

Sunday, July 19, 2026 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 44: 6-8

6 - Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

7 - Who is like me? Who has announced from of old the things to come?

8 - Do not fear or be afraid. Is there any god besides me?
There is no other rock; I know not one.

Many scholars believe that Isaiah chapter 40 and following were written two hundred years after Isaiah 1-39 – close to the end of the Babylonian captivity in 538 BC.

After the destruction of the Temple and in exile in Babylon the Jewish people had to figure out how to keep the faith alive under very different circumstances and in a foreign land. Some scholars believe that it was during the Babylonian captivity that the synagogue system was developed.

The Jewish people faced the same challenge after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. How do you keep the faith alive when you no longer have your central meeting place?

During the COVID shutdown every congregation struggled with the question – How do you keep the congregation and its ministry alive when you cannot use the building?

When in your life have you most struggled with the question – How do I keep my faith alive?

Psalms 86:11-17 – a Psalm of David

11 - Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

What part of God's way do you most want Him to teach you? Are you receptive? Do you have an undivided heart?

12 - I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart.

*Do you give thanks to God with your whole heart?
If not, what keeps you holding back? What could you do about it?*

13 - Great is your steadfast love towards me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

15 - You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

When and how have you experienced these attributes and actions of God?

17 - Show me a sign of your favor.

When and how has God shown you a sign of His favor?

Romans 8: 12-25

15-17 - When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

What does it mean to you to be able to call God "Abba! Father!"

It is very unfortunate how some people today resist calling God Father. Jesus called God Father. The apostle Paul called God Father. Those who did not have a good relationship with their earthly father and/or were abused and/or mistreated by other men in their lives need to experience the loving care of a Heavenly Father.

Fathers' Day sermon on "The Ideal Father"

18 - The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

How is that verse especially comforting and reassuring for you?

20-21 - Creation was subjected to futility (and) will be set free from its bondage to decay.

Even creation suffered consequences from human rebellion and sin.

Genesis 3: 17 – Cursed is the ground because of you.

How does the foolishness, short-sightedness, selfishness, and self-centeredness of the human race negatively impact creation?

23 - We, who have the first fruits of the Spirit.

Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43 - The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

For the parable of the four kinds of soil, Jesus took the initiative to offer an explanation. For this parable, the disciples asked Him for an explanation.

What are some things that you are glad that God has made clear to you?

What are some things that you wish God would make clearer to you?

25 - While everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat.

Are you sufficiently aware that the devil is your enemy?

1 Peter 5: 8 – Keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

How does our enemy, the devil, sow discord, strife, and weeds among the wheat – and will continue to do so until the end?