

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The word of God for this morning is found in Isaiah 65:1-2.

**“I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name. 2 I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk *in* the way which is not good, following their own thoughts.”**

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

Do you seek God or are you sought by Him? Although false teaching has always been prevalent in the world since the fall into sin, this particular question seems to be one of the more common errors of our time.

Although we don't hold to this error at St. John's, Peace or within the CLC, it is important for us to revisit who seeks out whom. It is important because almost every TV preacher, 'Christian' book and virtually every other form of ministry you come in contact with in the world teaches you incorrectly. It's very easy to come in contact with this error. And like all error, it can damage you spiritually. Therefore the word of God today reminds us that, “You are sought by God.”

We ourselves do not seek out God. If God would've sat on the sidelines, quietly waiting for us to come to Him, it would've never happened. He would place Himself before us every day yet we would walk by Him without even noticing Him there. Our sinfulness utterly blinds us to the fact that a Triune God even exists. We don't know anything about inheriting our sin from Adam and Eve. We don't know that Jesus died for our sins. We don't know anything of heaven or hell.

To say that we seek out God on our own is to say that we have something good left in us, something Godly. This is horrible false teaching because if it were true all of Scripture would be found in error because of it.

Our text itself disqualifies that from even being a possibility. **“I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk *in* the way which is not good, following their own thoughts.”**

Our text for today speaks in regards to two different groups of people. In verse two just sighted, we have the Lord specifically speaking to the Children of Israel. The Lord certainly spread out His hands to Israel. He not only came to them in the written word, He came to them outwardly.

Up until the New Covenant, Jehovah appeared outwardly to Moses, some of the Prophets and to the entire camp of Israel in the cloud and fire. He made Himself known in a way that gave no one an excuse. And as a whole, what was the response of these people? The same response every single person born of two human parents would give; the worship of self.

Jehovah said that the people were rebellious, doing things which were not good, created in their own minds. We don't react warmly to being told by God what to do. The things asked of us by God are

contrary to our nature and we rebel. The children of Israel setup alters and sacrificed their children to Baal. They schemed and plotted with the nations whom they were to drive out because they depended on their own strength instead of the Lords. They wanted to intermarry and serve their own bellies. The whole time not caring about the promise given to them by God. Gen 22:18 **"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."**

Do we fault God for this? May it never be. The God of truth reveals to us that He **"...spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people."** Throughout the history of Israel Jehovah was ever faithful to His promises. He stretched His hands out day and night to keep the family line of the Savior intact for the sake of every soul.

But is it only Israel that should be faulted? Verse 1 of our text, **"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' To a nation which did not call on My name."**

As I stated earlier, our text speaks in regards to two different groups of people. Verse two in regards to the nation of Israel; verse one to the rest of the world. Therefore, this verse speaks directly to us. And how does it speak? Does it speak of the Gentiles differently than Israel? Does the God of Creation praise us for having a wonderful, warm, loving heart? No He doesn't.

The Lord says concerning the Gentiles of whom we're part that we did not ask for Him, nor seek Him, nor call upon His name. All throughout the Scriptures the Lord shows us what kind of people we are by nature. Psalm 10:4 **"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts."** And in John 15:16 **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you..."**

None of us can escape the condemnation of hell if it were left up to us finding and seeking out God. With the certainty then that all of mankind is by our very nature opposed to God we need to be truly thankful that **"We are sought by God."**

**"We are sought by God"** because He stretched out His hands and called out to us "Here am I, here am I!" Our text even makes it very clear to us when it says that the Lord permitted us to seek Him. And the glory for that even goes to God.

You are sought by God when even before the creation of the world God had the plan of our salvation from sin perfectly planned. Not only perfectly planned but conceived by God in whom there is no shadow of turning. God cannot go against His word and because of it He looked at His plan of salvation in His son as complete because He knew that it would come to pass.

You are sought by God when in the Garden of Eden He pronounced the guilt of your sins upon the One who would be bruised.

You are sought by God when Jesus suffered through every temptation as to complete the entirety of the Law. You are sought by God in His willingness to shed His innocent blood for the sake of sinners.

You are sought by God when because of the Holy Spirit you had your sins washed away in your Baptism.

You are sought by God when in His mercy He came to you through His precious word, revealing to you your worthless condition but draping you in the righteousness of Christ in faith.

You are sought by God when in this same faith you go to the Lord's Supper seeking the confirmation of sins forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You are sought by God when He continually fulfills His promise to never allow any evil to snatch you out of His hand.

You are sought by God because you are one of His chosen vessels to go out into the world and preach sins forgiven in the blood of the Lamb.

You are sought by God in that you already have a mansion waiting for you in heaven, prepared by the Son of God Himself when He took His seat at the right hand of God because He brought glory, honor and victory to the Father.

You are sought by God because He will never forget His promise to come again to take you home to heaven. 1 Tim. 4:16 **"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God."**

Notice my dear friends that I haven't said that you were sought by God. Just as we have never sought God on our own account, God has always and will always seek us out through grace, in His word by faith in His Son Jesus Christ. He did this because His nature is not like our own. Instead of petty vindictiveness we find mercy and pity.

Rejoice and be glad that you have, are and always will be the center of God's attention, that **"You are sought by God."** Amen.