

Friday, May 12, 2017

## Justice

Isaiah 60-61

*"For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed."*

Isaiah 61:8-9

The timeliness of these verses is significant. UNESCO, whose declared purpose is to contribute to peace and security, is trying to steal Jerusalem from the Jewish people. At the time of this writing, a resolution has stated that Israel is an occupying power in the city that has been given to them by God. In these verses the LORD declares that he loves justice. He hates robbery and iniquity and He will bring justice. Jerusalem belongs to God. He has entrusted it to His chosen nation. There is a future day when the LORD will reveal with absolute clarity that His nation is made up of a people that have been blessed by Him. He will reward His people for their faithfulness because of His covenant. These verses clearly speak of a promise to the Jewish people that will be fulfilled. It is exciting to consider that God's covenant promises are eternal. There is a land promise that has been given and a just God will see to it that the promise is fulfilled. Those who refuse to acknowledge God's right to deed the land will be part of those who see and acknowledge that God has indeed blessed the Jewish people for His name's sake. Justice will be served by my righteous and loving God. This gives me confidence to know that the promises God has made to the Church will find complete fulfillment as well as she is grafted in and supported by the root.

*O LORD, bring Your justice to bear in our world. Your kingdom come. Please LORD, for Your name's sake rise up and hear my cry for justice. Let the descendants of Your people be known in every nation as You redeem them by Your Christ and allow them to know Your salvation as found in Him alone. I pray with Paul that the Israelites may be saved so that Your fame will be made known. Amen.*

Saturday, May 13, 2017

## Hephzibah

Isaiah 62-63

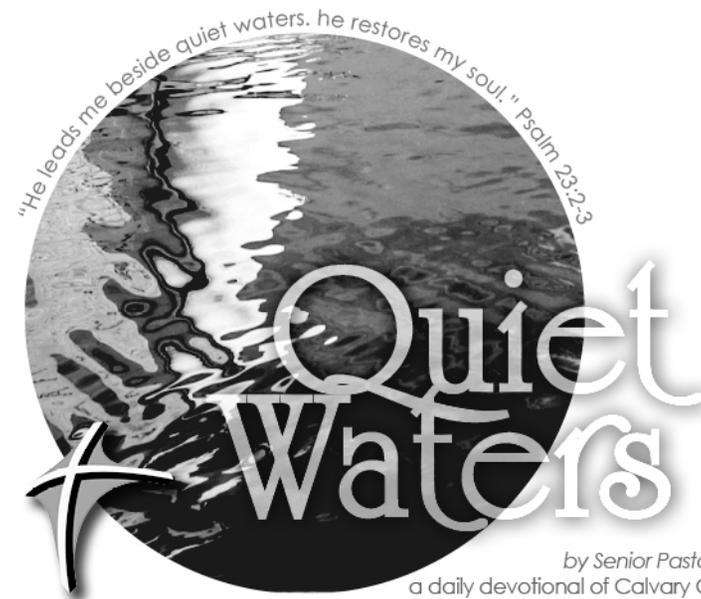
*The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD'S hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married.*

Isaiah 62:2-4

These verses must be read in context. God will rejoice over His bride. The Church is the bride of Christ and there are promises contained for the Church, but this passage is speaking about the new name that will be given to Israel. Israel had acted as an unfaithful wife and so she was forsaken by God—but not divorced (50:1-3). God has purposes for the sake of Zion and for all the nations of the world. Jerusalem must receive her new name and become a crown of the glory of God. Then righteousness and peace will come to the earth. No longer will the names Desolate and Deserted apply. Rather Hephzibah and Beulah. The meaning of these names is very significant. "Beulah" means "married." "Hephzibah" means "my delight is in her!" No longer desolate, the delight of the LORD will be in His people and His city. When a bride marries, she receives a new name. Israel is already married to Jehovah, but in the future, eternal reconciliation, she will receive this new eternal name. As the Lord's delight is seen, all the nations will see the righteousness and glory of God within her. Oh, that all may see that the delight of the Lord is in me and that His righteousness and His glory radiate from my life.

*O Dear LORD, how I love Your faithfulness and Your promises. I love to see that Your plan, as revealed in the Old Testament, is still on track. You are sovereign and Your glory will be revealed. I praise You because You are the LORD and "in its time" You do all things swiftly. I trust Your timing as I wait eagerly for Your power to be displayed. Meanwhile, keep me bold for You. Display Your righteousness and Your glory in my life. Amen.*

May 8 - 13, 2017



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka  
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, May 8, 2017

Peace

Isaiah 52-53

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:4-6

The first verse I remember memorizing is Isaiah 53:6. It was at Vacation Bible School. I remember being very perplexed by the word “iniquity.” What is iniquity? We surely didn’t use that word regularly around our house. What could it possibly mean that iniquities were laid on Jesus and how in the world was I like a sheep? What did it mean for me to turn to my own way? While I memorized the verse and earned the reward, it began for me a journey of trying to understand its meaning. In some ways, that journey continues today. I believe that this verse has led to that same journey for many since the day Isaiah first penned it. Of course, for those of us on this side of the cross, we have the advantage of knowing it was the promised Messiah who would be this suffering Servant and that the scandal of the cross would be the way that the salvation spoken of in these verses would be possible. While at first Jesus looks like the guilty One (after all it is Him on the cross), repentance calls me to see that it was my sins that He bore. My iniquity has been laid on Him. The weight of my sin, combined with all the sins of all people, crushed the suffering Servant. He bore the punishment that brings peace. The peace spoken of here is not a warm, fuzzy feeling; rather, it speaks of peace with God (see Romans 5:1). Through Jesus, I am at peace with God. No longer am I considered by Him to be a wandering sheep. I am in the fold, resting in His care, knowing His loving touch. Thank you, Jesus, for suffering with my iniquity laid on You.

*Dear God, I cannot even begin to read this passage without being overcome yet again for by depth of Your love, displayed in my Savior. Jesus, thank You for suffering with my iniquity upon You. Thank You for taking my punishment. Thank You for making peace with God possible for me. Please help me live in and live out that peace. Amen.*

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Flourish

Isaiah 54-55

*As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11

“The word of our God stands forever.” Isaiah proclaimed that truth in 40:8. The Word of God is the seed (Luke 8:11). In that passage, Jesus tells the disciples that the seed that is sown is the Word of God. In the passage of Isaiah, it is clear that it yields according to God’s purposes. His ways are not our ways. I cannot understand God. I can know God—that is, I can know Him beyond knowing about Him. I can know His love. It is the Word that renews my mind so that I can know God (Romans 12:1-2). My mind, impacted by sin, knows what I design a god to be. God’s Word reveals the one true God. It is as I rest in His Word, which never changes and which will never pass away, that I can rest in Him fully. That is how the seed grows within me. It buds and flourishes. As I write this entry, the month of May is just beginning and it has been a very wet spring. That has allowed for a fantastic display of budding. Things are flourishing and it is clear that what had appeared dead has come to life. So it is with the Word of God in my life. The more I know the Word, the more I can know God—not know about Him—know Him. That is the purpose for which God has sent it—to bring flourishing growth.

*Dear God, please allow Your Word to flourish in my heart. Let me be renewed by Your Word. Let Your Word change my thoughts so that I may truly know You. Amen.*

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

Contrite

Isaiah 56-57

*For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”* Isaiah 57:15

These chapters bring an accusation against sinners. In the midst of the accusations, God, through Isaiah, declares that they have made their beds on a high and lofty hill (57:7). This is the place where they had set up altars to adulterate themselves with false gods. In their arrogance and pride, they had set themselves up on what they perceived to be a high place. God reveals that it is not all that high. A person who takes refuge in God will be raised up beyond to the holy mountain (57:13). He then goes on to make a major declaration. God has two homes, so to speak. He lives in a high and holy place. Amen. I would expect nothing less from an Almighty God. I expect that He would live in a place that is exalted and a place of great splendor, beyond anything I can imagine. But there is a second home and it is most surprising. His second home is in the heart of a contrite person. This speaks of brokenness. Literally, the word we translate as “contrite” means “crushed.” It has the sense of stones that are crushed. If my heart is to be the dwelling place of God, I must seek that He would crush my hard heart. I must seek brokenness before Him. I must realize that I have made my bed on what I thought was a high hill. I have given my heart to other lovers that have taken me away from my first love. I must yearn for a heart that is soft before my God. God revives the heart of the broken.

*Dear God, may I always be broken before You—wholly surrendered to Your will in my life and given over to Your presence. May You find my heart to be Your home. Forgive the times that I have pursued other gods. Draw me close to You. Amen.*

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Sabbath

Isaiah 58-59

*“If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD’S holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.”* The mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isaiah 58:13-14

Sabbath is not a widely embraced teaching or practice in our culture. I have heard many people talk about the fact that the Sabbath does not apply to us today. There is some truth in that, I suppose, in that we are not under the law as the nation of Israel was. But the law of the Sabbath is merely a statement concerning the principle of the Sabbath. The principle of the Sabbath is found in Scripture before the Fall. The first mention of the Sabbath applies to God Himself, as He created a *Sanctuary in Time* where His people, of all ages, would be able to go and meet with Him (Genesis 2:3). The Sabbath is a gift before it is a command (Exodus 16:29) and Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), declaring that the Sabbath was made for people! When I consider the Sabbath as a gift (by the way, “Sabbath” literally means “cease”), when I choose to live 24/6 instead of 24/7, I discover all the layers of blessing that God is waiting to bestow on me. These are blessings that I forfeit when I choose to live outside of His design. There is a very special promise in this verse that is found only here in all of Scripture. “You will find your joy in the Lord.” It is an if/then clause. *If I choose to cease one day each week and call the Sabbath a delight; if I honor that day, not doing as I please, then I will find my joy in the LORD.* This is not a command. This is a plea. God is asking me to take the gift of the Sabbath and open it, finding in the process that my joy will be in the LORD.

*O LORD, thank You for this amazing gift of the Sabbath. You know that I live in a time when stopping is not considered important. It is hard to stop collecting all the time. I long to find myself regularly riding on the heights of the land—soaring as if on the wings of eagles. Amen.*