

The child who changes everything

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[0:00] And so this talk is called The Child Who Changes Everything.! So if you don't have your Bibles open, please turn to Isaiah chapter 8, verse 19, and we're going to 9-7 as Rosemary read.

Tom and Lisa are middle-aged with children. They have stable jobs. Life is busy juggling all the to-do lists.

They're nice, friendly, fun, down-to-earth people. Their lives seemingly revolve around their kids, more or less, though. They give their kids what they want. Their latest toys, phones, computer consoles, you name it.

Taking them from one club to another. They live for holidays and a comfortable life. Tom is preoccupied with money, home comforts, property, and the latest gadgets.

Lisa is seeking comfort in spiritual books and New Age philosophies. Gurus who will help her. Telling her what she wants to think.

[1:24] She looks to the new fad for meaning. She's always trying to look fashionable and hip. Posting selfies of herself on Instagram.

Always with makeup, by the way. Deep down, she is insecure. She wants to fit in, to be accepted. She's often on social media with Tom.

And they're always looking cool. Keeping up appearances. She's looking for affirmation from friends. But behind the smiles, there is a deep discontentment.

On one side of the family, they have recently suffered bereavement and ill health. Tom himself has health problems. They seem restless and deeply dissatisfied.

Is there any hope for Tom and Lisa? What's happened there? Well, my first point.

[2:27] Oh, no, that's my second point. What's happened there? Okay. My first point is utter hopelessness. Utter hopelessness. So, looking at the text, everybody, in chapter 8, verses 19 to 22.

What situation do we have here? What is going on? What does the prophet Isaiah foresee? Please look at verse 21.

God's people are distressed, hungry, roaming around through the land. They are famished, which means very hungry. They will become enraged.

And they will curse their king and their God. Not only that, look at verse 22. But the future is gloomy. The prophet says that they'll be driven, thrust into utter darkness. There is hopelessness in the promised land.

[3:40] What is happening? Why is this happening? God seems so distant from his people. Well, the reason being is that these are the covenant people of God.

His special chosen possession. Treasured amongst all the people. They have gone after other ways of fulfillment.

Contrary to what their loving creator has instructed them to do. To obey his direction, his covenant of love. Back in Deuteronomy, the people declared that the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant God, is their God.

And that they would walk in obedience to him. And that they would keep his decrees, his commands and laws. They would listen to him. It was like this beautiful marriage covenant.

God being the bridegroom. And his people being the bride. Saying, yes, I do. What has happened?

[4:52] Sadly, instead, the people have committed adultery. Do you see in the text? Verse 19. They are consulting mediums and spiritists.

Inquiring about the future. These people could be translated as necromancers. Wizards. People who summon up dead spirits.

From people that have died. You see, brothers and sisters. At this point of history. King Ahaz of Judah is on the royal throne. But he governs extremely badly.

He has led the people away from their gods. He did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Engaging in the detestable practices of the nations.

The Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places. On the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

[5:55] It says in 2 Kings 16. There are even more horrible things you can read about in that chapter. There is utter hopelessness in the land.

But not only this. But Judah was seeking alliance with the mightiest Syrians for support against their enemies. Pragmatically, you could see why. Israel and Syria are ganging up to attack Judah.

Judah looks like a small pawn on the chessboard. They need help. However, who do they turn to? Diviners to predict the future.

And pagan Assyria. Who will eventually attack her. Here we see Isaiah reasoning with the people. Verse 19.

Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? Should not a people inquire of their gods? These ventriloquists that pretend to summon up the dead.

[6:56] Who perhaps whisper, mutter, growl or chirp like birds. Are utterly useless. Why consult these in place of God's clear, powerful, life-giving word?

Why? The prophet asked them. They can give you no future. Go to the living God to get instruction. Divination was an abomination to God.

Against his holy word. You can read about it in Deuteronomy chapter 18 if you wish. Here, brothers and sisters, we see utter hopelessness in the land.

Who should God's people be seeking after? The Lord God. The Lord Almighty who dwells on Mount Zion. This relationship is what matters. Get that right and things start falling into place.

God's judgment is about to come as the Assyrians invade Israel from the north. The people will be exiled from their homeland like their forefathers in Egypt.

[8:13] All hope is lost. They have no light of dawn. Verse 19. Sorry, 20. Utter hopelessness in the land.

Well, what do we learn from the text? Well, when people drift away from God, they will always try to fill up the vacuum of their lives with something else, don't they?

Doesn't this picture our society without God? Restlessness, insecurity in the dark. Scared of the future. What might happen.

Seeking answers from other religions. Going to horoscopes to find hope. Perhaps rolling Chinese runestones to make decisions.

Seeking help from crystals. Going to tarot cards. Seeking satisfaction from a relationship. Perhaps sex. I'm sure you can think of more.

[9:18] I was told the Puritans said that people are allergic to God. People are craving for a deep satisfaction and meaning in life.

And they look for it in all manner of places. Perhaps you are into these things. You're yearning for fulfillment in creative things or mystical experiences or something else.

But do they really satisfy you? A lady I know recently gave her testimony. She was in the occult for 25 years.

Searching for what she thought was the light. She ended up crying out to God in desperation. She was in a very, very dark place.

Well, has God left his people? Let's move on. The second point on my slide there is glorious hope in the land.

[10:20] Glorious hope in the land. Verses 1 to 5. Please look at it. No, he hasn't. In verse 1. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

In the past, he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. But in the future, he will honor Galilee of the nations by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

There is a future hope in the land where the Assyrians had once invaded. In the north, in Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilee.

Those areas first to fall to the Assyrians where they had been humbled by Almighty God. Look! Where there was judgment and dishonor, now there is honor.

There is glorious hope. Where there was invasion, humility, hunger, thirst, ridicule, lostness, emptiness, no hope.

[11:25] Now there is a great light. Those living in the land of deep darkness. A light has dawned.

Do you see the perfect tense in verses 2 to 4? Have seen, verse 2. Verse 3 has, sorry, 2 has dawned.

3 have enlarged, have increased. 4 have shattered. Isaiah writes as if it were already completed. Even though he's writing thousands, perhaps hundreds of years before. There is glorious hope. Once a small nation, as I said, like a pawn on a chessboard in the Middle East, now has multiplied into a vast nation.

Great joy has come. There is much rejoicing. Before God.

[12:39] Verse 3. It is like bringing in the harvest. Do you see that? As people rejoice at the harvest. Your cupboards, storehouses are full to the brim.

It's like winning a battle and dividing the bounty. In verse 3. Look at the language in verse 4. Yoke. Which is a wooden bar.

That was used by oxen when plowing. So they would furrow in a straight line. Or used for prisoners of war. By oppressors.

This bar that they've had. This rod of oppressors. What does this remind you of? The oppression of Egypt during the time of exile.

The people are out of their shackles. The bars that held them cruelly have now been broken. There is glorious hope in the land. It's like waking up from a nightmare.

[13:45] And pulling back the curtains. And seeing the glorious sun shining through. Majestically. It's like being in a harsh prisoner of war camp.

And being liberated after years of imprisonment and hardship. Surely, brothers and sisters. We want this glorious hope.

Isn't it great as a church. That God never leaves his people. Even though we deserve it. We deserve his just anger on us. Even though it might seem he has left us.

He never does. As a church. As we go into a new phase of life. We have a great hope. In the Lord. That he will provide for our needs.

He is our great light. Our great instruction. We walk. By his word. By his precepts. We trust in him. And only him.

[14:46] And we need not despair. Be encouraged. Brothers and sisters. He is with us. And for mission as well. We have this glorious hope.

Which is life changingly beautiful. This Christmas. We can share. This hope. With our family and friends. Here as we meet. In church. To this community.

Here. In Preston Circus. Why don't you invite someone. To our services. This Christmas. There are invites at the back. There. Please take one. But the question still.

Hanging is. What is. This glorious light. Or who is this glorious light. Oops. There you are.

There's my third point. Glorious hope in a child. Glorious hope in a child. Please look at verses 6 and 7. In our text.

[15:47] So. You would have thought. That this light. Would come through. A militarily strong. Davidic king. Wouldn't you? To defeat. Israel. And Judah's enemies. But where is this hope.

To be found. In a child. How unexpected. No. In God's economy. He doesn't raise up a king. Who uses swords. And horsepower. To override his enemies. God's king. Comes in the form. Of a baby. Verse 6. A son.

Given to us. He says it twice. Emphatically. A seemingly weak. Fragile boy. What? Who is this great light?

Who is this hope? Who is this child? What will he grow up to be? Look at verse 6. A wonderful counselor.

[16:44] Or wonder of a counselor. Oswald states this. It is true wisdom. Which knows that in weakness is strength.

In surrender is victory. And in death is life. It is true wisdom. Which knows that in weakness is strength.

In surrender is victory. And in death is life. This child's counsel goes far beyond the human. Wonderful counselor.

This child will be called a wonderful counselor. If you want the best advice. Go to this person. Don't go anywhere else. Inquire of him.

Don't go to those meaningless mediums. Go to this child. Verse 6. Mighty God.

[17:46] This child is divine in being. Unlike any earthly king. This king is a God king. His strength will be seen most surprisingly.

Completely usurping any Davidic king. King Hayaz has no comparison to this king. With this king you won't become enraged.

You won't look towards the earth. You won't see darkness and distress. There is glorious hope with this child. He is mighty God.

Everlasting father. Verse 6. This child will be the father of eternity.

One who will continually act as a father to his people. Again. Unlike any mortal king.

[18:46] This father will not leave his children destitute. Abandoned. Hungry. Roaming aimlessly.

He is the perfect everlasting father. And lastly. Did you see? Verse 6. He is the prince of peace. Shalom. This child. Will be known for bringing peace. And not war. As opposed to those Assyrians. And Egyptians.

Who might rest in war. And conquest. As an end. This child. Will bring reconciliation. Between man. And God.

Will be known for the Lord. But. People. Will not have to turn in on themselves. With haunted misery. Hallelujah. But. They. Can find peace.

[19:43] With God. Brothers. Sisters. Friends. There is glorious hope. In this child. You see.

Israel. Could not attain this. We read all about it. Israel. Is like. A disobedient child. Who completely. Goes.

Against his father. There is only. One child. Who completely. Obeys his father. And submits. To his loving rule.

There is only. One child. That comes. Into the world. Miraculously. And dispels. The darkness. There is only. One child. That brings.

A lasting. Relationship. Rather. Than. An empty. Rootlessness. There is only. One child. Who brings. True justice.

[20:39] And peace. There is only. One child. Who will. End hostility. There is only. One child. Who can give.

Us a future. Hope. There is only. One child. Who can drive. Out. All our fears. There is only. One child.

Who will rule. As king. Of kings. Forever. And ever. For to us. A child is born. For to us. The son is given.

And the government. Will be on his shoulders. And he will be called. Wonderful. Wonderful. Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting. Father. Prince of peace.

This child. Will say. Come to me. All.

[21:32] Who are weary. And burdened. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke. Upon you. And learn from me. For I am gentle. And humble. In heart.

You will find rest. For your souls. For my yoke. Is easy. And my burden. Is light. This child. Will say. I am. The light.

Of the world. Whoever. Follows me. Will never. Walk in darkness. But will have. The light. Of life. This child.

Says. Anyone. Anyone. Who drinks. This water. Will be thirsty again. But whoever. Drinks the water. I give him.

Will never. Thirst. Indeed. Indeed. The water. I give him. Will become. In him. A fount of water.
Springing up. To.

[22:26] Eternal. Life. Friends. You see. For Tom and Lisa. Who are yearning.

For true. For true. Contentment. Longing. For real. Satisfaction. This child. Satisfies.
This child. Answers their question. Is there any hope. All their insecurities. All their dissatisfied.
Longings and fears. Can be met.

In this child. The hopes and fears. Of all the years. Are met. In thee tonight. Friends. This child.
Changes everything. Jesus Christ. Changes everything. Let's sing our last song.

[23:22] About him. Joy to the world. Let's sing our last song. Thank you.