

# CELEBRATING SALVATION

Dowlen Road, July 26, 2009 AM

## INTRODUCTION:

- A. Open your Bible to **Isaiah 9**. While you are turning there, I want you to imagine with me for a moment what it would be like to be a prophet.
  - 1. I'm not talking about these people today who claim to be prophets, who make all kinds of wild guesses about the future and occasionally have one that comes true.
  - 2. I'm talking about a true prophet of God, someone to whom God actually spoke and at times revealed information about the future that He wanted them to share with His people. Wouldn't that be awesome?
  - 3. Actually, John would describe it as sort of a bitter/sweet experience (Revelation 10). It would be something to actually KNOW what the future holds. And if the future held good things and you had the privilege of sharing that with others, it would really be awesome. But if the future was not so good, if it held the promise of God's judgment on your own rebellious generation (and that was often the case), then knowing the future would not be so great. You can see why John would describe it as sort of a bitter/sweet experience.
  
- B. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah certainly understood this.
  - 1. At times he was afflicted with the unpleasant task of warning his generation about the coming judgments of God (**9:8-9, 11-12**).
  - 2. But God also used him to tell the people of the amazing things He would do for them in the future. Isaiah is sometimes called the Messianic Prophet because he spoke about the coming Messiah – Jesus, more than any other prophet. Even though dark days were ahead for the nation, they lived with this wonderful promise. God would one day bring a Savior into the world who would rescue His people from their sins.
  - 3. Isaiah tells us so much about him. He would come from the lineage of Jesse, the father of the great king, David (**11:1**). His kingdom would be a kingdom of peace (**11:6,9**). He would gather God's people – the faithful remnant, a remnant that would now include all nations (**11:11-12**).
  - 4. With all of this Isaiah is pointing to that time when Jesus would come into the world to establish His spiritual kingdom and rescue men from sin and it's terrible consequences. Great things were coming. Isaiah had the privilege of announcing these grand events.
  
- C. But he tells us something else as we move into the next chapters (**12:1a**).
  - 1. In this short chapter that follows Isaiah describes how the people of God would respond to these great things God has done for them (**12:1b-6**).
  - 2. As I read these words, it occurred to me that the prophet is describing how all of God's children should respond to this great salvation God has provided for us.
  - 3. What Isaiah says should describe our response. I fear sometimes that our salvation becomes common to us; that we lose our grip on just what an amazing thing God has done in rescuing us from sin. These words from the prophet not only remind us of that, but they describe what we should do because of what God has done.
  - 4. Let's take a closer look at His words and allow them to provoke us once more to celebrate our salvation.

## Response #1: *Give thanks for God's anger is turned away (v. 1).*

- A. God's anger had been the prophet's theme in chapters 9 and 10 (**9:12**).
  - 1. Not only had the sin and rebellion of the people disappointed and grieved God, it has stirred His righteous anger.
  - 2. We need to take this to heart because our rebellion also makes God angry. Now some might complain, "But I thought God loves us" and He certainly does. In fact, it is because He loves us that His anger is stirred by our sins. Any good parent understands this odd mixture of feelings. When our children are rebellious and do things that bring harm on them, it grieves us. It breaks our heart. And it makes us angry with them at times. God is angry with us when we are defiant and rebel against His will.
  
- B. But Isaiah celebrates a wonderful turn of events that Jesus would bring.
  - 1. Jesus would come and provide for all of us salvation from sin. As we choose to turn from sin and turn back to God, Isaiah promises that God's anger will be turned away from us. This barrier that stands between us and God – SIN – will be torn down. We can have a relationship with Him again (**Romans 5:8-10**).
  - 2. Notice also that in this new relationship God will comfort us. As rebels against God's will, having to face an angry God is a terrifying thought that torments our souls. Have you experienced that feeling? But when we turn back to Him and His anger is turned way, this relationship gives us more comfort than any other.
  - 3. This promised Savior would do great things for us. He would deliver us from sin, turn away God's anger and make this relationship one that offers comfort. Isaiah says that, for all of this, we must give thanks. Are you thankful?

## Response #2: *Trust God and not be afraid (v. 2).*

- A. This verse opens and closes with the same thought: **God is my salvation**.
  - 1. What does this mean? Through Jesus, God has provided for my salvation.
  - 2. He has rescued me from my greatest danger. He has provided a solution for my greatest problem. God has saved me from sin.
  
- B. But don't miss Isaiah's point in verse 2. Because of what God has done, there is something that I should do.
  - 1. I should have complete, unwavering trust in God. If He was there for me through this greatest crisis, I can be absolutely confident that He will see me through any other "minor" issues that come up along the way.
  - 2. Because this is true, I do not have to be afraid. Our anxiety must surely exasperate God at times. We worry ourselves to death over every little issue that comes up along the way (health, money, job, kids, politics). Some may be saying, "These are not little issues." Compared to the sin problem, they are little issues. If our God helped us deal with the big one, He can help us with these too (**Philippians 4:6-7**). In fact, verse 5 urges us to call on His name (Psalm 50:15, **Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you...**).

3. Isaiah adds, "For the Lord God is my strength." Our problems loom large when we try to battle them with our own strength and wisdom. But when we tackle our challenges with God by our side, when we battle with His strength, no challenge is too great (**Hebrews 13:5-6**).
4. The Savior has done great things for us. We should trust Him. We should not be afraid to tackle any challenge of life.

### **Response #3: *Draw water from the springs of salvation (v. 3).***

- A. The meaning of this statement may take a little more effort to figure out, but the message of this verse is vital for every disciple.
  1. We must realize that salvation – rescue from sin – is not the only blessing that comes to those who serve the Lord. In fact 3:19 Peter told his audience that if they turn to the Lord, their sins would be wiped away and that "times of refreshing" would come from the presence of the Lord.
  2. There is a spring of blessing that can flow through our lives when we make the decision to follow Jesus.
    - a. We are relieved of the burden of guilt and regret over past sins (Ephesians 1:7).
    - b. We have a true sense of purpose for our lives (I Corinthians 6:19-20).
    - c. We have guidance and direction to help us avoid life's pitfalls and make tough decisions (II Timothy 3:16-17).
    - d. We have a great spiritual family that will accept us and support us, people who are traveling in the same direction (Acts 2:42-47).
    - e. We live in hope. We don't have to live in terror of death and the grave (I Peter 1:3-5).
- B. However, Isaiah reminds us that we must "draw" from this spring. If we want to enjoy these great blessings, we must seize them for ourselves.
  1. There are Christians who have never experienced these times of refreshing that Peter describes – who've never really discovered how great it is to be a Christian – because they have never drawn from the springs of salvation. To be plain: they don't study their Bible, live according to God's instructions or connect with other Christians.
  2. The Savior has done a great thing for us. He has not only rescued us from sin, but He has provided this spring of blessing that He wants to flood our lives. But to experience the blessings, we must draw from the spring.

### **Response #4: *Make known His deeds among the peoples (v. 4-5).***

- A. The blessing of salvation was never intended to be held as a closely guarded secret by a few who enjoyed its benefits.
  1. He wants the message of salvation to be carried to all men (**Mark 16:15**). God wants everyone to be saved (**I Timothy 2:4**).
  2. As Isaiah describes how the people of God will respond to the great things God has done for them, he says this: "Make known His deeds among the people" "Make them remember that His name is exalted" "Let this be known throughout the earth"
- B. There is an evangelistic spirit that should naturally well up in the hearts of people who have been saved.
  1. Think about it: when we hear of something amazing that has happened (jet safely lands on the water), we want to tell someone. When we get a piece of good news (I'm going to be a grandmother), we want to tell someone. When we learn of something that can benefit other people (there is sale at Walmart), we want to tell people.
  2. Followers of Jesus know of something amazing that has happened; the best news ever told; something that can be of the greatest possible benefit to other people. Jesus died to save us from sin (John 3:16). It should be our passion to make this known throughout the earth.
  3. I fear that we do not do this because the blessing of salvation has grown old to us and we fail to sense the awesomeness of this great thing God has done. The Savior has done a great thing for us. We need to be shouting it from the roof tops.

### **Response #5: *Praise the Lord.***

- A. How do you feel about what we are doing here today? Does the thought of gathering in this place and doing the kinds of things we've been doing stir your soul and get you excited? Or are you just serving your sentence, enduring this procedure out of sense of obligation – I'm a Christian, it's what I'm supposed to do.
- B. In this passage Isaiah reminds us what it is that gives life to our worship.
  1. Worship is the natural impulse of people who understand what it means to be saved.
  2. When I recognize my terrible situation as a sinner, all that God did to make a way for me to come back to Him, the price that was paid, the love it all expressed
  3. My heart should be overwhelmed. I should be so filled with gratitude and love that it just overflows with expressions of love, praise and gratitude for the great God we serve.
  4. Isaiah says: "give thanks" (v. 4) "praise the Lord in song" (v. 5) "Cry aloud and shout for joy" (v. 6)
  5. Heart-felt, sincere, passionate worship should naturally flow from people who understand what God has done for them. We offer this kind of passionate worship because...as Isaiah says..."great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."
  6. Our Savior has done great things for us; that should be reflected in the passion and zeal with which we worship Him.

### **Conclusion: *The Remnant***

- A. There are two lessons to carry away from our study
  1. If I count myself as part of God's faithful remnant – one of His children – I need to ask myself, "Am I doing these things?"
  2. If I'm not part of God's faithful remnant, I need to realize the great blessings I'm missing and the terrible predicament I'm in.
- B. It's time to turn back to God.