July 5
Grace and peace to you this day.

Last week was quite the week. Landmark rulings by the Supreme Court. Inflamed rhetoric, threats of violence, and a further increase in the national divide.

And yet, if we listen, the voice of the Lord speaks. I will not wade into the political debate, but instead will try to ascertain what the Lord is telling us here and now. What is the Lord saying to us in the midst of all this controversy?

As we continue this week with our look at the book of Isaiah, this is what the Lord declares:

“"This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself…” (44:24).

The Hebrew word used here for “formed” is yatsar (pronounced yaw-tsar), meaning to form or fashion something. This phrase means that God forms you, fashions you, and takes a personal interest in you from the moment you are in your mother’s womb. To the Lord, you were never a just a fetus. To the Lord, from the beginning, you were His, fashioned in the womb by the One who is “the Maker of all things.” The same hand that “stretches out the heavens” and “spreads out the earth” took the time, and the care, and the love, to form you in your mother’s womb.

Gerald Schroeder, who is an MIT physicist, writes in his book God on God that even the genetic coding of a single-cell microbe is so complex, that if its creation is simply the product of chance, the universe hasn’t even been around long enough to create such a simple, yet complex, form of life.

The point is this: all life, whatever its form, and whatever its stage, is the handiwork of our Creator. I think that the only way for we as Christians to continue to remind the world of this is to continue to proclaim the Word of God, and to continue on the missional path of Jesus. That’s the best way to help the world understand that all of us, even that little human residing in his or her mother’s womb, belong to Him.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

July 6
Greetings, DGCC Family.

No review of Isaiah would be complete without taking at look, however brief, at chapter 53, called “The Suffering Servant.”

This passage is perhaps the greatest of the prophesies of Jesus in the Old Testament. Centuries before the coming of the Messiah, the Lord had promised it through the prophet Isaiah. Because the chapter is quite long, I will only include the first half here. So, let’s jump in:
Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (53:1-6).

Reading this passage reminds me that the single unifying thread in all of Scripture is Jesus. Jesus was always God’s answer to sin. Jesus was always God’s answer to death. Jesus was always God’s plan of salvation.

From the time on the Garden (“He will crush your head and you shall strike His heel (Gen. 3:15)) to the prophet Malachi: (“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty” (4:2-3)).

The Bible is God’s great love story to His people, and the central character in that story, from beginning to end, is Jesus.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

July 7

Greeting you today with the Shalom of Jesus.

This is one of my favorite verses from Isaiah:

“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear” (59:1).

Have you ever thought that the Lord is too busy to care for our individual needs?

Have you ever thought that the Lord is so occupied with “the big stuff” that our little lives maybe take second place?

Have you ever heard that the Lord’s ear is too busy listening to “real” problems that maybe our go to the back burner?
And yet, the Lord says, “Not so.”

There are no hidden meanings here, no tricky Hebrew translations. Then, as now, the Lord is saying, “my arm (some translations say “hand”) is long enough to save. The same arm that stretched the heavens. The same hand that formed you in your mother’s womb.

Then, as now, the Lord says, neither is His ear “dull,” meaning unhearing or inattentive.

Today, as in Isaiah’s time, the Lord’s long arm and outstretched hand is waiting for you to take hold of it. His attentive ear is waiting for you to talk to Him. So go ahead, take His hand, talk into His ear, and see what He has in store for you.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

July 8

Happy Friday, everyone.

Here’s your musical devotional. Turn up the volume and enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca9LnzJnpjQ

IHS,
Pastor Lou