

August 3, 2014 (Pentecost 8 A)

Isaiah 55:10-11

“Absolutely Unequivocally ESSENTIAL!”

By Pastor Wayne Halldorson

I think we all know how important and vital WATER is. After all, our human bodies are roughly 70% water. We always hear from health professionals how important it is to drink enough water and stay hydrated – especially out there in the heat of the summer sun. Water is essential to life on our planet. Drinkable water is needed for a community to survive. Water is necessary for farming, for raising animals, and for our entire food supply. We could talk endlessly about water and how important it is – but I think we all know that water is ***absolutely, unequivocally essential***.

People have always known that. So . . . through the Prophet **Isaiah** – God used the fact that we humans know how vital water and the water cycle is . . . to teach us something spiritual that we would NOT otherwise know, unless He told us (as He did here in our first Scripture lesson): **Isaiah 55:10–11 (NIV 11)**

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

As absolutely and unequivocally ESSENTIAL as water is . . . the **Word of God** is even more important / even more necessary / even more powerful. By the power of God’s Word – the universe was created and called into being . . . *out of nothing!* By the power of His Word, God invented the laws of physics, the properties of all the elements, and the nature of things like water – and LIFE in all its various forms. His Word sustains it all, and is in control of absolutely everything that exists. His Word communicates His absolutely and unequivocally ESSENTIAL **truths** to our human souls for our eternal salvation.

He tells us about creation and the tragic fall into sin; about the curse of sin and its terrible consequences that affect absolutely everything. He explains to us – in terms our human brains can comprehend – what we need to know about life, death, and eternity.

He told us about His absolutely brilliant plan of salvation – that costs us nothing and would cost Him everything. The Word of God / God Himself – took on human flesh to save us by eradicating sin in one perfect sacrifice. He tells us how absolutely, unequivocally, ***essential forgiveness*** is for each and every soul – forgiveness that can only be found in the Blood of Jesus. He tells us how deeply He loves each and every one of us, and how He only wants the best for us – today, tomorrow, and forever.

His Word brought **you** life / brought you faith / brought you forgiveness / brought you eternal salvation. The GOSPEL of His grace and forgiveness in Word and Sacrament is just as **vital** to your human souls as water is to your human bodies.

You and I **need** to know this! Our habits, our priorities, our worship lives, our time in Bible study and in devotions is PROOF that this is a lesson we need to hear and take to heart! We say . . . *“We just don’t have the time / it takes too much effort / it’s too boring / it has to be more fun and exciting to appeal to people today / I’m just too preoccupied with this or that . . .”* Our souls are **dying** of thirst . . . and we don’t have the time to stop and DRINK?!

You **need** the Word of God – we ALL do – and you have it, in clarity, in purity, and in abundance! Thank God you are not drinking polluted spiritual water like most Christians have today. Thank God you are not living in a land where it’s a spiritual desert, and the Water of Life is nowhere to be found. In many countries firmly under Satan’s grip – the Water of Life is illegal! If you are caught with it or if you try to share it – you could be killed!

You live in a land where it is drying up, but it’s still readily available! You have a building you can worship in that’s part of a fellowship that refuses to dilute or pollute the Water of Life in any way. You are welcome to study the Bible with fellow believers several times a week. You have your own Bibles, in your own language, in your own home, and maybe even in the phone you have with you now. You have access to doctrinally sound and solid Christ-centered and Word-focused devotional and study materials – for purchase at our publishing house (www.nph.net) – and, even free of charge to borrow in our church library. Even as our culture spiritually dries up and withers, you have the Water of Life set before you in abundance. Not only are you and I **so** blessed to live in a free and prosperous land, overflowing with natural resources and abundant

fresh and clean water – you have the pure WATER of LIFE in abundance too!

Soak it up with thankful hearts. You are loved with an everlasting love – *the Word of God says so*. You are totally and completely forgiven of each and every stain and blot on your permanent spiritual records – *the Word of God says so*. You are supernaturally equipped and empowered; outfitted with the spiritual tools and weapons you need to face absolutely anything that could ever be thrown at you – *the Word of God says so*.

And – you have this pure Water of Life to **share** and to **SPRAY** out there far and wide . . . *the Word of God says that*. We are here, on planet Earth, and so overwhelmingly and abundantly **BLESSED** (physically and spiritually) . . . in order that we, in our unique and personal ways, can be a part of sharing the Water of Life with a spiritually polluted, dead, and dying world. Satan is doing all he possibly can to “shut off the taps”, to “poison the water”, and to silence the mouths of God’s people who know God’s Holy and Powerful Word.

Nevertheless – we have a **job** to do. Yes . . . it’s tough work! I know – people don’t care, and they hate to hear it. As the expression goes: you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink. Likewise we try and put the Gospel in front of people . . . and they turn up their noses and get angry at us! We also get frustrated with our brothers and sisters who are supposed to be helping us – *they* don’t seem to be trying that hard! Christians swimming in vast wealth often give very little to share God’s pure Truth. Mission work is suffering as a result. Volunteers are hard to come by in every single congregation. Christians on both sides of the pulpit are frazzled and burnt out. We **tried** sharing our faith with this or that person – and it didn’t seem to work. Someone once said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again – expecting different results.

Well then . . . let’s join the Apostle Paul and be **INSANE** for God – and keep on sharing Jesus anyway! You have God’s **promise** right here in **Isaiah 55** that it will produce **RESULTS!** We might not see it, but God will bless it and use our words, actions, efforts and dollars to carry out His saving plans. God’s Word will **NOT** return to Him empty, but **WILL** accomplish what He desires, and achieve the purpose for which He sent it out there . . . **through us**.

I’m sure you’ve all seen those ridiculous infomercials about “miraculous” weight-loss gimmicks, things to make you beautiful, supplements to give you amazing health, quick ways to make you rich, happy, and successful. We are right to be sceptical about all that garbage – people prey upon those who don’t know any better in order to get rich off their pain or ignorance. But . . . God is not lying to you. God does not want to prey upon you or get your money. God is telling you this simple and powerful **TRUTH** for your own good / for the salvation of your own soul / and for the salvation of others: **God’s Word is absolutely, unequivocally ESSENTIAL**. It’s really all you need. It’s free. It’s priceless. It’s powerful. Soak it up and share it far and wide – it leads souls to repent and find forgiveness in the blood of Christ. It works . . . *because He says so*.

Amen.