

God's people believe and share the gospel message

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Date: 07 November 2021

Preacher: James Ross

[0 : 0 0] now if you've got your bibles perhaps you could turn with me to isaiah chapter 52 we're going to look at just a very short section from verse 7 to 10 it'll be up on the screen as well as we think about the mission of god's people a reminder that our mission is always to to enjoy the gospel to enjoy our good news and isaiah 52 verse 7 to 10 serves that purpose of helping us to recover that sense of joy as it describes to us the wonder of salvation and encouragement to us to extend the hope of the lord to the ends of the earth so let's read these verses together how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news who proclaim peace who bring good tidings who proclaim salvation who say to zion your god reigns listen your watchmen lift up their voices together they shout for joy when the lord returns to zion and they will see it with their own eyes burst into songs of joy together you ruins of jerusalem for the lord has comforted his people he has redeemed jerusalem the lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our god this little text reminds us of the life transforming good news that there is in the bible at the heart of our faith and it's good news here in light of two things in light of the current circumstances of the people to whom this message from isaiah comes comes from god through isaiah and it's a life transforming as we consider the character and the work of god the true king so this evening to help us to in a sense to to grasp the circumstances of the people in isaiah's day to help us to enter into the text we're going to go on a little guided tour and so we're going to go to the heart of the ruined city of jerusalem in isaiah's time but we're also going to be passing by the city of stalingrad as we think about the great siege of stalingrad in world war ii that lasted some 900 days or so between 1941 and 44 we'll be taken to a city surrounded by the nazi forces starving to death and we will also take a very different journey we'll journey to narnia to that land where it was always winter and never christmas and we'll do that to help us to think about the good news that we have here that i hope these journeys will be a window for us into the life-changing joy of salvation that comes when the king comes when help and deliverance comes and so as i said isaiah 52 came first of all to the exiles this is a message for exiles so they have been sent away from israel because of disobedience and so they know that their city of jerusalem lies in ruins they have been captured by enemies and perhaps god felt distant as they were in a distant country and then comes that image of verse 7 so picture with me a breathless messenger running to the city

of jerusalem and the watchmen on the wall spot this man running over the hillside and the question is this good news what's the news is it is it death or glory and as he gets closer and we hear his message it's it's good news it's it's peace it's salvation it's your god reigns it's the equivalent of stalingrad throwing a street party when the nazi forces were defeated it's narnia finding hope when they discover that aslan the true king is on the move so let's jump into our text to see why we should celebrate god's salvation three words that stand out from our text the first reason to celebrate because god reigns verse 7 your god reigns now notice the answer to the despair that these people are facing they say how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news and we might think well the hope is because this messenger's here but no it's not the messenger it's the message that gives hope it's the beautiful message from their king of this king who reigns remember their experience it's one of defeat of knowing god's judgment of being separate from their homeland and from their temple and ultimately from the the promised land they have known humiliation and they have known loss but now by god's grace the tide is turning hope returns joy dawns just by way of observation this kind of picture is helpful for us seeing that the christian message our message our message is only ever going to sound to people as good news if we have that sense of the spiritual danger and misery of life without jesus as savior and when people dismiss the reality of sin or judgment or eternity jesus and his death may seem to them pointless and so one thing that we always want to pray is that god would open people's eyes both to have a right view of spiritual danger but also to have a right view of the the wonder of the salvation that jesus offers now what does the reign of god mean for his people according to this messenger in verse 7 have a look at these wonderful words the reign of god means peace means shalom it means wholeness and flourishing it means life as it's meant to be means peace with god and peace within ourselves and and peace in the world it's the way things ought to be when god reigns it's good tidings it's good news just as it was in original creation when god created and proclaimed that it was good when god as king rules over all there is goodness there is good news in that and there is too in verse 7 salvation now for these exiles literally they might be thinking in terms of broken chains and and the end of being captives and slaves and getting to return home but spiritually that's a really powerful image isn't it and the bible picks up the idea of us all being spiritually slaves jesus says we are slaves to sin and we cannot stop ourselves from being sinners and being sinful

we are unable to break free we are unable to conquer that great enemy of death spiritually we are far from god and eternal life outside of the good news of salvation so the gospel message your god reigns comes with that note of real celebration for the people of god when people tell of the the siege at stalingrad one of the the crucial turning points so if you imagine a city that's been bombarded month after month after month but there came a point where russian troops and and armaments came and managed to to break through and they they set up a rail link so now food supplies are going into the city and now weapons are going into the city and there was that beginning of hope that that hitler would not have the final word we go to narnia you know the story we are introduced to the the white queen jadis the one who claimed the throne of narnia but then central to the story is aslan's return the true king returns to his kingdom and instantly how power it is broken and begins to fade that perpetual winter turns to spring father christmas shows up because the king has come and what the bible says is that god is the true king overall and his reign for his people is good news it's peace salvation and it's important for us to to capture as christians it's important for us to get that sense of joy and celebration as we think about how do we communicate the good news it begins with appreciating just how good our good news is especially when we think about the reign of king jesus because jesus was and is god who reigns mark chapter 1 verse 14 and 15 jesus proclaims good news from god the kingdom of god has come near he calls the people to repent and believe the king has come bringing in his kingdom luke chapter 4 he begins to preach in nazareth he says the spirit of the lord is on me he has anointed me to proclaim and to proclaim what to proclaim good news to proclaim the release for captives jesus is this king who has come and he reigns we see it in the life of jesus what's the kingdom of jesus like his life is bringing in god's kingdom and we see healing and we see driving out evil and we see it raising people to life and we see him restoring peace and wholeness pictures of what his eternal kingdom is like but then we see how he brings salvation as god's king he is a king who suffers and dies for his people jesus in that sense is treated as an enemy so that we who trust in him might be regarded as friends of god and today our hope is that jesus still rules and still reigns in heaven in glory at his father's right hands as david reminded us he continues to pray for his church he continues to pour out his spirit on his church and he will return to take his church to be with him and we look forward to the new heavens and the new earth where we will enjoy as

god's people that perfect reign that goodness that joy forever so there is reason to celebrate because god reigns but that's not all that is contained in this section we also have a second reason to celebrate and that's because god returns look at verse 8 with me so we've gone from a single messenger shouting good news this message is now picked up as it were by the watchmen on the walls of the city and they are passing this news to the rest of the city listen your watchmen lift up their voices together they shout for joy when the lord returns to zion they will see it with their own eyes what's the good news for this city and ruins the lord is coming back our king will return so so again this is the context of exile and part of the tragedy of exile is that this people who had known so much of god's goodness and kindness and living in that covenant relationship with god had left the land due to their sin due to their idolatry due to their turning their back on the one true god and so god announced judgment and that judgment came from king nebuchadnezzar who came and he destroyed jerusalem and he took captives away and another prophet a prophet now by the name of ezekiel chapters 8 to 11 it reminds us that part of that judgment from god is that god himself left the building the glory of god departed from the temple of all the losses that the people of god knew the loss of fellowship with the one true god it was a great loss so now now they can celebrate with joy because here is the promise it's the promise of the return of the king king coming to save the day again think about stalingrad bombarded hungry desperate citizens but then on the horizon seeing tank after tank from their russian comrades seeing hordes of soldiers coming and all of a sudden there's hope this will not last forever we have not been forgotten or to think of that wonderful ancient rhyme that mr beaver shares with the children in narnia says wrong will be right when aslan comes in sight at the sound of his roar sorrows will be no more when he bears his teeth winter meets its day and when he shakes his mane we shall have spring again the great hope for narnia the return of the true king the hope for the people of god is that god wouldn't leave them in exile god wouldn't say i'm done with my people rather he would return why was there the separation the bible is really clear why is there separation is because of the people's sin because of the people's turning to idols and that's that's true for us why is it that we are by nature separate from god it's because of our sin because our hearts don't turn towards god they're naturally turned away from god different question why does god return why would god return and the answer is entirely because of his grace and his mercy it's not that the people deserve it it's that god delights to show mercy and grace and that's still true for us today that still remains the hope of god's people the hope of the world that

though we are by nature sinners and rebels and enemies against god that god in his grace and mercy is willing to come to us and to save us and to return us back to himself and when we think about who is jesus we recognize jesus was and is god who returns the gospels are full of that in malachi chapter 3 so so the last book in the old testament there was this future hope that the lord would return to his temple and then you think about so we've been in john's gospel it's no wonder there's so much attention on jesus coming to the temple he is the lord who comes literally comes to his temple the son of god comes to be among his people to rescue them and he declares i am actually the true temple if you want to meet with god you need to come to jesus he says another one of the old testament prophets zechariah zechariah 9 9 spoke of um that future hope of the the king who would come riding on a donkey the king who would return to them gentle and riding on a donkey and that's what we see with jesus shortly before his death jesus returns the king returns to jerusalem riding on a donkey as our humble servant king and that's not the end of that theme because now as the people of god we are still awaiting another return of king jesus so he came once he returned once and he has begun building his kingdom begun the work of establishing salvation but the end of history jesus will come back again his return is when we will see that prayer answered your kingdom come perfectly salvation will be complete on that day all his enemies will be defeated on that day eternal life will be secured on that day so our hope and our joy remains the same as those of the people in isaiah's day the return of the king we live in between that the first return the first coming of jesus and the second coming of jesus our king and there's one other reason to celebrate in this short section verses 9 and 10 and we celebrate the reality that god redeems now the message spreads beyond the single runner beyond the watchman on the walls to the ends of the earth from the ruins of jerusalem to the ends of the earth a song of god who redeems burst into songs of joy together you ruins of jerusalem for the lord has comforted his people he has redeemed jerusalem the lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our god in the book of isaiah from from chapter 40 onwards the theme of comfort becomes really prominent and important and an end to the loss and the misery and the defeat and and we're told here in part how that comfort will come the lord has comforted his people and he has redeemed jerusalem and that word there is the idea of the kinsman redeemer for those of us perhaps who know the story of ruth boaz was her kinsman redeemer a close relative who was able to to buy back land or to buy someone out of slavery to to pay a price to bring restoration and god says to his people i will be your kinsman redeemer that speaks to us of relationship of costly love of commitment on god's part to to save his church and to keep his church and so it's no wonder this message in verse 9 and 10 it becomes a song

[20:19] from the the ruined city of jerusalem to the ends of the earth there's this song that god saves maybe we think of a psalm like psalm 96 verse 10 say among the nations god reigns this is this is the hope not just for the exiles not just for the people of jerusalem it's hope for the world that god reigns that jesus saves when stalingrad was eventually freed from that siege after 900 days there were reports of of tears of joy of of street parties breaking out of wild celebration after years freedom had come in narnia when aslan leapt into battle and crushed the witch and and won the victory there is joy among people and animals because the king has come and the king had saved and in the same way and much much greater jesus was and is god who redeems god who saves that's how he was announced by the angels the savior who has been born to you is the messiah the lord god's chosen savior had been born and he was none other than god in human form jesus the son of god and in his life don't we see at the arm of the lord at work pushing back darkness acting as the light of the world acting with the power of god to bring in his kingdom and then in his death the arm of the lord nailed to a cross in order to secure our forgiveness and our salvation when we trust in him so we praise and celebrate the god who redeems the whole story of the bible is the story of jesus and it's the story of salvation that we are called to celebrate as we close let's go back to verse 7 let's think about that that single messenger on the hillside it's speaking for the king it's peace it's good news we are saved doesn't that represent a brilliant picture of the church and of us as christians we are sent by king jesus and and the hope for the world is not us as messengers but it's in the message that we declare jesus has come to make peace between people and god by dealing with the problem of sin that leads to death jesus is good news because in him we can have eternal life we can have relationship with god that lasts forever he jesus is the king who saves and that's why we preach this is why we want to spend time on monday evenings praying for those we know and care about who aren't christians yet it's why we want to show compassion in our community in our workplaces to our families it's why we seek with the help of the spirit to bring him into our conversations because we know that jesus really is good news we know that salvation is a cause for celebration so as the people of god as we discover again and again as we rediscover in the word of god

how amazing our good news is may we pray that we would want others to hear and that we would be ready to be that messenger bearing that good news from our king spreading the joy of his salvation let's pray together lord our god we thank you that throughout the whole bible we find the wonderful story of your saving grace we thank you that you are the god who reigns that you have created all things including us we thank you that despite our sin despite our rebellion against you that in your mercy and grace that you have sent your son jesus to live and die and rise and return to the glory of heaven as our king we thank you that he is your king who reigns we thank you that he is the king who has come and who will come again and we thank you that jesus is the king who on the cross secured salvation for all who would put their trust in him father again as we think of this good news spreading through the world as we think of the the misery and the suffering and the darkness that we hear and see so much of in the world and we pray that your spirit would be at work turning back the darkness bringing people from that kingdom of darkness into your wonderful kingdom of light and lord we pray it so that you would have the glory that you deserve we pray it so that more and more people would have true and lasting joy please help us never to forget the good news of jesus help us never to take it for granted give us that boldness and help that we need to share it with others to pray for others to work for the sake of others coming to know jesus as savior too now we pray in his name amen now let's close together singing the hymn nothing but the blood of jesus and we will stand together to sing all right sing are still there it is there in funny but they usually remember we would not do it still how can d and for those you you you and you you you amiga