

### Uncommon – Isaiah 46:8-11

Welcome to our kick-off services; My name is Rob Willey – I’m the SP here; And we’re pretty excited for what God has in store for us  
It’s a new ministry year, a new theme as you can see, and a new study from the book of Isaiah; Not a verse by verse coverage of every chapter . . .  
But touching on the highlights and truths that are particularly *applicable* in our day  
And there are lots of them; That’s *one* reason I chose this as our next study

The other, is that Isaiah is a book that God used to stir my passion to preach over 10 years ago now; I was reading it in my devotions, and the more I read . . .  
The more I overflowed with thoughts and connections and *passion* to pass it on  
So much so that I filled the margins on some pages with notes; I couldn’t help it!  
So after waiting several years, and reading it several more times, I finally succumbed to the compulsion to preach it

- That said, one of the over-arching themes in the book of Isaiah, is God’s uniqueness – his exclusive nature; Which is why I landed on the theme *Uncommon* . . .  
And the verse to that effect in Is 46:9 – *I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me*; That’s about as uncommon as it gets  
Leading to an uncommon community in the church, and an uncommon Savior at the cross; Hence the graphic
- So if you haven’t already, turn to that passage/follow along – Is 46:8-11 (p.607) (**Intro**)  
*Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, [9] remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, [10] declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ [11] calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*

Just so you don’t get hung up on v11, *the bird of prey and man of counsel from a far country* – refers to Cyrus the Great, the ruler of Persia . . .  
Who God would use 2 centuries later, to overthrow the Babylonians and release his people from their captivity; The overall point being . . .

### We serve an uncommon God (Is 46:9-10)

And he doesn’t want us to forget it; *Remember this and stand firm* he says in v8; *Recall it to mind*; Speaking especially to those who have fallen away, or turned their back  
Calling them transgressors, sinners; And includes you if *you’ve* forgotten who God is and what he’s done

God’s urging you through the pen of Isaiah, to *remember the former things of old* – the uncommon things he’s done in the past; Both in the world, *and* in your life  
Keep them in the forefront of your mind; It’s not only a deterrent to *sin* and a way to *stand firm*, but a means of repentance; A way of *returning* to him

- Have you done that recently? Have you recounted some of the things God has done in your life? Have you made note of his blessings and work?  
Have you thought about his protection, provision, and salvation? I hope so  
B/c when you get right down to it – we serve an uncommon God

### • So uncommon there is no other (v9)

That’s v9, our theme verse for the year – *I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me*; Or as Moses said it, *the LORD our God, the LORD is one* (Dt 6)  
IOW he’s unique; In a class by himself

Which means there’s not a Muslim God, and a Hindu God, and a Buddhist God, and a Christian God, and a something else God; There’s only one  
*I am God, and there is no other*; Period

And there’s nothing wrong with such dogmatic exclusivity, as long as it’s true  
And it is, b/c the Bible is the only self-authenticating book to say such a thing  
Other religious writings *try* to, but can’t back it up with historical accuracy, internal consistency, and fulfilled prophecy; Only the Bible does that  
Which makes it true, exclusive or not

- There are no other gods, nor are there different *manifestations* of the same God, just called different names in different religions  
Kind of like, “That which we call a rose, by any other name is still a rose;” No; This isn’t horticulture or Shakespeare  
The only difference in the way God manifests himself – is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
But that doesn’t change the fact that he’s one God, with one true nature, and none other even *like* him; *I am God and there is none like me*  
Which once again, makes him as uncommon as you can get; Not only that, he’s . . .

### • So uncommon he knows everything (v10a)

Including the hairs on your head (Lk 21:18), the travail of your soul (Ex 2:25), the thoughts of your heart (Heb 4:12; Ps 139:1-4), the days of your life (Ps 139:16) . . .  
And *the end from the beginning* – v10; He knows it all

And declares it; That’s why we have prophecies and promises throughout the Bible  
He doesn’t just sit back in silence and take credit when things go his way  
He actually *calls* the home run – thank you Babe Ruth; And then delivers; Every time

Like he did with Abraham – promising and prophesying that that he would make of him a great nation, a great people group; And still is  
Comprised of both Jews *and* Gentiles who believe; He declared it, and delivered

And how about David? To whom he promised an everlasting kingdom with someone from his lineage ruling it; He *declared* it, and it’s happening; And the list goes on and on  
Including the prophecies of Isaiah’s day – declared and delivered, b/c God knows everything; Which makes him uncommon

And so does the fact that he’s unstoppable; God is . . .

### • So uncommon he’s unstoppable (v10b)

In v10 he says – *My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose*  
And v11 – *I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.*  
IOW what God says, is; It’s true; What God says, goes; What God says, happens  
All of it; Which means he’s unstoppable; His will, will not and cannot, be thwarted  
Or sidestepped; Or hindered; Not one tiny bit  
Like your will can’t be thwarted by an ant with nowhere to hide; God’s that powerful

Which means, we can trust him to do what he says; Like saving us from our sins; And giving us life; And peace; And joy  
Even in the midst of death, and hardship, and uncertainty  
He *says* he'll do it; He *can* do it; And he *will* do it; B/c he's unstoppable (**Summary**)

I hope that rekindles your *awe* of him, and your allegiance to him, and your trust in him  
And if you don't know him, I hope it lights a fire in the first place  
B/c truly, we serve an uncommon God

And do so, as an uncommon people  
**We're an uncommon people (Is 41:8-10)**

Do you realize that? We're an uncommon community  
Not in a prideful or exclusive sort of way; But a *unique* sort of way; Is 41:8-10  
God is speaking here, and says – *But you, Israel* [as opposed to the fearful and idolatrous nations around you], *my servant, Jacob* [another name for God's people at that time], *whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; [9] you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off"; [10] fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed [don't be discouraged], for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

One of the coolest things about this passage, is that it applies directly to *us*, the church  
B/c we're a part of Abraham's offspring; The NT is explicit about it  
Like in **Gal 3:7**, which says – *Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham*. Those who have the Spirit w/in them according to the context there . . .  
And believe what God says, just like Abraham did\*\*\*\*\*

But *that* doesn't make us *uncommon*; If anything, it makes us *more* common; B/c we're lumped together with the whole; What makes us *uncommon*, is that we're . . .

• **Chosen by God (v8)**

We serve an uncommon God, as an uncommon people, chosen by him  
It started with Abraham; It was reaffirmed by Moses, when he told the Israelites –  
*The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth* (Dt 7:6) . . .  
And it continues with us

Like when Peter, speaking to the church as a whole (**1 Pet 2:9-10**), said – *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession* [notice the same language God used to refer to his people in the OT] . . . *[10] Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people* [remember, he's speaking to the church, believers on this side of the cross]; *once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

We're chosen; And not just by anybody, but by God; The God of the universe  
Which makes us an exceedingly uncommon people\*\*\*\*\*

The question is, how do you know? How do you know if *you* are among the chosen?  
And the answer, is that your heart either *swells* with *gratitude*, having already *received* God's free gift of salvation; Or it *pounds* with *conviction* if you haven't

If your heart's pounding with conviction as I speak, pounding with the weight and significance of these truths – chances are, God's knocking; He's got his hand on you  
And I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond, to receive him, before we're done

We're an uncommon people b/c we're chosen by God, *and* . . .

• **Called from all over (v9)**

In v9 God says – *I took [you] from the ends of the earth, and called [you] from its farthest corners*; And he says in **Is 43:5-7** . . .

*I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. [6] I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, [7] everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*

Far from a separatist, backwoods, ingrown *cult* where it's us and no more – drinking the cool-aid and perpetuating our own dysfunction . . .\*\*\*\*\*

We're a church consisting of more and more people from all *over* the world  
On target to enter heaven, comprised of people from *every* tribe, tongue, and nation  
And combined with the fact that we're chosen by God – that makes us uncommon

As does the fact that we're . . .

• **Blessed beyond measure (v9b-10)**

Mainly, b/c we're never forsaken; Is 41:9b says – *You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off*

IOW I haven't discarded you God says; I haven't traded you – like professional sports teams do with their players; Especially those who are aging or injured

Can you imagine the Green Bay Packers sticking with a player for the rest of his *life*; I mean Brett Favre was long enough

But can you imagine them holding a press conference to say Aaron Rodgers was going to be their quarterback for life? “As long as he's breathing, he's our man”  
Not happening; As soon as someone better comes along – he's out; Cast off

But not us; When God chooses *us*, he sticks with us – start to finish

Issuing us garments of salvation and robes of righteousness (Is 61:10), that he never takes back; Unlike the jerseys athletes are given; We're *never* traded; Never forsaken

• That's why he can say in v10 – *fear not*; Why? B/c the next words are – *I am with you*  
There's no need for fear, b/c I'm right here God says  
And then again, *be not dismayed, for I am your God*; I'm on your side; I'm on your team; There's nothing to worry about  
*I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

That makes us blessed beyond measure; Especially when you include the love we share, the unity we enjoy, and the hope we have (**Summary**)

All from an uncommon God, who has chosen and called us to be an uncommon people

And he's given us an uncommon message

**We have an uncommon message (Is 55:6-7)**

Found in Is 55:6-7; It's the last passage I want to look at, and perhaps the most important, if you haven't yet responded to God's call on your life

This is where Isaiah is extolling the virtues of a life with God, and pleading with those who are listening; Saying in v6 . . .

*Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; [7] let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

If you're here this weekend, and you've never done that – this message is for you

- **A message of opportunity**

*Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near*

For some of you, this is as near as the Lord has ever been; That's why your heart's pounding; The only relief from which, is to *run* from him, or *call* on him  
And I would *urge* you to call on him; B/c if you run, you may never experience his nearness like this again; It's a message of opportunity, and you'd be wise to seize it

It's also . . .

- **A message of repentance**

*Let the wicked forsake his way* [it says], *and the unrighteous man his thoughts*

Whether it's outward sin and a wicked *way* for you, or inward sin with unrighteous thoughts – both are wrong; And you need to confess them, and turn from them  
That's repentance – admitting your sin, asking God to forgive you, and turning from it  
Easier said than done, I know; But there *is* no other alternative; There is no other means of *relief* from your guilt, and eternal punishment

And the longer you wait, the longer you wait to repent – the harder it will be

So don't; Don't wait; Agree with God about your sin – calling it what it is . . .

And forsake it

Third, it's . . .

- **A message of hope**

As in *let him return to the LORD* [the one who is sinful, the one who is wicked in God's eyes], *that he may have compassion on him*

God's compassion, God's mercy, God's grace – awaits those who come home to him

Having made you, he loves you; So much, that he died for you – bearing the penalty for your sins, that *you* deserve

So he could receive you into his presence, and welcome you home, once and for all

That's the compassion of God; A message of hope, that *I* hope you'll embrace

And last, it's . . .

- **A message of forgiveness**

*For he will abundantly pardon*; If you seek the Lord, if you call on him – confessing your sin, turning from it, and trusting him to forgive you, he will

He will pardon, and do so *abundantly*

Which means there's no sin too great for his forgiveness, and no volume of sin too

much for his sacrifice; When he paid it all, he covered it all; And promises to forgive

But *you* have to seize the opportunity, repent of your sin, and turn to him

It's an uncommon message, requiring an uncommon response (Pray)

- If I've been speaking to you, if the *Lord's* been speaking to you . . .

And your heart's pounding – I want to give you an opportunity to respond

An opportunity to call on him for your salvation

So I'm going to lead you in a prayer right now

And though I'm not going to ask you to stand or come forward, I *am* going to ask you to raise your hand *after* we pray – so I can rejoice with you, and pray for you

- Just call out to the Lord in the quietness of your heart, with something like this . . .

God, I believe you're an uncommon God, who did an uncommon work on the cross, for me, and my sin; And I want to be a part of your uncommon people; So please forgive me of my sin; I admit I'm a sinner and want to live your way, from now on; Come into my life now – I receive you as Lord and Savior (hands)

Prayer – Lord, I pray for your blessing and peace on each and every person who just gave their life to you; Solidify their decision and multiply their joy; Protect them from the evil one, and give them a greater and greater desire to know you more

We love you, and ask now that you would use our *tithes and offerings* to reach more and more people with the uncommon message of the gospel; For your glory