



THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE

LESSON 9 – APRIL 26, 2020
ABUNDANT HARVEST CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL
EVANGELIST MONIQUE FOSTER

THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE

BIBLE BASIS: Isaiah 61:8-11, 62:2-4

BIBLE TRUTH: The Lord promises to place His love and justice on the people of Israel.

MEMORY VERSE: “For I the LORD love judgment. I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them” (Isaiah 61:8, KJV)

THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE

LESSON AIM: By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLAIN the hope of vindication for the righteous and faithful; VALUE salvation and restoration for God's people; and COMMIT to make just decisions in everyday life.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON: When people feel helpless and angry, they seek help from others. What hope is there that the conditions of the powerless will be addressed? Solomon's wise decision confirms that God loves justice, and Isaiah affirms that the righteous will be vindicated.

LESSON OVERVIEW

BIBLE LEARNING: God places His love on His people.

BIBLE APPLICATION: Christians revel in their reception of God's love and promises of justice.

STUDENTS RESPONSES: Believers commit themselves to serving the Lord and acting justly.

HISTORY

- Isaiah the son of Amos, was the greatest of the writing prophets.
- His name means the Lord saves.
- He was married and had two sons (Shear-Jashub, Maher-shalal-hash-baz)
- He was sawed in half during the reign of Manasseh.
- He spent most of his time in Jerusalem, enjoying his greatest influence under King Hezekiah.
- He's credited with writing a history of the reign of King Uzziah (King of Judah for 52 years who was 16 when he became King who reigned was co-regent with his father, Amaziah.)

MORE HISTORY & BACKGROUND

- Isaiah wrote during a stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel.
- He warned Judah that her sin would bring captivity at the hands of Babylon.
- Although the fall of Jerusalem would not take place until 586 B.C., Isaiah assumes the demise of Judah and proceeds to predict the restoration of the people from captivity.
- Isaiah also predicts the rise of Cyrus as the Persian, who would untie the Medes and Persians and conquer Babylon in 539. The decree of Cyrus would allow the Jews to return in 538, a deliverance that prefigured the greater salvation from sin through Christ Jesus.

KEY HEBREW WORDS & TERMS TO RECOGNIZE

- Mishpat (meesh-POT); it is also rendered as “justice”
- Tzedakah, (tseh-day-KAW); righteousness. Used in parallel structure with justice.
- Gazel (gaw-Zale); to plunder or things taken away by violence.
- Olah (oh-LAW); burnt offering
- Berit beh-REET); to make an alliance or pledge
- Tzedakah; righteousness
- Tehillah; praise

LESSON SCRIPTURE

- ISAIAH 1:8-11, 62:2-4, KJV

LIGHT ON THE WORD

- Names in Bible times held meaning for their bearers.
- They often reflect a parent's hope for their child's life or the parent's concerns at the child's birth.
- Rachel knew she would die in childbirth and wanted to name her son Ben-oni, "son of my sorrow"
- Jacob, however, saw hope in his favorite wife's son and named him Benjamin, "son of my right hand." (Genesis 35:18)
- Sometimes name are foretold for children whom God has already chosen to do His work (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:13).
- Renaming, especially when the new name is from God, expresses a kind of rebirth into a new person. Abram, "great faith, became Abraham, "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). Jacob, "sup planter," became Israel, "wrestles with God."
- Jesus changed Simon, "he has heard," to Peter, "rock," to reflect his character and his place in the church (Matthew 16:18). Saul, "asked for" in Hebrew, began to go by Paul, "small," the most similar sounding Latin name, to reflect his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles.

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON

AIM: STUDENTS WILL COMPREHEND GOD'S LOVE
FOR HIS PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION: A Source of Comfort

- The prophet Isaiah articulates a message about justice from an unlikely place – in the midst of Babylonian captivity. In that place, God has seemingly forsaken the people of Israel and has used a more corrupt nation to punish God's own people for their corruption.
- This timeless spirit and commitment to calling out injustice becomes immortalized in the words of Isaiah 61:1-4, the very words that Luke records Jesus using as the text for his initial sermon in Luke 4.
- This illustrates that God's commitment to justice transcends time, space, and communities.
- Even to people who find themselves in diaspora, they can comfort themselves in knowing that God still loves justice and that He is faithful to righting the wrongs that have been inflicted upon them.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: Students will value the position that God's people hold in the world.

I. DIVINE ADORATION FOR JUSTICE (Isaiah 61:8-9)

- I. Our text follows the form of much Hebrew poetry where the lines of couplets communicate similar ideas but with different nuances.
- II. The Lord declares that He loves justice.
 - I. He then puts a declaration of His hatred for robbery and wrongdoing. If Justice is on one-side and robbery and wrongdoing are on the complete other side. The two are incompatible.
 - II. Note: the focus of verses 8 and 9 are not on the Lord's hatred; rather, they center on the Lord's love for those who have been mistreated and suffer injustice.
 - III. These verses are for those on the margins of the empire (in this case, the Babylonian Empire) and for those who feel that God has forgotten them because it seems like evil has won the day.
 - IV. To those people, the Lord writes a love letter about justice to them and shares how He will settle the accounts, because His covenant is everlasting, and His blessings can relocate them from a place of shame to a place prominence.

GOD IS FAIR & A JUST GOD

61:8 For I the LORD love judgement, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

- The Lord gives reason for changing their situation – why he’s going to give them double blessing.
- This verse also describes God’s character.
 - He is a fair and just God.
 - The Hebrew word translated “judgement” is mishpot (meesh-POT); it is also rendered as “justice.” Often justice is used as righteousness tzedakah. Used parallel
 - God is both just and righteous in judgement.

ROBBERY FOR BURNT OFFERING

- It appears that the phrase refers to the improper manner in which such offerings were made people stole an animal and then used that dishonest gain as an offering to God. It refers to Israel's' past sin and hypocritical sacrifice that resulted in their long captivity. However, in context, this doesn't seem to be the case. The ideas here is that God hates "robbery and burnt offering.
- The word "robbery" is gawel (gaw-ZALE) in Hebrew, which also refers to plunder or things taken away by violence.
- Referencing to what the Babylonians did to Judah and those in the surrounding nations.
- Robbery through plunder is paired with the Hebrew word olah, which is very often translated "burnt offering," from the root ahal, meaning to lift up. However, the word olah can also come from root word "owal, in which means "evil deeds, immorality, wickedness."
- Therefore, the sentence "For I the LORD love judgement, I hate robbery for burnt offering" can be rendered better as "For I the Lord love justice, I hate plunder and evil."
- Rather than to blame Israel for hypocritical sacrifices, God says this to aver the injustice of the Babylonians.

THE LORD'S PROMISES

- An Everlasting Covenant
- When God promises to make an “everlasting covenant” here, He is indeed renewing an already existing covenant relationship with His people.
- Just as in Jeremiah 31:31-37; it includes the blessings of the New Covenant that Jesus Christ instituted by His death (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:1-18).

THEY ARE THE SEED IN WHICH THE LORD HAS BLESSED.

- V. 9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which he LORD hath blessed.
 - All these blessing are for posterity. (For all future generations of people)
 - As a result of these blessings, and the eternal covenant with the Lord, Israel's descendants will be noted by all nations.
 - Israel will be a distinct nations among the nations.
 - Israel will be recognized as the one that the Lord has blessed.
 - They will see God's blessing radiating around them.
 - This divine promise to be a blessing among other nations has been part of God's covenant with His chosen ones going all the way back to Abraham.
 - A blessing not limited to Israel but to all spiritual children of Abraham – All believers in Christ – The Church.

QUESTIONS 1 & 2

1. What does God mean when He says “I hate robbery for burnt offering?”
2. What would God’s love letter about justice say to our society today?

LIGHT ON THE WORD – JUSTICE AND PROMISE

- From the context of this passage, we can see that God is dealing with the Babylonians, who have plundered nations and destroyed them.
- However the Lord will not let undue harm come to His people, for He will create a covenant that all the peoples of the earth will have to acknowledge.
- As God's people, the Israelites would be under God's protection, a promise that would be contingent on Israel's continued obedience to God.
- But the emphasis in this passage is on Israel's reception of God's bountiful grace and justice
- God hates the injustice committed by the other nations but promises that He will act justly in His covenant with Israel.
- This is a promise and God always keeps his promises.

THY SOUL SHALL BE JOYFUL WITH MY GOD

(Isaiah 61:10-11)

- **V. 10** I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

II. DIVINE ATTIRE OF JUSTICE

(Isaiah 61:10-11)

- Verse 10 marks a change in the speaker.
- It moves from the Lord's speech to the Lord's servant, Israel, speaking about a celebration. It is at the level of wedding ceremony significance. Similar to: how a bride and bridegroom put on their best outfits, this celebration and rejoicing demands a wardrobe change.
- This type of formal attire is what the Lord provides for God's people Israel through a robe of justice. The Lord also provides garments of salvation.
- It is important to remember that salvation in the Hebrew bible has a wide meaning that includes "to rescue."
- This shade of meaning is helpful in this passage, because it depicts how the Lord is going to take God's people that have been treated as insignificant and stripped of their dignity, and the Lord is going to envelope them in garments of rescue. Their very clothes will make them witnesses to all other people that the Lord sides with, the vulnerable and exploited.

RIGHTEOUSNESS & PRAISE FOR ALL NATIONS

- For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.
 - God controls the springtime growth, and so He can control righteousness and praise, as well
 - When God sows His goodness in us, we can respond in one of two ways:
 - 1) By reflecting his righteousness in ourselves
 - 2) By offering up our praise directly to God.
 - As with all that has been going on with Israel in this prophecy, this budding is “before all the nations.” That means righteousness will be a common thing in all the earth – not only Zion will benefit from this.

QUESTION 3 & 4

3. What do you think is the significance of clothing imagery in this passage?
4. We should be keen to observe the oppression and nakedness that the Lord has had to clothe in our communities. In considering African Americans, who have been historically dispossessed in the U.S., how significant is it for us to recognize that God has provided a possession of justice as clothes.

LIGHT ON THE WORD – CLOTHES THAT MAKE THE PEOPLE

- God places the clothes on Israel. When we look good, we feel good.
- God promises to adorn His people with the promise of His rescue, His righteousness, and His blessing.
- Not only does this promise to take care of Israel positively affect Israel's confidence, these garments let the world know that God's people will always be protected even in the midst of significant persecution.
- As Christians, we know that God will protect us from harm and bless us in order to share His love and justice with those we know.
- We are clothed in the forgiveness and righteousness of Jesus Christ, who has cleansed us from sin from the inside out and given us a new heart to love God and others. Our clothes are to both outward and inward.

III. DIVINE ATTRACTION TO JUSTICE

(Isaiah 62:2-4)

- These verses depict how the Lord is drawn to His people in spite of their oppressed status and in spite of how the forces in power have rendered them as forsaken.
- The prophet's zeal will not all him to remain silent, and he is certain that the Lord will Liberate in such a dynamic way that every people group in the world will be dazzled by the Lord's commitment to justice.
- Israel will arise as crown jewels.
- Righteousness will be restored.
- Such as significant transformation is marked by a name change.
- Israel will no longer be called Forsaken or Desolate. Instead, the Lord will give the nation names that only the Lord can give.
- They may not look like a name in English, but they are one word in Hebrew. One of the names is "The LORD delighted in thee."
- This a powerful message for those who can only see destruction around them and for those who struggle to see pleasantness in themselves or in their tragic situations.
- The Lord wants those folks to know that they are not forgotten and that His delight in them.

QUESTION 5 & 6

Question 5 -What do you think is the significance of clothing imagery in this passage?

Question 6 - What do these few verses teach us about the power of naming?

LIGHT ON THE WORD – ALL WILL KNOW

- God's people, with their new clothes, will be known by all the world as God's beloved.
- Not only will people see the Lord's work in the nation of Israel, but Israel is also granted power in the name of the Lord.
- God's people are to take the Good News of God's goodness and love to the ends of the earth, and their light will shine forth like diamonds!
- Whereas people would call the nation of Israel a desolate wasteland, now they will call her blessed and fruitful.
- As Christians we are clothed in God's love and have a responsibility to take His love with us wherever we go.
- Moreover, as we are called "Christian," our name should motivate us to look and be more like Jesus.
- If the name of Christ is tarnished by us, then we have done a disservice to the Gospel

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: Students will value the lives of those who have been historically marginalized

- God reaffirms His unending love for those who were forced into slavery.
- God reminds them that their name is not what their oppressors call them.
- Their land is not barren like the oppressors call it.
- Their culture is not savage like the oppressors call it.
- Rather, they are the beloved, and they are the ones in whom God takes delight.
- To God, the wretched of the earth, the dispossessed, and people of color are beautiful.
- In the sight of the Lord, Black lives matter.
- Their name is “Delightful.”
- More important, when the righteous are oppressed or disenfranchised God promises equity.

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: Students will recognize their ability to enact justice through political engagement and love.

- There are so many injustices in our society, especially to the African American Community that shows inequality.
- Although, it is very discouraging, for how lack of progress that some communities are still facing.
- We are called to love justice, like God does.
- By loving justice, we are to keep one eye on the big picture while focusing our other eye on ways that we can remind individuals and communities that they are not forsaken by God.
- Are you that mentor God is calling for?