Sermon on Isaiah 62: 1 – 5 – God Gives Us Reason To Celebrate!

“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”

There are some things in life that we just can’t keep quiet about. A new job or a promotion at work! A young couple recently engaged! Parents expecting a child! Your team playing in the championship game! These are some of the things we get excited about! These are some of the things that we celebrate! In our text for today we see that God Gives Us Reason To Celebrate!

In fact, you could say that, I. God Can’t Keep Quiet About Us! II. May We Never Keep Quiet About God?

During the Season of Epiphany, we have reason to celebrate. The good news that Jesus is the Light of the World! The good news that Jesus is the Savior of all people! One might say that it’s too bad that the Season of Epiphany comes during a time of the year when we often have a hard time celebrating. The excitement of Christmas and New Year’s is over. Lots of cold and dark and cloudy days yet to come. It’s hard to get motivated. It’s hard to get excited. It’s hard to celebrate.

A couple of weekends ago, I had the opportunity to conduct a wedding in Wisconsin. For the most part, it was a cold and cloudy weekend. It got dark outside by late afternoon. Gloomy, doomy, dark, and dreary! Not whatsoever! Maybe on the outside, but definitely not on the inside! People were dressed in their best! Bride and groom, family and friends, food and drink, music and dancing! There was a wedding celebration going on! The kind of celebration that Jesus and his disciples found in Cana. The kind of celebration that God describes in our text. The kind of celebration we see often in Scripture where Jesus is pictured as the groom and we are the bride. It’s a beautiful picture when you think about what we deserve because of our sins. There’s an old saying that goes, “always a bridesmaid, never a bride.” It’s a way of saying that a person comes close, but never achieves what they really desire. On our own, we could never come close to being the bride of Christ. On our own, we could never hope to take our place at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb in heaven.

There are some things in life that we just can’t keep quiet about. There are some things in life things that we should keep quiet about. Gossip. Rumors. Slander. Talking about people behind their backs. Saying things that tear people down rather than build them up. As an old saying goes, “if you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” Sinful thoughts that lead to sinful words that lead to hurt feelings. These are the kinds of things that should be kept to ourselves. Better yet, these are the kinds of things that should be confessed to God as part of our daily lives of repentance.

“Always a bridesmaid, never a bride.” Because of our sins, we don’t deserve to be either, rather we deserve to be cast aside, desolate and deserted, here on earth and for all eternity in hell.

That’s what God’s people were dealing with at the time of the prophet Isaiah. They had it all and they took it for granted. God had been so faithful to them. God had blessed them in so many ways. They were God’s children. They had the promise of the Savior. God had been nothing but good and loving and perfect in every way, shape, and form. But the bride wasn’t happy in that relationship. She felt there were too many demands, too many rules. She wanted her freedom so she started looking elsewhere for happiness. She fell out of love with God and fell in love with the false gods of this world. Temptation has a way of making sin look fun, but in the end, it leaves only shame and regret. How could she? How could we?

Notice the love God has for us and for all people in our text. He tells us, “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”

For those dwelling in the darkness of sin, a light has dawned. The Light of Jesus who tells us, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” To give us the light of life, Jesus came into our sin darkened world. To give us the light of life, Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn’t and haven’t. To give us the light of life, you could say that this light was snuffed out on Good Friday. As the world was covered in darkness, the wrath of God was unleashed on his One and Only Son. He suffered the punishment that should have been ours.
He suffered and died to forgive our sins. He rose again from the grave to give us the light of life here on earth and for all eternity in heaven. The marriage we could never hope to be a part of on our own, became ours in Christ. He laid down his life for us, and in so doing, he made us his bride. As he ascended into heaven, he promised that he would come back to take us to be with him and all believers at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. Perfect weather, family, friends, food and drink, music and dancing, worship and praise! Sound exciting? God’s excited about you being there!

He’s done everything to make sure it happens. He’s given you the gift of salvation. He’s given you the wedding garments of His righteousness. He’s also given you a new name. As a bride takes on the name of her husband in marriage, so too God has given you his name. He tells us this through the prophet Isaiah, “I have called you by name; you are mine.” Baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Triune God adopted us into his family. He gives us all the blessings that come in His name. In our text, he calls us “Hephzibah and Beulah.”

I didn’t check, but I’m pretty sure those names didn’t make the top baby names of 2012. I’m not sure if those names have ever been on any such list. They might not be very beautiful sounding, but they have beautiful meanings behind them. Hephzibah means, “my delight is in her.” Beulah means, “married.” Married to Christ who delights in you. God tells us in our text, “you will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God….the Lord will take delight in you…your God rejoices over you.”

God can’t keep quiet about us! May we never keep quiet about God! May God forgive us for the times we have. May God strengthen us to joyfully share him with all people! God wants all people to be with him in heaven but the only way to get there is through a relationship with Jesus. Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Do you know people who don’t have a relationship with Jesus? Do you know people who could use a closer relationship with Jesus? Do you know people who once confessed a relationship with Jesus on the day of their confirmation but have since walked away? Even though it may seem like they’ve given up on Jesus, Jesus hasn’t given up on them. Remind them of that. Remind them that they have a loving Savior watching and waiting and wanting to welcome them back with open arms.

Maybe you aren’t comfortable talking to people about Jesus face to face. In our second lesson for today, we heard how the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people, all of which serve to build and strengthen the body of Christ. Maybe you get tongue tied when you try to talk to people about Jesus? How about using that tongue to seal an envelope with a hand-written note and invitation to worship with us? Maybe your feet can no longer walk up and down the aisle to serve as an usher or a member of the altar guild? How about putting your hands together in prayer that God might bless Good Shepherd as we reach out to others with God’s Word? Maybe you don’t have the kind of financial toolbox that enables you to put large offerings in the offering plate? How about using your time and talent tool box to do some of the things God has given us to do as a congregation to plan and work together so that all may know Christ’s love? God can’t keep quiet about you! God rejoices when he thinks about you! May we never keep quiet about God! May we continue to rejoice when we think about the great things God has done for us in Jesus our Savior! May our rejoicing lead to reflecting the light of Jesus in all that we say and do! As God tells us in our text, “may your righteousness shine out like the dawn, your salvation like a blazing torch. May the nations see your righteousness and all kings your glory,” the glory of your Savior Jesus.

Amen.