

The Rejected Report

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Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

[0 : 0 0] As we come now around God's word, let us seek his blessing upon his word. Let us pray. Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, we give thanks unto thee that we have access into thine own presence, that we can enter the very throne room of God and that we can lay out our petitions before thee, knowing, O Lord, that thou art the one who can meet with our needs out of the riches of thine own grace, that thou art the one who is never weary of hearing the petitions of thine own people, although at times they may feel that they are coming with the same petitions before thee again and again.

But in the cry of thine own people, thou doth find delight, and thou doth encourage us to come in and through thy Son with boldness and confidence to a throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy and to find grace to help us in our time of need.

We give thanks that thou art the unchanging God, that thou art the same yesterday, today and forever. For we are so conscious of the fact that as we travel through this world, that our circumstances and situations change daily, that they change from day to day.

But thou change us not. Thou art a compassionate God, thou art a loving God, thou art a merciful God.

And we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, that thou hast revealed thyself to us through thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the God who delighteth in mercy, and for whom judgment is a strange work.

[2 : 2 0] And so we pray that as we come around thine own word, that it may please thee to grant to us of thy Spirit to enlighten our understanding and to lead us into thine own truth, that we may see wondrous things in thy word, things that would encourage us and strengthen us in our journey in this world, and things that would rebuke us.

O Lord, we acknowledge that we are standing in need of rebuke, as well as in need of encouragement. And we give thanks that thy word is a double-edged sword, a word that brings comfort, encouragement, and a word that brings rebuke.

And we seek, O Lord, that thou would grant us the grace to receive thy word as such. We pray for our homes and our families, and seek thy blessing to be upon them.

Thou knowest their needs, and we give thanks that thou art the one who is able to meet with them. We pray especially for their number who are indifferent and careless regarding the claims of thy word, and pray that thy spirit would work in their lives, that they would be drawn to the gospel, that they would be drawn to the Christ of the gospel, to the salvation that thou doth offer to sinners such as we are in Jesus Christ.

And, O Lord, that thou would make them to be a willing people in a day of thine own power. O remember those who are ill, and pray that thine own healing hand may be upon them.

[4 : 1 7] Those who have been hospitalised within our own neighbourhood, we pray, O Lord, that thou would bless her, and we give thanks for the skill that thou doth give to doctors and nurses to bring relief and healing.

We pray for her husband and family, and for the many others that we know not of who are hospitalised. We pray, O Lord, that thou would be with them and bring them healing and be with their families and all those who are anxious regarding their loved ones.

We remember those who are waiting for hospitalisation, those who are waiting for treatment. In these anxious days, O Lord, we pray that thine own comfort and peace may be their portion.

we pray, O Lord, for those who have been bereft of loved ones who remember the Queen and the Royal Household, and the many others who are looking upon empty places in their families, in their homes, and in our communities.

All that reminding us that we are sojourners in this world that we are just passing through. Grant us wisdom, O Lord, to make our calling and election sure in Jesus Christ.

[5 : 36] We pray for our young people and our children and pray that thou would raise up a generation that would fear thy no name and who would be thy witnesses in this world.

We pray for all thy servants who proclaim the gospel this day. May they do so with confidence and in boldness, knowing that thy word will not return unto thee empty.

we pray, O Lord, that thou would remember those who are lonely, those who are confined to their homes, those who are in care homes. Bless those who look after them, those who take care of them.

And as we come here around thine own word, we pray, Lord, that thou would bless us, that thou would keep our minds focused upon thy word because we know that there are so many things that cause distractions.

But we pray that it may please thee to have our minds to be stayed upon thee. And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins is in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[6 : 43] Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the prophecy of Isaiah and chapter 53. Isaiah and chapter 53.

Who hath believed a report and to whom is the Adam of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground.

He hath no form nor comeliness and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we heard as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.

[7 : 56] All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is done. So he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment and who shall declare his generation for he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death because he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him he hath put him to grief.

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he hath poured out his soul unto death and he was numbered with the transgressors and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

[9 : 23] May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word and seeking his blessing and help let us again read from the beginning of Isaiah chapter 53.

Who hath believed a report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? We have already looked at the introduction to this fourth servant song in the previous chapter where among other things we noted the astonishment of the people who looked upon the sufferings of the servant.

As many were astonished at thee his faces were so marred more than any man and is far more than the sons of men. But also we noted the astonishment regarding what was to be achieved through his sufferings.

So in the coming day he will sprinkle many nations and even more amazingly the mouth of kings will literally hang open when they see him in all his majesty and glory.

But the prophet now comes to be more personal and speaks of his own personal astonishment. Who hath believed our report and to whom is the Adam of the Lord revealed?

[10 : 57] The plural our here refers to Isaiah and the school of the prophets. Who hath believed our report and to whom is the Adam of the Lord revealed?

Isaiah like the other prophets was commissioned to bring the Lord's word to the people. His ministry was not an easy ministry.

His message was unpopular and not many listened although he continued to preach to the people and he continued to tell them to repent and to turn to God.

But sadly the people did not take him seriously. Isaiah was called by God at a time when he was about to bring judgment on his people because of their sins.

A judgment that was fulfilled in the Babylonian captivity. He was commissioned by God to stress to the people the message of divine judgment because of their sins.

[12 : 08] But he was also told that the people would reject his message. Go and tell this people hear ye indeed but understand not and see ye indeed but perceive not.

Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert and be healed.

What we are confronted with here is in the verses that we have taken is the human and the divine side of preaching. The human side. Who hath believed our report and the divine side and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed.

Isaiah would have been affected by the rejection of his message. He would have felt in his heart disappointment as he longed for his listeners to receive God's mercy.

Nevertheless, in spite of all that, he remained faithful. Now, this was not only true of Isaiah. For instance, Jeremiah tells us how the rejection of the people told his message affected him.

[13 : 32] In Jeremiah chapter 9, we read these words, Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes are fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slaying of the daughter of my people.

Even more wonderful is the fact that Jesus would this strange spiritual dilemma. As he wept over Jerusalem, as recorded for us in the Gospels, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.

For the day shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and keep thee on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Nevertheless, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, would have been confronted in that they knew. That they were obeying the will of God, and that would bring a great comfort to them.

That they were obeying the will of God, despite the rejection of their message by the people. Now, although Isaiah and other prophets were to proclaim God's judgment on the people because of their sin and rebellious hearts, they were also commissioned to proclaim a great message about the coming Messiah and all the benefits that he would bring.

[15 : 29] Isaiah was aware, along with other prophets, that he was in fact serving a future generation of believers who would appreciate his message.

In 1 Peter chapter 1 we read, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and such diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, such in what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

So then, in verse 1 here we have the human and divine side of preaching. Who hath believed our report?

Isaiah's astonishment is not confined to himself. We can honestly say that the echo of his cry is heard down through the avenues of time to the present day and shall be heard into the end of time a cry that is uttered by every preacher of the gospel.

Who hath believed our report? Well, what report is Isaiah speaking about? The report is about God's purpose for the salvation of sinners through the suffering and death and exaltation of his servant, his own beloved son.

[17 : 04] God's word is proclaimed or read or given to us by whatever means, it is God communicating to us this report.

He has made his purpose of salvation known to us. Paul writing to the Ephesians says that God has made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.

This is the place where our Christianity begins. Its beginning is not with this or that experience, but it begins by accepting the truthfulness of this report.

by accepting the truthfulness of the report. It draws us to the gospel in order to know more and more.

This is the place where so many people struggle to accept the truthfulness mess of this report. In Luke chapter 16 we have Abraham's answer to the request of the rich man in hell.

[18 : 23] The rich man did not want his brothers to have to experience the pain that he had to endure and so he made a plea. But he was shown that his plea was unnecessary.

Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. In other words, the rich man's brothers already had the means of salvation.

They had in their possession everything they needed to get to heaven. They had Moses and the prophets, that is, they had the very word of God. God had communicated his will to them.

If only they had believed what the Bible said, if only they had accepted the truthfulness of the report, it would be enough to save them.

They would have known the promises of God about the coming of salvation. They would have known that they needed the blood to atone for their sins. And they would know that Jesus was the Christ, that Jesus was the Messiah, that Jesus was the Saviour.

[19 : 32] It was all there in the scriptures. All they needed to do was to believe it. Now there in Luke 15, we notice the rich man's objection.

I think it might be Luke 16, actually. We notice the rich man's objection. He thought that the word of God was not enough without some kind of supernatural sign.

So he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. The rich man knew his brothers well enough to know that they did not believe the Bible any more than he did.

But what if God showed them some sort of sign? What if a ghost came and preached to them the gospel? Surely then they would have to sit up and take notice, wouldn't they?

Well, the simple answer is no, they would not. On the contrary, Abraham said, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded the one rose from the dead, or who hath believed our report.

[20 : 52] Paul writes to the church at Corinth and says, for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

Well, what is your response to this report? Have you come to see and accept the truthfulness of this report? The truthfulness of the word of God?

However, although acceptance of the truth is the first essential requirement, there is more required than merely to accept the truthfulness of the report.

The second thing that is required is obedience. To be obedient to the word of God. To be obedient to the truth of God.

To be obedient to the report. And this is sometimes where people have a problem. They believe the truthfulness of the report.

[21 : 55] They believe the truthfulness of the Bible. They believe that Jesus was the Son of God, that he died and was buried and that he rose again and that he is going to return.

But sadly at that point they stop. The devil whispers, all that is true but not for you.

All that is true but enough time for you to give all that serious consideration. or he whispers, well now is not a convenient time.

Or who hath believed our report. Sometimes our own reasoning can get in the way. We have a lesson to learn from Peter's response as recorded for us in Luke chapter 5 where we read that after Jesus had stopped speaking or preaching that he said to Simon, Peter, launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft.

Let us for a moment consider Peter's reaction to this command and consider your own reaction to the gospel. Peter was a professional fisherman man, that was his living.

[23 : 14] So Peter replied, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing. Peter's own way of reasoning and wisdom was surfacing here and it was getting in the way.

Nevertheless, he did what Jesus told him to do. He said, nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net. And that is the important thing.

Even if Peter was a bit reluctant and even his own reasoning was getting in the way, Peter still obeyed.

Obedience to the word of God for me and you is a matter of life and death. Who have believed our report?

The report contained in the Bible and presented to us in the preaching of the gospel is the wonderful story about this glorious servant of Jehovah who through herself humiliation and suffering on behalf of his people even unto death has accomplished for his people so great a salvation and this suffering servant of Jehovah is now exalted to such a great height of glory.

[24 : 36] but despite the fact that the message of the servant's significance and work has been so eagerly presented to the people so many still do not respond in obedience.

in John chapter 12 we read but though he had done so many miracles before them yet they believed not on him that the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake Lord who hath believed our report and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed.

And the writer there continues with another quotation from Isaiah to which we have already referred as found in chapter 6 therefore they could not believe because that Isaiah said again he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart and be converted and I should tell them.

These things said Isaiah when he saw his glory and spake of him. Now without going into too much detail what we have here really is the hardening effect of unbelief.

People think that they can wait to commit themselves to Jesus. They think that at the time of their own choosing that they can become Christians when what they fail to realise is the hardening effect of unbelief on their hearts so that it will be increasingly more difficult for them to believe.

[26 : 20] If you continue to go on and unbelief God can give you over to a judicial hardening of the heart to which John says therefore they could not believe.

This confronts us with a very sober reality that when God presents us with this report and we accept the truthfulness of the report that we should obey the report in trusting faith.

Who hath believed our report? A continual contempt, a continual scorn, a continual rejection to be obedient to the report which invites us to faith in Christ.

Remember that God can do as he did with the Jews of Isaiah's day and that's give you over to a judicial blindness and hardening of your heart.

You see the hardening of the heart is just God giving you over to what your heart desires. That is simply what it is.

[27 : 32] God giving you over to what your own heart desires. The hardening of the heart. All who hath believed our report.

Then Isaiah uses an interesting image when he describes the divine side of the act of preaching as the revelation of the arm of the Lord.

Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The arm of the Lord is an Old Testament statement that speaks of the power of God.

In Exodus chapter 15 we have the following words recorded for us in the song of the sang after crossing the Red Sea. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed.

The mighty men of Moab trembling shall take hold upon them. All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them.

[28 : 36] By the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone till the people pass over O Lord till the people pass over which thou hast purchased.

However within our context it is clear that it is the manifestation of this power of God in and through Christ that is spoken of.

God and here really comes the paradox of the power of the servant because the power of the servant had not been revealed in an overwhelming display of strength but in the work of the servant as we have described last week in the introduction of the song the power of the servant in his humiliation and his suffering and death that is why Paul could write for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are saved it is the power of God but we preach Christ crucified and to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men but who hath believed our report whose eyes have been opened to behold in this despised and humiliated servant the very embodiment of the power and the wisdom of God

Paul writes for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God into salvation to everyone that believeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God the report concerning the servant is the power of God into salvation to all those who believe that is why Paul was not ashamed to preach the gospel why Paul was not ashamed to bring this report before the people for it is the power of God the power of God displayed manifested made known in the sufferings and death of his own son on the cross of Golgotha we read who hath believed a report and to whom is the arm of the

Lord revealed the servant brought before us as the arm of the Lord and to whom is this revelation given well you know a weak person is incredibly grateful when a strong person stretches out his hand to help who shares his strength with him and that is how the spirit of the Lord deals with us as sinners when the spirit of God is dealing with us he reveals to us our weakness which is due to our sinfulness and we need a strong arm to help us in the book of Romans chapter 5 Paul gives us four descriptive labels of what is true of us as the recipients of God's love and grace and one of these labels is that God loved us when we were yet without strength that is when we were powerless and helpless to rescue ourselves for we were without strength in matters of our salvation it means to use a theological term our total inability we are entirely empty of any spiritual strength unable to understand spiritual truth because the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of

[32 : 54] God for they are foolishness to him neither can he know them we are totally unable to please and obey God we are without strength totally unable of saving ourselves or delivering ourselves from the just and the righteous wrath of God yet it is for such that God sent and delivered his son to die on the cross of Golgotha remember the parable in Luke regarding the shepherd who found the sheep that was lost what did he do he lays it on his soul just rejoicing we have psalm 40 a well known psalm a psalm that I'm sure we are all familiar with he took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock he set my feet establishing my way here the psalmist reports deliverance with dramatic images the distress is termed a slimy pit literally a pit of destruction miry clay or mud of mire now whether the psalmist had actually been in such a pit is not the main point here the main point here is that being mired down in such a horrible pit of mud and mire which suggests to us depressing surroundings complete helplessness dark mean doubts spiritual affliction you know today you may be in a confused state puzzled by what is happening whether in the world in our country in our denomination in our community or in our congregation or even in our own lives well out of such a situation the lord threw the psalmist up and set his feet on a rock making his standing to be secure he directed his steps if the psalmist was literally in such a pit and was literally drawn out to stand on solid ground we must all come to the point where we agree that

God would have caused it to happen and most probably he caused that to happen through the means of people who rescued the psalmist well my dear friend we are in a horrible pit of sin powerless to save ourselves but God sends a people with an amazing report and in this report God reveals his arm of strength he stretches out his arm towards you who are wallowing in the mire of sin God sends a people with an amazing report and in this report God reveals his arm of strength he reveals the means that he uses in his wisdom and in his power that through the servant that sinners can be rescued from the horrible pit in which they find themselves this is a strong arm that can take you out of the pit who have believed our report and to whom see

Aaron of the Lord revealed the psalmist was delivered from his difficulty by God just as one would throw a victim out of a pit not only did God set him free by lifting him out of the pit but he also made him safe and secure by setting his feet upon a rock we find that the Bible frequently uses the imagery of a rock with respect to God and especially to Christ and the gospel Jesus describes Peter's confession of faith in himself as the rock on which he would build his church thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it in the sermon on the mount Jesus made reference to those who built their house upon the sand therefore whosoever hear these sayings of mine and do them I will liken him into a wise man which built his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not for it was founded upon a rock the imagery of a rock brings before us the thought of strength of stability and durability so we are told he brought me up also out of a horrible pit out of the mighty clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings and he put a new song in my mouth even praise unto our

God the point here is that God can deliver people who are sinners unable to free themselves from their difficulties oppressed by their circumstances God can give you security and he can give you confidence he can save you he can take you out of that horrible pit of sin and put your feet upon a rock the servant is the arm of the Lord the power and wisdom of God and today even if your difficulties are the result of foolish choices that you have made or your spiritual life is mired in sin and its consequences the arm of the Lord stands ready to rescue you the arm of the Lord is outstretched towards you all those who wait patiently upon the Lord and that means an act of faith what a report who who have believed a report and to whom has the arm of the

Lord been revealed what a report it is a proclamation to us of what God has done about us for us for our salvation no human being could have done what he did for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved who hath believed our report and to whom is the Adam of the Lord revealed Paul writes in Romans chapter 10 but they have not all obeyed the gospel for I say I saith Lord who hath believed our report a reminder to us as we have already noted today that all hearing of the report does not lead to faith you can hear the report you can accept its truthfulness and still have no faith it is offered to all it is preached to all but all do not believe all do not obey the report all do not obey the gospel how do you hear this report

[40 : 28] I see as yes that God's word will not return into him void by which he means that it will not return without producing some effect God's word never leaves anyone the way the word found them it will either soften the heart or it will harden the heart when Jesus gave the parable of the sower he said who hath ears to hear let him hear well how do we hear what effect has the word of God got upon you Paul speaks of the hearing of faith which leads us to conclude that there must be two kinds of hearing there is the ordinary hearing and there is the hearing of faith now many Christians here today will understand what

Paul means there came a day in their experience and they heard the gospel differently they heard this report differently maybe they thought that a great change had come upon the preacher all of a sudden he began to be more interesting they began to be captivated by the gospel but what was actually happening is that by the work of the Holy Spirit their hearing had changed the message was the same but their hearing had changed from being an ordinary hearing of the message to be a hearing of faith you may be familiar with the words of the Bible you may have been listening to sermons now for the 20 years that I have been among you some even for 30 40 50 or 60 years or more but that does not tell us anything are you satisfied with the mere sound of the gospel with the ordinary hearing of the gospel well my dear friend it is the hearing of faith that saves has has your hearing led to faith and obedience remember that there is a hearing that does not lead to faith and obedience what is your own spiritual responsiveness to the word of God are you pleased with just the mere hearing the ordinary hearing of the gospel or have you a desire in your heart that that mere hearing of the gospel would turn to be a hearing of faith a hearing where you put your trust in the

Lord Jesus Christ where you lean to Christ only and only him for your salvation who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks to thee that thou has communicated to us thine own will through the report that thou has given to us that in thy word we find a God who delighteth in mercy a God whose desire is that people would come and partake of the salvation that he has provided for sinners in and through the sending of his own son and delivering him up to the cross of Golgotha in punishing his son in the place of sinners who will put their trust in him what a wonderful report is given to us and sadly so many hearts have been hardened that they reject the very report that they reject the obedience that the report requires of them oh

Lord let us not be pleased and happy and satisfied with the mere hearing of the word but that it would lead us to the hearing of faith that it would lead us to put our complete trust in Jesus Christ complete trust in his salvation to know his salvation and the joy of his salvation oh may we accept the truthfulness and may we also obey the report that thou hast given to us we pray oh Lord that thou would continue with us in these days that we would know thine own rich blessing upon us as homes as families and as a community and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen

Amen