

Friday, March 29, 2019

## Humbly

Isaiah 38-39

*But what can I say? He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul. Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.* Isaiah 38:15-17

Hezekiah has been given a promise from God. In his anguish, he cried out to God and God answered. This is Hezekiah's response. He has seen the hand of God in the midst of his anguish and he declares that it will change the rest of his life. He will live differently because the Lord's deliverance has allowed him to see that the suffering brought three things to him. First, it was for his benefit, as it brought him wholeness and peace upon receiving deliverance. Second, it brought an awareness of the love of God and the rescue that that love brought to him. Finally, and perhaps most incredibly, it brought about the removal of sin. In some way, the encounter with God allowed Hezekiah to know that his sins had been hurled away. Through Christ, I have the same opportunity. I have been delivered from the anguish of sin in my life, knowing that, as my Savior, He has hurled my sin "behind His back." I know that it was for my benefit that God showed me the cause of my anguish and that He did indeed rescue me. I also know His love—and it has changed me. All the days of my life will be different because He has rescued me from the anguish of my sin. By His grace, I will walk humbly with Him all my days.

*O LORD, what can I say? I have been set free from my anguish and I long to walk with You humbly, declaring Your great power and Your endless love demonstrated for me. Let me live that I might praise You, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.*

Saturday, March 30, 2019

## Comfort

Isaiah 40-41

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.* Isaiah 40:1,11

Chapter 40 opens a new section for Isaiah. It has been observed that the book of Isaiah, in some ways, is like a Bible in miniature. The Bible has 66 books and Isaiah has 66 chapters. The Old Testament has 39 books and there are 39 chapters in the first part of Isaiah. Both seem to focus primarily on the judgment of sin by God. The 27 chapters of the second part seem to parallel the 27 books of the New Testament, in that they both seem to emphasize the grace of God. These 27 chapters of Isaiah open with the ministry of John the Baptist and close with the new heavens and the new earth. Of course, the chapter breaks were not part of the original text of Isaiah, but it is an interesting way to consider the book as a whole. The comfort spoken of by Isaiah in chapter 40 and forward is for a future generation. Rabbis have called Isaiah 40-66 "The Book of Consolation." Indeed, that is what it is. It provides comfort as it reveals that God is to be trusted and that He cares for and comforts His own. He tends His flock like a loving shepherd. It would be a visual for the people who would be coming back to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the temple of God. It is a comfort for me today as well. I can be comforted to know that God is a God of judgment, but also a God of grace, who longs to comfort His own.

*Dear God, how I need the comfort that can only come from You. So many times I can feel overcome with the circumstances of life that seem to try to overtake me. Remind me often that I am gathered in Your arms and that You are carrying me close to Your heart. I rest in Your care. Amen.*

March 25 - 30, 2019



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

Monday, March 25, 2019

## Stubborn

Isaiah 30-31

*This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.*

Isaiah 30:15

Isaiah describes the nation of Judah as obstinate children (30:1). Over and over, in many different illustrations and contexts, God, through Isaiah, is trying to make the message clear. Trusting in anything other than God will fail and is rebellion against Him. It is as if the nation were a stubborn, strong-willed little child. Isaiah reminds them that going back to Egypt for help is going back to the place they were held in slavery! That is foolish. It is foolish to go to the places that have wounded me and caused me to be in bondage to try to find healing and freedom. What are the ways I do that in my life? God says that there is freedom available in salvation and strength. It comes from repentance, rest, quietness, and trust (30:15). But stubborn children will have none of it. God reveals in this chapter that if Judah finally comes to her senses, He stands ready to bless graciously and with compassion (30:18). I see what God promises to them if they will turn in repentance. First, He will bring spiritual regeneration (19-22). They will hear the whisper of God in their ears telling them where to go and what to do! This will allow them to detest the idols they have placed in their lives and they will discard them as the disgusting things that they are. Secondly, God will pour out physical blessings (23-26). They will see that all things come from Him. Finally, He will defeat their enemies (27-33). I must search my heart for the places that my stubborn refusal causes me to miss the compassion that God longs to show me!

*Dear God, I am a stubborn man. I hold on to things that keep me from relying fully upon You. I miss out on compassion that You are showing me because I am looking away from You. Draw me to repentance so that I may hear Your sweet guidance for my life. Amen.*

Tuesday, March 26, 2019

## King

Isaiah 32-33

*Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. In your thoughts you will ponder the former terror.*

Isaiah 33:17-18a

There is the sure promise of an amazing King with an amazing kingdom. Isaiah has been careful to blend the promises of the future in with the judgments that are sure to come as we wait for that day of the LORD. When I read the last part of Isaiah 33, it causes me to long for Zion of the future—that city on a hill over which our great King will reign. I long to see the King in His beauty. I long for the day that all that is opposed to Him is put aside and peace will reign. I long for the place where the things that tempt me to stray from Him will tempt me no more. When I allow those thoughts and the certainty of the hope they provide to consume my imagination it brings me peace. Because of my salvation in Christ, I have a certain hope for the future. But that is not the full extent of the message and it misses the hope needed to live for Him today. That same King whom Isaiah speaks of in chapter 33 as a heavenly King is the King that is spoken of in chapter 32 as an earthly King. The Messiah is the God-man. He is the earthly *and* heavenly King. His kingdom is forever and is in place now! I have the opportunity, because of the pouring out of His Spirit in my life (32:15) to live in joyful submission to His rule. Without a fear of the King (33:6), I will reject that rule. The fear of the LORD is the key to the treasure of sure foundation for my life. The fear of the LORD is the key to a rich store of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear of the LORD is what Isaiah experienced in chapter 6.

*Dear Jesus, You are my King. I long for that day when I see You face-to-face and there is no sin to keep me from You. I long for the day that I am set completely free from the presence of sin. Meanwhile, I rejoice that You are my King while I serve You in this fallen world, striving to make Your reign known. I need Your strength, my King, to help me in my striving. Amen.*

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

## All

Isaiah 34-35

*Come near, you nations, and listen; pay attention, you peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter.*

Isaiah 34:1-2

Chapters 34 and 35 end the section from chapter 28, but largely beginning with chapter 13. Before moving on, Isaiah gives one more judgment against the nations and one more promise of the future. The message of the judgment of God is not a popular message today. People would rather hear of the love and grace of God than His wrath and judgment. They would rather define God with *their* definition of good rather than His. But God's loving-kindness and goodness is based in His holy, perfect, moral righteousness, which requires that a good God be a God of judgment and, yes, a God of wrath against all opposed to that righteous, holy standard (34:8). He has a day assigned for vengeance. Notice the inclusiveness of his wrath—all nations. Chapter 34 is graphic in a way that is hard for us to understand. I consider that this is God as Isaiah encountered Him in chapter 6. It is this view of God that brings awe, this view of God that is most accurate, this view of God that for us has become most uncomfortable and avoided because it does not seem attractive. It was the same for the audience in Isaiah's day. For us, it seems much better to have a god who is there to serve our purposes, bring us comfort, and meet our needs as we have defined them. It is much better to have a god who is good (as we describe good) and is absolutely forgiving of all and accepting of anything that happens. That is a god we can tell our friends about. The only problem is that a god like that cannot be trusted because it exists only in our selfish imaginations. The commission that Isaiah accepted from God was to tell the truth. Just like all of Scripture, chapter 34 is truth. God's righteous nature requires that justice and wrath pour out as described. It may not seem pleasant, but it is necessary for His purpose to be carried out. He is the loving, sovereign King who can be eternally trusted. We each will either face the graphic eternal judgment due to a rebellious spirit or submit in awe to His righteous, loving, just reign, as His adopted child through the provision of Christ (John 1:12) I am so grateful that, by His grace, I am living in submission as His child!

*O LORD, I read in these verses the outcome of Your righteous judgment against sin. We are deserving of Your wrath, and yet, You offer grace. Help me be bold to tell people truly who You are so that they may find the rescue that You have given me. Amen.*

Thursday, March 28, 2019

## Prayer

Isaiah 36-37

*Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.*

Isaiah 37:14-17

Hezekiah brings the insults that have been hurled against God to God's attention. He spreads them out before God and begins a conversation with God about it. He recognizes the majesty of God and that God's majesty has been defamed. He calls out to God to defend His name. I am sure that Hezekiah was also filled with fear. There was an impending defeat. His forces (in their own strength) would surely fall to Sennacherib. Yet that is not what he began with in his prayer. He began by acknowledging the rightful reign of God and His power. His prayer is that God would reveal Himself in such a way that it would be clear that He was truly God, so that all kingdoms would know Him as the LORD God. God answered this prayer. Am I overwhelmingly concerned about the reputation of God? Do I lay before Him all the places I see His name defamed and do I ask Him to move in power to reveal the power of His name? What are the ways that my life distorts His reputation? Am I willing to have Him do whatever He sees necessary in my life for His power to be revealed—even if it is uncomfortable for me? God's name is to be great and it should start by being great with me, as one of His children!

*O LORD, help me turn quickly to You in prayer when I see Your name defamed. Help me see the places where this is happening—there are so many places and the truth is that I have become numb to many of them because of the way they have been found acceptable in our society. Help me stand against those who blaspheme Your name. Cause their voice to be quieted, God! Silence them so that the world will know that the LORD is God. Amen.*