

*Study & Preaching Notes*

*Epiphany 2- Year C*  
*Sunday, January 14, 2007*

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**Isaiah 62:1-5**

*For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.*

*2The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. 3You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 4You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. 5For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.*

Most scholars assign these verses to “Third Isaiah”, dated after the return from exile, this passage promises a glorious restoration for God's people in Jerusalem. For Jews who find themselves defeated and deflated, these are gospel words.

There is hope, there is anticipation...

The Lord will establish Jerusalem. This is a certainty because it is not dependent on the people, but on God who declares that it will happen. This declaration of what God will do in Jerusalem is an encouragement to the people who might be feeling despondent. The hope is that they will begin to rebuild Jerusalem in order for it to be a sign of hope for others who might still be in exile and who are reluctant to return because the city is still in ruins and living conditions are hard.

(Anna Grant-Henderson)

This passage reminds us of the nature and function of the church: We are the Lord's delight, an entity which radiates his glory to this broken world. (Bryan Findlayson)

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. 4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5and there are varieties of services, but*

*the same Lord; 6and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.*

God is at work within each of us blessings His church with various gifts. No one gift is placed above any other. One Spirit. One Church. One Faith. Finally [vs. 10] Paul mentions speaking in tongues and its interpretation. This describes a phenomenon which was present in some early Christian communities (and exists also in other religions) in which people spoke, but not in a way recognized as belonging to their own language. Some think it meant that people spoke in another language: Luke assumes this on the day of Pentecost. Paul seems to focus not on a language miracle, but a form of expression which results from the impact of the Spirit on people and whose meaning needs to be interpreted; otherwise it will not be understood. He, himself, speaks in tongues (14:18). His discussion in 1 Corinthians is very interesting. On the one hand, he has no doubt that this manifestation is a gift of the Spirit, but, on the other hand, he qualifies it significantly. He treats it as a low priority. He also suggests that it may be abused. It can be noise nuisance (13:1)! This indicates that he does not simply equate speaking in tongues with an activity of the Spirit. It can, in fact, be an act contrary to God's will and the common good. (W. Loader)

How do we know what our "gifts" are?

"In what ways do we limit the development and exercise of spiritual abilities within our congregation?" Are we stifling the work of the Spirit?

### **John 2:1-11**

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and*

*then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

“Six stone jars are standing there full of water. They are transformed to become vats of wine. Minds sensitive to numbers and their symbolism would have noted the number six, falling short of the perfect, seven. The well versed Jewish Christians of John’s community would have known why the jars were of stone: they cannot contract impurity and so are eminently suitable for holding water used to purify the hands before eating. Such rites are often reported in John as common practice (see later the practice of immersion of pilgrims which forms the background of the foot washing story of John 13). They are never ridiculed. But they belong to the past and have now been replaced by a new order of grace, which that old order of grace foreshadowed (see 1:16-17). So the water has become wine, the old temple, a new one in the person of Jesus. That ‘leaving behind’ is also part of the story’s theme.” (W. Loader)

“...in the Cana story, we can understand the wine that Jesus provides as a face-saving gift to the groom and his family or we can look for a deeper meaning. On some occasions, Jesus gives a discourse (a speech) that explains his signs/works, but not at Cana. The lack of a discourse means that interpretations of the sign at Cana are more diverse than they might otherwise be. We might understand the steward's comment in verse 10 to refer to the "inferior wine" of Jewish law and the "good wine" of Christ's grace — or we might understand the abundance of the wine that Jesus provides to reflect the abundance of his grace — or both.” (R. Donovan)

As a church, how do we know when “our hour has come” for a particular project or ministry?

How do we live by God’s time?

"The Lord has hundreds of gallons of the finest joy ready to release upon our communities but we must be ready to say; 'Whatever he says to do, you do it!' Are we ready to act on what we are asking for?" (J. Goebel)