

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

July 21, 2024

Old Testament Reading; 2 Samuel 7:1-14

Responsive Reading: Psalm 89: 20-37

Epistle Reading; Ephesians 2: 11-22

Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56

Sermon:

### **From Where Shall My Help Come**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: Let those who have eyes see! Let those who have ears hear!

Promises, Promises, promises. We hear that a lot, especially in an election year. Big promises are not a new thing, and they are not unique to the USA. Look at our Psalm reading for this morning. God is promising a worldwide pandemic in which He will infect the whole known world with His plan for a unified utopia under the direction of a line of leaders starting with the one named David that He has already anointed.

This undefeatable force will be a reflection of His own faithfulness and mercy. It will be a permanent establishment that by His mercy and His covenant shall stand firm with Him.

If the sons of David deviate from the mission they will be dealt with but not disowned. God goes on to promise, “Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: his seed shall endure forever,” Earlier there is a prophecy of the coming of Jesus. In verse 27 God says, “I will make him my first born, the highest of the kings of the earth.” The first born cannot mean David because he was the youngest of seven brothers. It could not mean Solomon because he was a later offspring of David and the second son of Bathsheba. The only first born had to be “The only begotten Son, i.e. Jesus, of the line and lineage of David.” “His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” His seed, one man, followed by twelve men followed by a few hundred then a few thousand until millions who profess Jesus all over the world. His seed will endure forever! His seed DOES endure forever!

I look to the hills, from where shall my help come. Our Epistle says it a little differently. I look to the hills. For whom shall my help come? The help is for everyone. The New Testament is the New Church. The chosen people are no longer the only chosen people. We are all chosen by God. We did not choose God. God chose us. The Jews were under the Law and their

history. The Gentiles were despised and belittled by the Jews as being inferior in God's eyes. The Gentiles were not even allowed in the inner courts of the Temple but now in the New Church, the Gentiles, and the Jews for that matter, were the Temple where Jesus lives. All the walls of separation were torn down.

We now would have equal help for all. Neither the Jews nor the Gentiles had to struggle under the oppressive laws of Moses, but this was not a license to live any way we want to. We now are expected to live under the new commandment of Jesus. "I give you a new commandment. Love others as I have loved you." Earlier in scripture Jesus had told the young lawyer, "The great commandment is this; Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And to those of us who always beat up on ourselves we should probably "Love yourself as you love others!" But I digress.

A note of interest here. The Jewish faith required the people to make sacrifices to reconcile themselves to God. God never had to reconcile Himself to people. BUT God loves us so much that He sacrificed His son to reconcile us to Him! This is all wrong. God should in no way love us so much that He would sacrifice Jesus to establish OUR eternity! But He did and He does, and I

believe that He would do it again if He felt it was the only way.  
WOW what a God we have!

In our Old Testament reading God says that He never asked David to build Him a Temple. God said that He always chose to go with the Hebrews wherever they went. They had lived in tents and so did He. God is not One And Done. When Jesus ascended to sit on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, God sent His Holy Spirit to not only live with us but to actually live IN us.

OK God lives in us but how can we be sure He is going to help us and not just go along for the ride?

All we have to do is look at the work ethic of Jesus and we can be sure that God is “never going to slumber or sleep”.

In our Gospel Jesus tries to give His disciples a break and in the part we did not read He fed the five thousand. After that little lunch, He and His followers went to Gennesaret where Jesus healed everyone that he could get to, or be brought close enough to touch His robe.

Jesus ain't no quitter and He ain't afraid to go out of His way. We don't have to go to the Holy Land to find Him. God will find us. He will find us in this congregation, in a cardboard box under a bridge or even at a political convention.

Let those who have eyes to see, see and those who have ears to hear, hear! Sound the bugles! Strike up the band! Here comes God to save the day (and our souls)!

Hallelujah and Amen!