

“It Never Fails”

Text: Isaiah 55:10-13

The word of God has great power. We know that from the very beginning. That word of God created the world we live in. God said, “Let there be light.” Moses tells us that there was then light. (Genesis 1:3) There were also the other parts of our created world. (Genesis 1:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26) Psalm 148 summarizes that when it says: “For he commanded and they were created.” (Psalm 148:5)

When God’s own Son Jesus Christ came into the world he spoke that word again. In fact, St. John gives him the name “The Word” in the first chapter of his gospel. Looking at the ministry of Jesus we see that he-gave life with a word (John 11:43,44); destroyed it with a word (Matthew 21:19); cast out demons (Mark 9:25, 26); healed diseases (Matthew 12:13); calmed the storm (Mark 4:39); and caused his enemies to fall to the ground (John 18:6)

As we have that entire picture in mind, is there any question as to whether God’s word can be trusted or not? I remember reading a comment from C. F. W. Walther about God’s word. He said that the people of his day would defend the inerrancy of Scripture to the death, but that they seldom trusted what it had to say. The good news that God gives to us in this text is that his word always works. It works because he makes sure that it does. He gives us a beautiful example from nature, one that we know well. As he sees to the rain and snow, in a greater way he goes with his word and makes sure that-

IT NEVER FAILS

I. God's promises are sure

II. God's word serves his purpose

I.

A. Guarantees are important to us. I heard a man talking the other day. In his younger years he did much business with a particular bank in town. He was in need of an unsecured loan. Since he was a regular customer, he could be trusted with the loan and as I heard him say to the man he was talking to, that it was done with a handshake. This is not a comment on banking today, lest I loose my happy home, but on the trustworthiness of the man. They knew he was good for his money.

Everything is not as it appears however. The other night we bought a lamp to replace a broken one that we had in our family room. It looked fine, except it would not stand level. My wife attempted to straighten it out. It seemed fine, but as she walked away, it soon came crashing down to the floor.

Our lives are like that at time, and all seems to be lost. Yet God is not limited. There are wonderful examples in the Bible from Gideon, to David, to the boy with the loaves and fishes. God can accomplish what he desires out of very little. Certainly Gideon wondered how he would defeat the mighty Midianites (Judges 6:11ff); King Saul wondered how the boy David could face the giant Goliath (I Samuel 17:33); Jesus multiplied those meager supplies to feed the 5,000 (John 6:1ff)

B. In the verses preceding our text, God says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8, 9) That is the message of forgiveness that God brings to us for the

sake of his Son, your Savior Jesus Christ. It doesn't make sense to us. Our desire is that we do something for it. How could God simply forgive us for the sake of his Son?

God always keeps his promises to us. Our world of today requires guarantees and warranties so that products will perform and we will be protected. It also gives a certain safety net to the manufacturer. We are surprised from time to time when companies go above and beyond what they are required to do. That is a pleasant surprise in our world of today.

God's promises always exceed our expectations. They are that way because he operates by his grace in our lives. His promises do not depend upon our faithfulness, but rather upon his goodness. His promises are always sure as we find them in his word.

II.

A. In order to prove his point, God gives us an example from nature in the first two verses of our text: "For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." I have shared with you that this is my favorite Bible passage.

When I was in the last year of the seminary 30 years ago, we were studying this text in a class I was taking. That winter, Ft. Wayne, Indiana had 60+ inches of snow. When spring arrived, lawns were as green as they could be. That fact brought this truth home to me. God is in charge of nature. Even though snow and rain, yes-even floods occur, he is in control and he uses this moisture to produce what he desires. Our gospel lesson for today tells us the same thing, using a metaphor from nature. God's word, the seed, produces God's desired result.

B. A farmer needed a hired hand. After trying several workers who did not meet his expectations, he hired the man whose lone qualification was, “I can sleep at night.” The farmer was running out of options and so he hired the man. That night there was a terrific thunderstorm. The farmer awoke, ran to the hired man’s room but could not wake him. He muttered, “I’ll take care of him in the morning!” The farmer went into the driving rain only to find the barn doors securely closed, the haystack well covered, and the tractor put away in the shed. There was nothing left for him to do but return to his house and go back to bed. He then understood what the hired man meant by saying, “I can sleep at night.”

You can sleep at night too! God always keeps his promises to you. His word is filled with assurances for you of your salvation in Jesus Christ. That same word guides you in all conditions of life. It points out your sins and your failures, but also speaks of the free forgiveness that you have in your Savior Jesus Christ.

Verses 12 and 13 speak of the joy of God’s people. In the midst of despair there would be hope, as the people would return from the Babylonian captivity. That certainly would be a time of great rejoicing for them. This was a promise that God had made to his people and like all the other promises he has made it would be kept.

As we look at this descriptive illustration from nature of the rain and the snow, we know the conclusion we can draw. God’s word serves his purposes in our lives and can always be trusted by us. It also has great power and does the work he desires. It is proclaimed from this pulpit, taught in the classroom and shared in the mission field. We believe the word of God and all its promises. It is guaranteed; it never fails. In Jesus name. Amen.