

Friday, March 15, 2019

Heart cries

Isaiah 14-15

My heart cries out over Moab; her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishiyah. They go up the way to Luhith, weeping as they go; on the road to Horonaim they lament their destruction. Isaiah 15:5

As the burdens continue to be revealed to Isaiah, the burdened oracle concerning Moab causes his heart to cry out. Isaiah is being shown the great lament that the Moabites will feel and express in their capture. They will be wailing and wearing sackcloth. They will be weeping and lamenting. They will be crying and their hearts will be faint. It is possible that Isaiah cries out as he foresees this pain and lament, but I think that the real reason for his heart cry is found in the real cause of the Moabites pain. They have not cried out to the LORD. In their lament and anguish, they have maintained their pride (16:6). So we see that the wailing is not repentance, but insolence. Rather than turning toward the LORD, they lamented the destruction of material things. I believe it is this, at least in part, that causes Isaiah to cry out over them. If only they could have turned to the LORD. They still would have lost the temporary, but they would have gained the eternal. Overweening pride and conceit caused them to miss the possible blessing.

Dear God, it seems that so many people I see and listen to are trying to hold on to things that are going to be taken away in righteous judgment—and yet, I do not see them turn to You. I see them weeping and wailing that they cannot have what they have determined is right. May this cause my heart to cry out to You for them. Amen.

March 11 - 16, 2019

Saturday, March 16, 2019

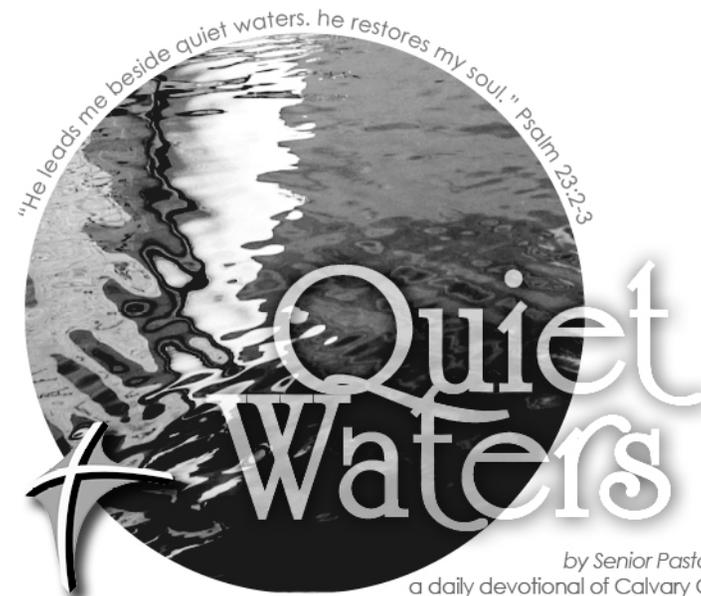
Forgotten

Isaiah 16-17

You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud, yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain. Isaiah 17:10-11

This oracle against Damascus is actually against Ephraim as well (17:3-4). As the Israelites watch what happens to Damascus (Aram), they will have opportunity to see what will happen to them if they do not repent. But they have forgotten God. They have forgotten their Savior and their Rock. God is the Rock. He is unchanging and in Him alone can one place their trust. He is also the only one who can save. Yet 17:10-11, while celebrating that God is Savior and the Rock, also declares the folly of self-effort. Notice the number of ways in which self-reliance is expressed—even to the point where the people have convinced themselves that they are the ones who cause plants to bud! Their trust is in the cities they have built and the things they have accomplished, rather than in the God they have forgotten. I live in a country and a time that have forgotten that God is Savior and the Rock. Sadly, even many who claim to be Christians have forgotten God and spend their time and efforts on what is important to them temporarily. There will come a day when it will be too late to repent. The time is now to remember the God who has been forgotten. I must constantly search my heart for the ways in which I have forgotten God and remind myself often that He alone is my Rock and my Fortress.

Dear God, how I am prone to forget You. I get so busy in the things that need to be done that I can lose track of You in the midst of serving You. Please help me to always remember that You are my Savior and my Rock and that I need You every moment of the day. Amen.



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

Monday, March 11, 2019

Holy

Isaiah 6-7

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."
Isaiah 6:1-5

There are a few passages of Scripture that truly capture my heart and draw me more significantly into considering the holiness of God. This is one of those passages. As I apply biblical imagination to this passage (Michael Card calls this an imagination surrendered to God for the purpose of bridging the heart and mind as we read Scripture), I am swept away into considering what it will be like when I see Jesus face-to-face. It truly causes me to consider His holiness and splendor and beauty. Like Isaiah, as I consider this, I realize that I have fallen short. Yet, as I continue to read the passage, I see that atonement is available and that my guilt is taken away. I stand ready to go and serve wherever I am sent. I am ready for my commissioning! I no longer dwell in defeat; I live in victory and in the assurance of the commission that I have received from the Lord Himself. I am to go and proclaim the truth of a holy God who is mighty to save.

Dear God, how amazing for You to give this glimpse of Yourself to Isaiah. Thank you for placing this in Your Word to us. It helps me know Your nature and character so much more. I know that I have no right to stand before You on my own. Truly I am a man of unclean lips and I too live among a people of unclean lips. I rejoice that atonement is possible for me because of Jesus. I bow before You and humbly accept the commission that You have given me. May I be bold for You! Amen.

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Fear

Isaiah 8-9

Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.
Isaiah 8:12-14

In recounting the words that God spoke to him, Isaiah is telling the people that they have a choice: to have God be a snare or a sanctuary. The choice is lived out in what they choose to fear. If they choose to fear people or circumstances instead of the Lord, then He will become a snare and eventually a stone that causes stumbling and a rock that makes them fall. Peter quotes these verses and applies them to those who are suffering for doing what is right, in 1 Peter 3:14-15. When the circumstances of my life or what people will think of me stir fear in me, then I am moving away from a proper understanding of the sovereignty of God. I am torn away from His strength and protection (sanctuary) and I am exposed and easily snared by improper thoughts about Him. I begin to think that He is not really hearing me and that I need to step in and take care of my worries. I look for other things to provide the protection only He can provide. I look for security in relationships, financial security, and significance in my job, others' opinions, or one of a thousand other places. Each of these subtly convinces me that trusting in God and fearing Him will not cause me to feel safe. It causes my fears of other things to grow. If left unchecked, I will no longer see Him as the Rock on which I stand.

Dear God, may I fear You and You alone. So many times my search for significance and security causes me to live in the fear of rejection and harm. You alone are the One who can keep me safe. Help me realize that the security of Your presence erases all other fears. Amen.

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Glorious

Isaiah 10-11

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.
Isaiah 11:10-11

The millennial reign of Jesus will be glorious. As I read this chapter, I am stirred with an excitement for that day. The root of Jesse is also the Shoot that comes from the stump of Jesse. This is explained in Luke 1:32. God is not yet done with the people of Israel. A King will sit on that throne forever—because of the promise of God. He has preserved a remnant that provided for the first advent of the Christ who will sit on the throne and call out the last remnant at a future date. By His grace, Gentiles will walk along that highway as well, but it is first a highway for the remnant of His people of promise. The explanation in this chapter of that reign on earth is stirring and causes me to have passion today to let as many people as possible know of the future hope that we have in Christ.

Dear God, I look forward to this glorious reign of Christ on the earth. I admit that I have a hard time imagining the fullness of it, but I am confident in Your promise—not only to Your chosen nation, but to Your chosen people who have been grafted in. How I long for that day. Help me, please, to live in the expectancy. Amen.

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Burden

Isaiah 12-13

Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my holy ones; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath—those who rejoice in my triumph.
Isaiah 13:2-3

God is absolutely sovereign over all things and all times. Reading the prophecies fulfilled bring assurance of that truth in our lives. Isaiah proclaims a series of "oracles." The Tree of Life version translates this as "burden." The word used in the original text means "weighty oracle." Isaiah is to prophesy the fall of nations and the death of thousands upon thousands of people. This indeed is a weighty burden. As I read these oracles, I am grateful to know that God is sovereign, that sin will not go unpunished, and that there will be true justice—but I must remember that the oracles are prophesying the death of people. There must be judgment against sin. Nations that reject God and His truth and promises will be judged and the rulers of those nations will be judged harshly—but they are people. Isaiah could have just as easily pronounced this judgment with a self-righteous attitude, but instead he saw this as a burden. Was he burdened for the people who would die under the eternal wrath of God? Surely Isaiah understood the final outcome of the people he was prophesying against (61:22-24). Surely this prophet—who had seen the holiness of God—had also been swayed by the love of God for His created ones. Have I?

O LORD, am I burdened by those who do not know You? Am I burdened to think that they will fall under Your wrath against their sin or am I tempted to smugly judge and believe that they will be getting what they deserve? Search me in this and change my heart in all the places needed. Break my heart for what breaks Yours. Amen.