

Friday, April 12, 2019

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.

Saturday, April 13, 2019

New!

Isaiah 64-65

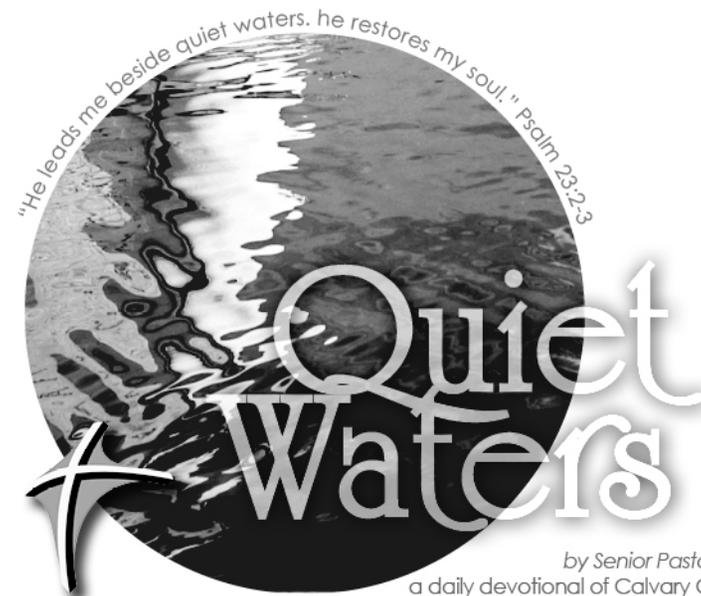
"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

Isaiah 65:17-19

The millennial reign of Christ on the earth is a moment that I look forward to with great anticipation. As Isaiah comes to an end, God pronounces what waits at the end of the age. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. This is not the same as that spoken of by John in Revelation, for this proclaims a time of peace and joy in a mortal existence. The new heaven and earth of Revelation speaks of those who have shed the mortal and have been clothed with the immortal and have had death swallowed up by life (1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 5). The existence Isaiah speaks of is the reign of Christ on earth following His return to earth in victory. The devil has been chained and Jesus reigns among the people of earth. Tears are a thing of the past. Old age is common and infant death is gone. I cannot fully imagine all that this is and all that it will mean for the people of God, but it causes me to have a great desire to make the forgiveness of God known to as many people as possible. The only way to have the certain hope of living in the promises of God is to understand that we live under all the promises of God—the promise of His grace and the promise of His wrath. These verses speak of a time when all are living in peace with God. It will be a wonderful day for all who enter at the hand of God.

Dear God, I know that You have a plan for eternity, that You will judge all sin, and that You will bring Your peace to bear in heaven and on earth. This is a certain hope that holds me fast. I love considering that You are sovereign and that You are patient. Your sovereignty allows me to know that Your promises will be fulfilled. Your patience moves me to go and tell as many people as possible, knowing that You want everyone to come to repentance. Amen.

April 8 - 13, 2019



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

Monday, April 8, 2019

I 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.

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

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.

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

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.

Thursday, April 11, 2019

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.