

Devotional: 17-23 December 2023

Read: Isaiah 11:1-9



As Isaiah penned this portion of Scripture as he was carried along by the Holy Spirit, Israel (both the northern and southern kingdoms) had abandoned the path that God had desired for them.

A path that their forefather's swore they would follow and uphold (Joshua 24:16-18). The Government had become corrupt, and the rich got richer and the poor, the widow and the fatherless were forgotten and had become disposable in the eyes of the wealthy.

The religious environment wasn't much different. The people of Israel participated in sacrifices as prescribed in the book of Leviticus, however, those sacrifices become a hollow and empty tradition. They paid lip-service to the God that saved them out of the land of Egypt, but their hearts were cold, hard and far from a living genuine relationship with the Triune God of creation. Assyria, a neighboring country, was a growing threat to the southern kingdom of Judah. But God was faithful even though Judah was not.

God would protect God's promise of a Messiah that would come from the house and lineage of David. God would defeat the kingdom of Assyria. Isaiah prophesies about this defeat of Assyria in the previous chapter (10). He paints a vivid portrait of God defeating the Assyrian army. The picture the prophet paints is of a huge and powerful forest, one that would resemble something like the Redwood forests found in California.

A forest with strong and mighty trees, vast in number and lush with color. But in one swing of justice axe of God, this once powerful and lush forest, is brought down to mere stumps, and the picture we are left with is one of desolation, hopelessness and despair.

And we see God's deliverance as He defeats the Assyrian army as recorded later in Isaiah 37:36. And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

But in our text today, out of that picture of desolation, hopelessness, and despair, comes forth new life and the promise of a new and coming KING. A King that will bring hope out of hopelessness. A King who will be born in a miraculous manner as recorded in Isaiah chapter 7. A Messiah King who is none other than Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

As we leave the desolation of chapter 10 and walk into chapter 11, the picture we are left with is nothing but dead stumps and hopelessness. The forest that was leveled seemed strong & powerful from a human perspective, but God often does not work through what we perceive as the strong and the mighty. God often brings forth God's will through what we would perceive as weak and insignificant.

A small shoot would arise from all these dead stumps, and this shoot that sprouts from the house of Judah, the house of Jesse, will be no ordinary man. This shoot will be a KING, the Messiah. From a small and insignificant family, the house of Jesse, a family that raised sheep, a shepherd King would spring forth (Micah 5:2).

Jesse had eight sons, the older surely looked like a king but when Samuel the prophet was commanded by God to anoint God's chosen king, it was the weakest & the youngest of the brothers, not the strongest or the tallest. 1 Samuel 16

So, David was chosen to be Israel's next king that day. However, this prophecy in our text today only finds its roots, its beginning in David. It finds its fulfillment in the promised King who comes from David's family, and that King is Jesus.

At the time that this prophecy was given the king that was ruling, Ahaz (a king from the house of David,) was a wicked king, one that refused to look to God for strength and guidance. In fact, most of the kings of Judah who were from the house of David were evil and wicked kings.

Nevertheless, God would keep God's unconditional promise to David and would bring forth a righteous and good King from David's family, a King that would also be a shepherd, just like David was. This Shepherd King will gather the flock of God and provide salvation to all nations.

As Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, He willingly emptied Himself of all glory honor and privilege as the second person of the Triune God. Yet even though He became fully human, our text reminds us that Jesus will be fully equipped through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit to accomplish all that was required to provide salvation to any and all who call on Him.

Jesus is the KING that Isaiah speaks of; He is the second person of the Triune God who willingly set aside all glory, honor, and privilege to become fully human in the likeness of Adam to provide salvation. He is the Shepherd King from the house of David who became nothing so that you and I could have everything through Him, the free gift of eternal life.

Study Questions:

- A. How does understanding the historical background of this text make it more powerful?
- B. How does it encourage you and inspire you to see God's faithfulness in the midst of humanity's unfaithfulness?
- C. As we approach Christmas, how can the hope of the second coming of Christ encourage, comfort and preserve us?
- D. Why is it important to balance out the expectation of Christ's second coming with the call by God to wait patiently?
- E. Reflect on the imagery used in Isaiah 11:6-9. How does it challenge your understanding of peace?
- F. How can we emulate the spiritual qualities of the Messiah in our daily lives?
- G. What does it mean to you that the Messiah stands as a banner for all people?
- H. What practical steps can we take to mirror the expected peace and unity in our communities?
- E. Read Revelation 19:11-16 and discuss the imagery of Christ that is shared in our text today.

PRAYING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER –
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, LET US PRAY WITH YOU & FOR YOU
PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED

- **Mrs. MaryLou Himes** is recovering from eye surgery. Lord, our Divine Healer and Protector, we approach Your throne of grace with faith, seeking Your restorative power following Ms. MaryLou's eye surgery. As we step into the recovery process, we remember Your promise to us in Isaiah 41:10, where You said: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." We beseech You, Lord, to touch the body and eyes of the Ms. MaryLou recovering from surgery with Your healing hand. Guide the process of recovery, restoring vision and optimal health. Lord, during this period, we ask that you grant us the gift of peace that calms our worries, and the patience to wait for Your perfect timing. Holding on to this faith, we offer up this prayer in the powerful name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Cards and notes of encouragement can be mailed to: **Mrs. MaryLou Himes, 1800 Annie Street, #4, est Bend, WI 53090.**

- **Ms. Mary Rogge** had Rotator cuff surgery on 10 November 2020. She is completing physical therapy. Ms. Mary is appreciative for your cards and notes of encouragement and love. We give God thanks for Mr. Roger and the Family, who are supporting and caring for Ms. Mary. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge, 4436 Magna Vista Drive, Jackson, WI 53037.**
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** is home; thanks be to God. She is going through radiation and chemotherapy treatments. She is grateful for your continued prayers for healing, restoration, and strength. She is very appreciative for your love, prayers, and support. Ms. Sandy is also grateful for prayers for Mr. Pat and the Family as they care and support her through this season of treatments and healing. Cards and notes can be sent to: **Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Bro. Bob Krell** is rooted in our hearts and prayers as we shower him and the Family with our love, care, and support. It was a marvelous blessing to have Bro. Bob with us in worship last Sunday; "I'm doing well and slowly getting my strength back". We continue to pray for Bro. Bob's healing, restoration, and strength. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Michael Cahoon**, son of Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Mr. Mike has started a second round of chemotherapy. *Good and gracious God, the odds were overwhelming; you gave me hope. The opponent was powerful; you gave me strength. I felt alone in the struggle; you gave me a team. I felt like a stranger; you sent cheering supporters. I felt confused; you showed me the game plan. I felt defeated; your words inspired me. I was felt hopeless; you picked me up and put me back into the fight. I feared time was running out; you gave me a new beginning. The cancer cannot win against Your love; against the team of scientists, physicians, and nurses; against the support of my family and friends. Great Physician, you are the guide, you are the motivator, you are the healer; you are Lord. Thank you for helping me to achieve the goal, for leading me to the win. May I now be a champion for others who feel what I felt, who need to know the Power behind every victory. Amen.* Cards and notes filled with prayers encouragement can be sent to: **Mr. Michael Cahoon, C/O: Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, 1615 Beverly Lane, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Tom Damp** has been comfortable and safe in his home for years. This has been possible primarily due to home healthcare services. However, with significant changes in coverage from health insurance, availability of in-home health care personnel, and other life circumstances, Mr. Tom is having to make unexpected decisions; stay in his home or transition to assisted living. He asks for your prayers and care as God reveals, God's plan for his new season. Caring Father, we thank you for the opportunity we have as a church family to pray and care for Mr. Tom Damp. We ask that you bless him with the resources to keep safe from harm. Please surround this whole process with your wisdom and mercy, Lord. We pray for Mr. Tom's health and care in this whole process. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen. Card and noted can be mailed to: **Mr. Tom Damp, 1707 Sunset Ridge Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**
- We give thanks and praise that **Mr. Ben Barth**, now husband of Ms. Heather Wolf, granddaughter of Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge. Mr. Ben has been released from the hospital after the recipient of a new heart and new lungs-to the glory of God. Almighty God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, restored the sick to wholeness of mind and body, bless Mr. Ben on receiving his donated organs. Restore him with the gift of health, that he may continue to serve you with hope and thanksgiving. We pray, too, for the donor and family, whose courage and compassion has enabled the possibility of this transplant. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Please overwhelm Mr. Ben with cards and notes for continued healing, strength, and restoration. *Also, extend congratulations on their marriage.* Correspondence can be mailed to: **Mr. Ben and Mrs. Heather Barth, 223 South 11th Ave., West Bend, WI 53095.**
- We remain in prayer and support for **Mrs. Ann Cording**. Great Physician, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for God's miraculous healing today. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. We're not promised a painless life on this earth, but You do want us to live a happy one. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Sickness and injury can't stop God-placed dreams. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: **Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**

- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: **Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: **Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to **Mr. Allan and Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.**

We continue to celebrate our 175th year of service, commitment and Methodism in West Bend, Wisconsin.

“Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Anticipating Our Future”

Prayer: O most loving Father I come to you with full confidence and throw myself into the arms of your most sweet love and mercy. I hope, O Lord, that you will never cast me away from your Presence, you who so lovingly invite us to yourself, saying, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-burdened, and I will refresh you. Behold, I come, O Lord, receive me according to your word, and I shall live, and let me not be disappointed of my hope. Accept, Lord, my heart as a burnt offering; I give it all to you; I give you my eyes, to see you alone and all things in you: my ears, to hear your Word: my mouth, my lips and tongue, to be filled with your praise, and to sing of your glory and of your greatness all the day long: my hands, to be stretched forth in prayer to you in heaven, or in alms to the poor, and to do you will: my feet, to be led into the way of peace: all my members, that they may say, Lord, who is like unto you? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless His holy name: bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. I now freely surrender all these earthly things, for in you alone I have all things: I renounce myself, for I am your: I live, yet not I, but you, Christ Jesus, lives in me. I love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength. Amen.

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin