

Pentecost 19 -October19 , 2014
Text: Isaiah 45:1-7
Theme: "God's Use of the Ungodly"

People tend to like to divide the world into "us" and "them." It makes life easier when there are clear bad guys and clear good guys in our world. Have you seen the scare videos that the Evangelicals have put out on Islam. Christians had better work hard to convert the Muslims because they're having kids and we're not so they're going to take over and then what? Huh? Then what? Then God will still be Lord and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church. That's what. We have no need to worry about Islam, Mormonism or any other man-made religion.

We only have one thing to fear in this world. God. God is omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, immutable. God alone is to be feared and we happen to be the ones he loves. We are the ones for whom he gave his only son to die on the cross. As they say in Chicago, we're connected. Just trust in God. Render unto Caesar what is Caesars but above all, remember that God is the one who put Caesar where he is and God is the one who has marked us as his children with Holy Baptism.

In our Old Testament reading, Cyrus, the King of Persia, did not just happen to amass enough wealth and power to conquer Babylon and pave the way for the Israelites to return to the Promised Land. Have you ever noticed that we often act as though God only controls

the lives of the Godly but Cyrus, a complete heathen, worse than any Muslim ever thought about being, was cherry picked by God to be the one to conquer Babylon. He could have chosen one of the Israelite rulers to do this, but he didn't.

Throughout history, we see the same two things cause spiritual corruption over and over again: money and power. Sometimes people complain when preachers talk about money but you'll like it today because I'm telling you that it is a great blessing that we don't have any. Jesus says many things about the horrific danger of money and power. He told the rich young ruler to go sell all that he had. He said it was easier for the camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. He said the love of money is the root of all evil. It is God's gift to us that, he often keeps money and power away from his people. Money and power often lead to destruction.

Look what happened to the Greek and Roman empires. How much has been written about the corruption that even now is still plaguing the Roman Catholic church, the wealthiest church on earth by far? So God chose Cyrus, a complete heathen to accomplish his plan.

Our goal in this life is not to beat down all the unbelievers. Neither is our goal to hide from them in fear so that they don't

corrupt us. Our goal is to know them, build relationships with them and find a way to proclaim the Gospel to them. Whether we are living in a Christian nation or a non Christian nation, our goal is the same. All of us would prefer a Christian nation because it is far more pleasant, but God is in control of that. We are only in charge of proclaiming the Gospel. Christians love to complain about there being no prayer in schools. Christians love to point to Roe vs Wade as the beginning of the moral collapse of this nation. Christians love to whisper that President Obama is secretly a Muslim. Those are not our chief concerns.

Our chief concern is to proclaim the Gospel and perhaps we ought to concern ourselves more with our calling and less with whining about the condition of the mission field on which we have been placed. We had it easier when everything in life was based on Christian morals but that brief oasis in the world is behind us now. 1950 is more than half a century gone and we have to face reality. We are Christians of the 21st Century and this is our ballgame.

Now we have real work to do. Remember that God is in control. There is no such thing as Allah. Buddah was a real person, but he perverted God's law and led people to believe that they could live perfect lives. Islam and Hinduism are religions based in human fantasy and dead leaders. Our God, on the other had is alive and

well. Get to work. Rejoice in ungodliness all around you. Our God is the master of all and he is using the ungodly today, just as he used King Cyrus, to pave the way for our work. We need to get to it and stop whining.

Jesus looked at the coin and said,

“Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s.” Caesar is God’s tool. He led a world to peace, a world that became the perfect seedbed for the birth of Christianity. Be never afraid of Caesar. God rules all the earth and he is Lord of Church. We have nothing to fear.