

**Lessons for The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

**July 23, 2023**

Psalm 119:57-64 ~ *Joyful commitment to God's commands even in the face of ridicule.*

Isaiah 44:6-8 ~ *The eternal God of Israel established His people through His powerful deeds.*

Romans 8:18-27 ~ *Creation waits expectantly for God to remove the sufferings of this age.*

Matthew 13:24-30,36-43 ~ *God's children live alongside those of the world until the end of the age.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** God is Always Beside Us.

God's love toward us is great, but His judgment upon sin is sure. Those who have been called according to God's purpose can count on a love that made great sacrifices to rescue us from the evil power of sin and death. When evil crops up around us, God protects us from destruction, keeping us safe for the harvest of righteousness.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Lord God, in the turmoil of my life, help me see you beside me to encourage me, behind me to uphold me, before me to lead me. Help me understand my life from the certainty of your love, rather than trying to understand you from the experiences of my life. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** God leaves His people in this world to be instruments of compassion to those who are caught up in the despair of the bondage to this world's cares. We use His good gifts to lighten their loads and turn their eyes toward the hope of the glory God has prepared for His people.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Rock of our Hope and Redeemer of nations,  
Lighten our suffering and comfort our sorrow.  
Bless all these gifts from the things of creation,  
As we confess patient trust for tomorrow. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** When the troubles of life overwhelm us, we resign ourselves to futility or strike out in destruction and start over. God, however, waits in hope and expectation as His redeeming love brings His purpose to fruition. Through all our sufferings, the one Lord, the redeemer of His people, helps us in our weakness.

**Questions to Consider:**

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**Bonus on next page:**