

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 July 2026

Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0:00] If you don't like sarcasm, you might not fully appreciate our Old Testament reading this morning from Isaiah chapter 57. In the very opening words of Isaiah chapter 57, verse 13, we heard the Lord through the prophet Isaiah say, When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you, but the wind will carry them all away.

A breath will take them. If we were putting this in today's context, it would be like the Lord saying, When you pray, pray that your cars, your houses, or your money save you in your time of need. Let them take care of you. That sarcasm might sound a bit cutting, but it's very true. Oftentimes, we depend on our own resources to find meaning and joy in life, and it's only after broken relationships, a devastating crash in the stock market, or our own health scare do we then seek the Lord.

By way of context, the book of Isaiah primarily focuses on Israel, that is, the northern kingdom's demise that came about after their defeat, their humiliation by the Assyrians.

But in this portion of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 57, Isaiah now, it's talking about the southern kingdom.

[1:40] He's prophesying to the southern kingdom, Judah, and their future devastation, which did come by way of the Babylonians. Both northern and southern kingdom would fall.

Why? Because of their idolatry. Putting their hope and their faith in something other than their God. The theme for Israel, Judah, and for all of us is simply this.

Trusting in anyone or anything else other than the Lord to save us brings only sorrow, heartache, and devastation.

Thankfully, our Lord does not merely make sarcastic comments and then leaves his people to their own demise. Listen as I go on to read or reread what the Lord says to his people here in Isaiah chapter 57.

And this is for all of us, not just for Israel and Judah. For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy.

[2:53] I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit. To revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry. For the spirit would fail before me and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness, I was angry and struck him.

I hid and was angry. And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and I will heal him. And I will also lead him and restore comforts to him and to his mourners.

The Lord allows us to choose whom we will serve. But he is always desiring. He's always calling for us to be reconciled to him.

He calls us to repent of our sins. That is, to turn away from all of our false gods. And to put our faith solely in him. He calls us to be contrite.

[4:04] What does that mean? It means to be sorry for our rebellion. He calls us to humble ourselves. And the promise of our God and creator is that he will heal us.

He will lead us. He will not forsake us. Now, you might be doubting these words. I know there are times that I do.

But our relationship with our God is not dependent on how we feel at a particular moment in time. Feelings come and go. To be blunt, I haven't felt or had some type of experience or encounter with God since I was a young lad.

And even then, I didn't hear any voices and I didn't see any visions. So if you feel less spiritual based on your lack of experience or your lack of feelings, join your priest and your bishop.

I was just talking to Bishop Chad the other day and he said the exact same thing. Our relationship with God, despite circumstances or what can seem like spiritual deadness, is not based upon our gut.

[5:24] Our relationship is dependent upon God's word, not upon our changing emotions. And here in Isaiah chapter 57, as well as throughout all of scripture, we hear the Lord's word to us.

God's word is outside of us.

And it comes to us by the work of the Holy Spirit through physical means, which we call sacraments. So no matter what the voices say in your head, God has already spoken.

And his promise is one of love and forgiveness to those who seek to repent and to return to him.

God's word is sure and true.

You see, friends, the heart of the Christian faith is simply this. This is the crux of the Christian faith.

And that is God took upon flesh. God became man to reconcile us to the father by seeking and saving the lost.

[6:42] The lost includes all of us. And the word of God incarnate comes to us now. Just as God came in physical human flesh, he comes now in physical means outside of us.

God is near. He's ever present among us, even if we do not hear a voice, even if we do not feel him.

The problem is that we, like Israel and Judah, seek false gods to fill the void.

Those gods are money, a life of wanting what others have, or even in elevating others in a codependent relationship, thinking that they will bring us happiness.

They will save us. Only God, in Christ Jesus, can save you. And that's why Jesus came to this earth.

[7:46] The whole point. He came for you. He came offering his own life so that you might have life in him.

That is why we hear those comfortable words prior to receiving our Lord's body and blood each and every Sunday. Come unto me, all ye that travailed or heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

So God loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he is the propitiation. He is the covering for our sins.

Friends, the Lord is not some distant deity who takes a hands-off approach to us. He came to heal us.

[8:57] He came to love us. He came to give us life, eternal life. So with that in mind, listen to the very last words of our reading from Isaiah 57 this morning.

Our Lord says, Peace, peace to him who is far off, and to him who is near, says the Lord, I will heal him.

You might think the Lord can't love me because of my devious and perverse past. The Lord can never love me because of my selfish actions, bad decisions.

The Lord can never love me because I've rebelled against him. And the Lord says to you, Peace, peace to you.

I will heal you. Therefore, dear friends, come and receive the life and love at this altar.

[10:02] Come and receive the God who came in human flesh, who now comes to you and bread and wine in order to give you life. Friends, you are loved.

Come then, and let us all repent of our false gods, anything we put before God. And let us put our trust in Jesus Christ.

Believe his word, rather than listening to the contradicting voices in your own head. Amen. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.