we may know what is easy and light. So that we too may approach him in silence, and purely receive the salvation that he delivers to us. Jesus is our rock and salvation, no matter what may be raging around us in this changing world.

As we sang in our sermon hymn, Jesus is our “firm foundation.” Like David, we can trust because of what Christ has done for us, we shall not be greatly shaken. Our salvation is secure. And that allows us to approach this lifetime differently. We need not be afraid, or have to go into hiding. We are able to live right in the midst of a *restless* and *changing* world, and *rest* in the *unchanging* Word of God. In fact, God uses us, then, to bring such rest and comfort to others. And it’s what the LWML has been doing for 76 years.

Many congregations in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, including our own, are celebrating and thanking God for the ministry of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League, the official women’s auxiliary group of the Missouri Synod. For 76 years the LWML has been supporting mission work nationally and internationally. If you aren’t sure of what the LWML does or is involved in, perhaps use this opportunity today to find out more. Perhaps attend the next fall rally for our zone, which will take place in Kalkaska on October 13th. Or speak to our church’s LWML group today to learn what important work they are participating in.

Since its founding in 1942, which was right in the middle of World War II, the LWML has lived through major challenges in our world, in our country, and in our church. Through all of these changes and uncertainties, the LWML has demonstrated how to place our trust in God and look to Him for direction. Using the example of the widow’s mite, who gave all she had in a life-changing offering in the Bible, the LWML has supported missions in seemingly small ways like collecting loose change in small boxes, but by such dedicated efforts, have accomplished big things. Lives have been changed because of their commitment, and by their work, many have received the salvation and the rest that our Lord and Savior offers them.

We can be encouraged by these examples of faith, by the LWML, by King David. People in this world are stuck struggling to keep up in a fast-paced and changing world, with no solid ground to stand on. We have something to offer them that they could never find on their own. We have rest, silence, and peace in knowing the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. And so we reach out to the world right where we are, we show them love, and we tell them about His salvation.

We need not be fearful that we aren’t properly equipped, or we don’t know what to say, or we don’t have anything that could possibly make a difference in someone’s life. We have Jesus, who has been given to us. And we have the Holy Spirit, who lives and works through us. That’s all we could possibly need. And no matter what happens, we know our salvation is secure. We cannot be shaken. We now have the privilege to watch what God can do through us as He brings more and more people to the rest we share in His Son, Jesus Christ. In his name. **Amen.**

And now may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. **Amen.**