

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the book of the Prophet Isaiah, the fifty-fifth chapter, beginning at the tenth verse:

"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. ¹² "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Heavenly Father these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

The power of God's Word is inherent in who He is and what He does for us. Think of the beginning of the world; God spoke and everything came into being... and it came out of nothing. Before God spoke there was nothing and now that He spoke there is everything. I do not think that any of us can speak and bring something into existence.

Or consider when Jesus spoke. When Jesus opened His mouth He was able to cure people of leprosy and even raise the dead. Think about His final night alive in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the guards came out to arrest, Jesus He spoke the words "I am He" and we are told that the men had to withdraw and fell to the ground. What a powerful word!

Our God has a very powerful word. It is a word which can create and can destroy. It is a word that can bring life and a word that can bring death. God's word is the most powerful word... and it always accomplishes its objective.

And yet, possibly the most powerful of God's words is the almighty, the incarnate word, Jesus Christ. As John tells us, ***"In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God."*** Jesus Christ is God's word, Jesus Christ is the word and as our text tells us today, ***the word of God, Jesus Christ, shall accomplish what God pleases.***

Hurry, which of the ten commandments deals explicitly with the word of God and what it should mean to us? Nothing on the top of your head? Consider the third commandment. The third commandment says, ***"You shall keep the day of rest holy."*** Wait... I thought we were talking about the word of God not the day of rest. Aha, but as Luther tells us, what does this mean? ***"We should fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn***

it." Thus in our own catechism, in the proper understanding of God's word, there is a commandment for us about God's word. That commandment tells us that we are to hear God's word and learn it, the explanation tells us that we are not to despise God's word and the preaching of it. And we must ask ourselves, "How am I doing at this?"

Do I actively seek out God's Word in matters of this life and especially in matters of the life to come, or do I turn to other people or my own feelings? Do I willingly and readily hear and read the word of God, or at times is it more of an afterthought or burden? Do I seek to learn God's word (which does include memorizing) and do I seek to have my children and grandchildren learn it also, or is that the pastor's job when it comes to catechism and maybe then I'll help if I need to?

You see, it is very easy for us to say that we keep the commandment... but we don't. God's word tells us to have no other gods and this commandment we break continually. God's word tells us to not murder which includes not

hating our neighbor and we fail at this also. God's word tells us that we should not covet anything that is not ours and yet we cannot go a day without wanting something that someone else has... and we've even named it, "keeping up with the Joneses." Yes, ignoring God's word is something that we are great at, though we may not like to admit it.

And though we are not perfect children when it comes to hearing God's word and loving and learning God's word... God's word is still a very powerful force. You see, God's word does not derive its power from how well you follow it, it derives its power from God Himself. God's word is powerful because our God is all-powerful. God's word will work and accomplish its goal... no matter how many times we get in its way.

It reminds me of the explanations of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. Especially the fourth petition, ***"Give us this day our daily bread. What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that***

He would lead us to acknowledge this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving."

God will give us what we need... even when we fail to ask for it and seek it from His hand. God is the one who is doing this, and just like fulfilling our need, God's word also accomplishes what He wants it to regardless of how much we get in the way.

Consider if you will the word, Jesus Christ. Jesus came into this world, born of a woman, born in a stable. He did not come to fanfare and pomp, but to lowliness. No one was looking for the word of God to come in this way and yet He did. Jesus Christ also lived a life of suffering and pain. His family, friends, and disciples abandoned Him; the people of His day wanted to kill Him; the government falsely accused Him and put Him to death. Before Jesus' death, His disciple Peter tried to get in His way and stop the word of God, Jesus Christ, from dying... and Peter also tried to prevent the word of God from being accomplished. And when Jesus was hanging on the cross dying, He said His final word, ***"Tetelestai!"*** Which means "It is now and

always has been finished” God’s word, Jesus Christ, spoke God’s word to say that His task was now and always has been accomplished... and it was accomplished with no help from us. God’s word came to fulfillment despite the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ intentions of man. God’s word was fulfilled because God made it work.

Just like the rain and snow that come into our world water the ground and so make farming, and thus life, possible; so the God of word comes into our lives to make our lives possible.

In preparing for this sermon and realizing the absolute strength of God’s word one example came to mind more than any other: the “Blessed Inconsistency.” If you know what the blessed inconsistency is, good job; if not, I pray that you learn it today. The blessed inconsistency says that heaven will not be filled with only CELC Lutherans. The blessed inconsistency tells us that wherever the word of God is preached, and not even in its full truth and purity, just preached, it is accomplishing God’s plan. When the gospel of Christ is being

preached in a church, God is working on the hearts of those who hear that word.

The blessed inconsistency also is the reason why we, as Christians, do not sheep steal. That is, we do not go to the Roman Catholic church and try to convert people. That is why we don’t go to the Presbyterian church and try to convert people. That is why when we canvass and someone says that they have a church we do not press them on joining our church. The blessed inconsistency tells us, that though people are in churches which do not teach the pure and unadulterated word of God they are still hearing the gospel of Christ, and so long as they hear that gospel then God’s word is working and God’s work is being accomplished. It is being accomplished in spite of those teachers who are proclaiming falsehood... because the word of God is being proclaimed and it is stronger than any man.

Dear friends in Christ, the word of God is one of the most powerful things you will ever encounter in your life. The word of God is that word which God spoke to bring an entire

world: the universe, the earth, the animals, the plants, the water, the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, and the people, into existence. And God spoke and all of this appeared, it appeared out of nothing because God's word is powerful because it is God's word.

The word of God is also our Savior, Jesus Christ. The incarnate word, the word made flesh, came from the Father and lived, suffered, and died for all of us. Jesus accomplished all of this in spite of resistance from people on every side. Jesus accomplished this through His word. Through Jesus' word He healed illnesses, He forgave sins, and He raised the dead... which is exactly what He does for us when we have faith in all that He has done. He will heal our illnesses, He has forgiven our sins, and He will raise us from the dead... and all of this He will do with no help from us.

And the word of God is powerful regardless of the one wielding it. Whether it is a faithful pastor who is proclaiming the word of God or whether it is a heathen who is only pretending, God's word will accomplish what God wants.

Just like our baptisms and the Lord's Supper... they are powerful not because of the man performing them, but because of the word of God that is attached to them.

It is truly amazing how powerful the word of God is. It works in spite of us... and it works for us. God uses His word to protect us. God's word can condemn us. God uses His word to correct us. God uses His word to forgive us. God uses His word to raise us to everlasting life. God uses His word, because His word accomplishes what He wills.

Thank God that He has used His word to do everything for me. Thank God that He has given me His word to lead my life and to be my Savior. And thank God that His word always accomplishes what He wants... especially when we see the word of God as our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.