

Disruptive Hope

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Date: 27 December 2020

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our online service for Sunday, December 27th, 2020. My name is Kent Dixon. I'm the lead pastor of Bramard Baptist Church here in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Well, I hope you had an amazing Christmas time, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day. Perhaps you tuned in for our Christmas Eve service on Facebook.

Or if you haven't, guess what? You can do that now. So you can tune in to that. I hope it was a blessing for people who tuned in.

And it remains on Facebook, so you can go ahead and check it out anytime. Well, welcome to everyone who's tuning in live this morning on Facebook, or who will be checking out this video later, listening to it on our podcast, or any of the other channels that we have available.

So, yeah, I do encourage you to like us on Facebook or follow us on Facebook, because you'll get notifications of when we go live with our service videos and so on.

[1 : 05] So, God bless you in whatever way you're connecting with us. And just a little secret, I'm on vacation right now, so I'm not actually here. Well, I am, but I'm not. But you'll figure it out.

So, again, just welcome, my sincerest welcome to you, however you're tuning in. And I hope that you had a fantastic Christmas, that it has been relaxing for you.

It's been a blessing. You've been able to connect with friends and family in the way that you're able to safely do that. And here we are reflecting on the coming of the end of 2020.

So, let's open in prayer this morning. Father God, we recognize that we are closing in on the end of what has been a very difficult year for most of us.

Lord, it's been a time of anxiety and struggle and financial hardship, health concerns and so on. And, oh, Lord, it's been very tiring.

[2 : 08] All of us are tired. All of us are frustrated and feeling discouraged in some ways. And so, Lord, I pray for a sense of hope now.

I pray for a sense of relief as we recognize there are vaccines coming in that are already here and are going to be distributed more and more throughout the new year.

Lord, I pray for safety as people choose to take vaccines. And, Lord, for those who choose not to take them, I pray that they would continue to be wise. That for all of us, Lord, we would be patient.

You would give us patience and perseverance to continue to maintain the health restrictions that we need to get through this, Lord. And we have faith that you have everything under control and that we will see the end of this by your grace.

So, Lord, we also recognize that you've shown up in so many ways. You've provided for our needs. You've answered prayer throughout this year. And, Lord, for our little church, Bramar Baptist here in Edmonton.

[3 : 15] Lord, you've been faithful to us. And we thank you for the ways that you've allowed us to be able to continue to connect with people and to continue to share your word and your truth with people.

Lord, that's been a blessing for us. And I pray for continued faithfulness both from us and from you in the months ahead. And, Lord, we look forward to 2021 with hope, with a sense of possibly returning to some semblance of normal over the course of this coming year.

So, Lord, we thank you for that. Lord, we ask you for strength for this new year. Lord, as we seek to do your will, as we seek to follow your path for us, for our church, for our lives individually, Lord, I pray that you would give us the strength and the awareness to realize when you are speaking to us, where you are directing us, and to be obedient and follow.

Lord, we also ask above all else that your will be done in 2021. And, Lord, we should almost get shirts made because that's such a beautiful rhyme. And yet, Lord, here we are.

We're asking for your will to be done, Lord, not ours. And, Lord, if you can use us in any way, we ask you to do that. We ask you to use us as individuals, as a church, as your people around the world.

[4 : 37] And for anyone who's tuning in and listening and doesn't really know you, Lord, I pray that they would come to know you in this new year, that they would come to recognize you as their Lord and Savior, and that they would give their lives to you.

And so, Lord, we just ask for everything, for you to continue to meet all of our needs. We know that you will. We know that you see us. And you know that we have the needs that we have, Lord, before we even ask for them.

So we ask you to continue to provide as you have faithfully always done. Lord, I pray that you would bless this year ahead, 2021. May each one of us be blessed, be used by you, and to make a difference for your people around the world.

Lord, may it be a year of peace and a year of healing. And we pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, while Christmas has still passed, I should say, I'm not the ghost of Christmas past, by the way, but we may still be in the Christmas spirit, at least I hope we are, and I certainly am.

So let's enjoy, I'm reluctant to let go of Christmas carols. And as you can see around me here, I still have Christmas decorations, and we gradually phase that out of our home.

[5 : 56] But we often keep a tree up undecorated, but with lights on it still, and think of it as a winter tree, because it does bring a sense of joy into our home. So while the Christmas season has passed, we're still going to sing some Christmas carols together this morning.

And the messages of these carols are not Christmas-only words. I hope you recognize that. They're words that are true for us all year. And we're going to sing three of my favorites this morning.

Angels from the Realms of Glory, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and O Come All Ye Faithful. So let's begin with Angels from the Realms of Glory.

Bless you as you follow the lyrics on the screen, and follow the leading of this worship leader. God bless you. Angels from the Realms of Glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth.

Ye who sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth. Come and worship, Come and worship, Worship Christ the newborn King.

[7 : 27] Shepherds in their fields abiding, Watching all your flocks by night. God with man is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light.

Come and worship, Come and worship, Worship Christ the newborn King. Sages from the Realms of Glory, Sages leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar, Seek the great desire of nations, Ye have seen His natal star, Come and worship, Come and worship, Come and worship, Worship Christ the newborn King.

Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear, Suddenly the Lord descending, In His temple shall appear, Come and worship, Come and worship, Worship Christ the newborn King.

Hark the held angels sing, Glory to the newborn King, Peace on earth and mercy, My God in sinners reconciled, Joyful all nations rise, Join the trials of the skies, With angelic hosts proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem, Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King, Christ by highest heaven adored,

Christ the everlasting Lord, Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin, Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity, Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel, Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King, Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King, O come ye,

[11 : 31] O come ye, O come ye, Faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem, Hark the heavenly, Come and behold Him, One the King of angels, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord Sing, class of angels Sing in exultation

Sing all ye citizens of heaven above Glory to God, all glory in the highest Oh come let us adore Him Oh come let us adore Him Oh come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord Yea, Lord, we greet Born this happy morning Jesus, you give me all glory

Word of the Father, now in flesh appear Oh come let us adore Him Oh come let us adore Him Oh come let us adore Him Be in Christ the Lord Well I hope you enjoyed those songs and it wasn't too odd to you to be singing Christmas carols.

Those songs and the truth of those songs, the words of those songs are so rich and such a blessing. And many of the songs that we sing at Christmas time and we've classified as Christmas carols, it's a shame to me that they get shelved for 10 or 11 months of the year, I guess 11 months of the year.

It's just too bad because some of them are really great. So you never know, I might sneak in the odd Christmas carol throughout the year when you least expect it. Well, this morning we're blessed to have a guest preacher and then next week as well.

[15 : 01] Next week, Bremer's very own pastor, Luwam Gumling, will be leading you because I will not be here, but will be leading in celebrating communion and he'll also be bringing the sermon on Sunday, January 3rd, believe it or not folks, 2021.

Wow. So as I said, that'll be next week. This week we have a guest and then I'll be back on Sunday, January 10th to launch us into a new sermon series.

So I invite you to enjoy this sermon this morning. Enjoy Pastor Luwam's first sermon of 2021 next Sunday and then I'll be back, as I said, on January 10th.

Well, it's a joy for me to welcome a guest preacher this morning and her name is Shannon Ewell. Shannon is our denomination's director of church planting.

And Shannon's going to be bringing a message this morning from the book of Isaiah. Our denominational leaders actually put together a series of Advent sermons for each week of this past Advent season.

[16 : 15] And we actually chose to not use them this year because I had some ideas for things that I wanted to preach. So I hope you enjoyed our sermon series for Advent this year.

But Shannon is here this morning. You know, we recognize that 2020 has been about disruption in so many ways, hasn't it? It's been about chaos in a lot of ways.

But in that disruption, in that chaos, we've still had hope. We've continued to have hope. 2,000 years ago, we recognized that plans were also interrupted.

They were disrupted. An unexpected pregnancy, a fearful appearance of an angel. A disrupted night with sheep, unplanned guests in the manger.

It was different. And it was unplanned and it was disruptive. But with that disruption, there came hope. There came the hope of a Messiah.

[17:15] The hope of a Savior who would inhabit our broken world. Hope for one who would bring about shalom, bring about peace in all its fullness.

Shannon's message will focus on this idea of disruptive hope. May you be blessed by this message and go in peace when the sermon concludes.

My prayer for each of you is that this new year that's coming up so quickly, that this new year will bring you closer to God, closer to Him in ways that you can't imagine yet, closer to Him in ways that you have not experienced before.

before may 2021 bring blessing bring peace bring comfort for you and your family as we close this year it's it's been quite a journey but god bless you i love each one of you and care about you deeply and you're in my prayers so may you celebrate this new year may you celebrate new year's eve and new year's day as a sign of hope that this disruptive hope is something new that we can find that lies ahead for us and lies in only in christ jesus and so enjoy shannon's sermon now and then go in peace when it's done god bless you i wonder how many of us here today are sighing with relief it's over the excess of our celebrations is packed away or in process of being done so the leftovers are being slowly whittled down and eating a carrot stick is a refreshing change of pace most of us love celebrations births and weddings birthdays christmas easter so we know the feeling of jubilation once they are underway we're thrilled that that which we were waiting for that which we hoped for is now happening last summer our daughter married and we hosted 90 people in our yard as the day approached the anticipation increased until on that day we gathered on a beach to witness the bride and groom enter into a covenant of promises to keep to one another of living a life of love and caring for one another and any others that come into their lives in all the ordinary days that would be ahead of them hope and joy were palpable in the air and in the days after as we removed twinkle lights from the trees returned all we had borrowed and rented packed it all away for many of us that celebration was done and behind us our days returned to their normal ordinariness but for the couple now entering into what this covenant lived out actually requires of them they have to be continually reminded of those promises even and especially when life our life is disrupted by the things that disrupt human life there is no resting on the celebration without fulfilling the covenant of what they've been called to and committed to as they walk out their new life together this season we've just been celebrating is like that it's easy for us once it's all packed away and behind us just to rest in our ordinary lives often sighing with relief yet the very celebration itself reminds us not only of the hope of what is to come but also of the hope that has come the hope that disrupting our everyday lives by calling us back to the joy of being co-laborers with god in his redeeming reconciling restoration work of bringing all things in heaven and earth together under one head even christ today in our passage from the prophet isaiah that exuberance and joy of hope in the air drips off the page we're going to pick up at isaiah chapter 61 verse 10 and go through to 62 3 i delight greatly in the lord my soul rejoices in my god

for he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in robes of righteousness as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels for as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seed to grow so the sovereign lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations for zion's sake i will not keep silent for jerusalem's sake i will not remain quiet till her righteousness shines out like the dawn her salvation like a blazing torch 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 it's no wonder isaiah is celebrating look at what has occurred prior to his great praise and delight heavenly promises have come to earth prophecies of old and long yearned for are being unfolded hope is heavy in the air verse 10 gives us the imagery of exactly what occurs at a wedding the bride is dressed and presented to the groom a covenant is enacted and then it's time to party hope is heavy in the air so heavy so tangible that isaiah says he can't keep silent for the sake of zion for the sake of the people he can't stay quiet because this message this message of the one who will come like a blazing torch amongst them is now revealed in the same way we shouldn't keep silent for the sake of the world that god so loves and to who to whom he commands us to love as he loves god with us has put on flesh incarnated himself and salvation has come down like that blazing torch with righteousness and justice shining out like the dawn and for this we cannot keep quiet or can we after we've sang the familiar and favorite songs retold the wondrous stories cleaned up the party messes and packed it all away for another year do we also somehow inadvertently pack away or put on the back burner the full message of the good news the gospel that is now here on earth as it is in heaven and which isaiah expresses in this prophecy leading to his great delight and joy as we look at this passage it is clear that celebration is in order but what is it that is being celebrated birth of the messiah isn't mentioned here at all although for the messiah to exist a birth certainly occurred rather the passage tells us that what is being celebrated so extravagantly is the clothing of the people by god with garments of salvation and with being arrayed in robes of righteousness that the people are now called oaks of righteousness for the display of god's splendor that as we wear these clothes displaying the character of god we will shine out like the dawn like blazing torches and that in acting and enlivening god's gracious righteousness and justice brings him splendor right into the crown of his hand some 700 years later when jesus begins his active ministry on earth he refers to this prophecy in luke 4

[26 : 15] this is no passing reference but rather the foundation of what god incarnated is ushering into the human reality salvation is good news to the poor the disenfranchised the brokenhearted the captives prisoners of darkness this is good news of bringing his justice that delivers people out of shame and rejection and back into the community of humans to god and humans to one another the good news of god establishing his kingdom as the rule and reign of earth and heaven the good news of redeeming humans back into his shalom rising humans out of the ashes and crowning them with it as his image bearers to shine like the dawn among all the peoples with righteousness and justice of god's desire that all his creation is reconciled and restored to him and to community relationships again of restoring that which has been distorted by humanity's desire to be gods of their own selves and lives of being crowns of being crowns of splendor in the hand of the lord and oaks of righteousness for the display of god's splendor this is the good news of being invited to participate with god in rebuilding and restoring the places long devastated where hope has been disrupted by the cruelty oppression pain and death of humans living life as our own gods this and so much more is what isaiah's words are delighting in and celebrating it is clear that god's salvation action is for the peace and justice in our neighborhood cities and the world shalom complete wholeness healing and restoring of all things both now and into our forever and as his people set free from sin and fear of death that incites every man for himself mentality as god's people wear these clothes of salvation and righteousness and justice we display god's splendor but what does that mean what is god's splendor what is his splendor but his character his splendor is for the display of his character through this salvation that is entered into human history jesus in john 17 while talking to his father says he has brought god glory on earth by completing the work he gave him to do and then he says and now father glorify me in your presence with the glory i had with you before the world began and then even further he says i have given them us all believers the glory that you gave me that they may be one as we are one what is this glory erdman's dictionary of the bible notes that in the new testament just as in the old glory refers to salvation now revealed in the messiah's work of deliverance thus john presents jesus as the revelation of god's glory his works as the sign of that same glory participation in the glory of the resurrected christ is participation in the glory of god believers are the image and glory of god giving glory by leading lives worthy of the gospel through obedience through obedience good deeds purity and willingness to suffer for christ

we see this also in the psalm so many times god's glory rests in his mighty works manifested in creation itself the psalmist writes at the announcement of jesus's birth the angels declare glory to god in the the highest and on earth peace to all people on whom his favor rests when we go back to what is god's splendor not only here in our isaiah passage but in many other references we remember that god's splendor is the display of his character through salvation that has entered human history these words splendor and glory are often interchangeable as they are communicating a similar aspect of god and his character and his relationship with humans god's splendor his glory is displayed through his image bearers as we enact and enliven his salvation of righteousness and justice in the true hebrew understanding of justice *sadaqwa* that kind of justice that delivers from slavery and oppression and restores people to community relationships and then that right righteousness *misfat* is displayed when we are the deliverers of justice that restores community relationships including our relationships with god no wonder isaiah is delighting greatly in the lord rejoicing god is adorning he's clothing us with clothes of righteousness and justice that bring shalom to the world and we as these image bearers of god shine in the world and as we do we become crowns of splendor in god's hand we have displayed god's character just as jesus in john 17 rejoices in and exactly as isaiah foretold in the beginning of this chapter 61 prophecy and of which jesus announced his intentions at the outset of his ministry in luke 4 it is not necessarily our ritual acts of worship that bring god glory yet part of giving god glory comes from our honor of him but it's also our obedience and allegiance to display god's salvation plan of redemption reconciliation and restoration to all those to whom god has been inaccessible and to whom the world is neglected repressed oppressed and trampled upon how then can we keep silent how then can we pack up our celebratory decorations and simply go back to our regular days of ordinary living god through christ and his work has co-opted us to join his great good news of his kingdom here on earth working towards his understanding of righteousness and justice isaiah eloquently pours it out for us to bind up the brokenhearted proclaiming freedom to whatever holds people captive releasing humans from prisons of their own devices and the devices of others to comfort all who mourn and grieve to pour upon our heads gladness instead of ashes clothing us with the liberty from these things so we rise up from what isaiah tells us god calls us in chapter 130 oaks with fading leaves to what isaiah now says in 61 3 to being oaks of righteousness a planting of the lord for his splendor tim keller has written the gospel is not just about individual happiness and fulfillment it's not just a wonderful plan for my life but a wonderful plan

for the world it is about the coming of god's kingdom to renew everything gospel-centered churches do not only urge individuals to be converted but also to seek peace and justice in our cities and in our world god calls us to reorient our lives around mercy and justice around being healers of the world jesus describes his followers as light of the world and that are participating in acts of righteousness that delivers the kind of justice that restores reveals our god who loves the world so much so he sent jesus to usher in his kingdom where peace and justice and healing and completeness prevail shalom rather than packing everything away at the end of the celebration this is the time to intentionally pursue the peace and justice of god with all our hearts minds souls and strength so that we are clothed in his righteous acts of delivering the kind of justice that restores those community relationships advocating justice for all peoples in all ways in loving neighbors as we desire to love ourselves and to be loved as we enact where our clothes of his mighty love compassion mercy justice and grace we shine not from our own light but from the light of the world and we display god's splendor ever we live work play and pray this is what brings god glory to to the peace andwalker who looks at that time and in some midst we get with a battle of ultraviolet that opens us all to work to state the stars for us as the long time we are nominated to destroy as the AfD public ■■■ of the Monate Rachel-Tim Norris when we filter out of injustice to copy and spread and shine in ways to drop them shall we hope to use it by its heart anytime we are living in a■ world where is our mission?