

A Revelation of Hope

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 February 2017

Preacher: Rev N Lachlan Macdonald

[0:00] Let's just unite our hearts together again in prayer before we open God's Word. Lord our God, we pray that you would still our hearts, that you would calm our minds, that you would give us clarity of thought and understanding as we open your Word afresh this evening.

That we would be comforted, that we would be encouraged, and that we would be challenged by your Word. That we would see it as the very spoken Word of God, that Word that has come to encourage and to challenge in equal measure, and that we would use it, that it would indeed be that which we turn to each and every day of our lives, that we would look to plumb depths and to experience the joys that are contained therein.

And as we do that, as we are all students of your Word, that you would continue to change us. That we wouldn't merely come here this evening to gather information, but that we would come here this evening for continued transformation.

So bless this Word to us now. Open our hearts, our minds, our ears, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Turn back then with me, if you will, to Isaiah, in chapter 57, at verse 15. For thus says the one who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy.

[1:53] Somebody once said to the famous 19th century poet laureate Lord Tennyson, they said, my dearest object in life, when at my best, is to leave the world, however little, better than I found it.

What's yours? Tennyson replied, my greatest wish is to have a clearer vision of God. I wonder where our vision is this evening.

Is our vision like that person that spoke to Tennyson on making a difference in our world? Making things just a little bit better than they were before we came along.

Surely a good thing. But temporal. Because after all, regardless of how much difference we make, we won't always be here to see it.

We won't always be here to enjoy it. Because at some point we will be called to eternity. Or is our vision this evening that of Tennyson?

[3:10] That we would have a clearer vision of God. There are times in life where we experience great loss.

When things occur that we wouldn't have envisaged. When things happen that appear to make little sense to us.

When the future is uncertain. And in these times, the greatest thing that we can have is a clearer vision of God.

Proverbs 29, 18 says, Where there is no vision, the people perish. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

So upon what is your vision set this evening? What is the vision individually? What is the vision collectively?

[4 : 10] for gospel growth and for blessing in the days ahead? Is our vision relying upon ourselves?

Are we looking inwardly to see what we can do and what we can accomplish? Or are we seeking to raise our eyes to God? To fix our eyes upon him to gain a clearer vision of who he is?

I think that's what we have here in this passage in Isaiah. We have a clear vision of who God is and indeed what God offers to those who will humble themselves before him in faith.

And I'd like to look at that for a short time this evening. Three points. The revelation of God's person. The revelation of God's presence.

And the revelation of God's purpose. These are all a revelation of hope. Even when life is dark and uncertain we look to God and we find hope.

[5 : 24] So the first thing we see here in verse 15 is a revelation of God's person. For thus says the one who is high and lifted up who inhabits eternity whose name is holy.

If you go back to the beginning of Isaiah in chapter 6 we read in that year in the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.

Isaiah had seen the Lord the one who was high and lofty the one who is exalted. He looked upon him and he was undone.

So great is the Lord God so high and exalted is he over and above anything that we can imagine anything that we have experienced to merely look upon him.

Isaiah was undone. Paul himself that we spoke of this morning had a revelation of God a theophany on the road to Damascus and he was undone he was blinded by the glory of God.

[6 : 41] God is the one who is high and lifted up not who was or who will be but who is high and lifted up.

He is the one who inhabits a place that we cannot inhabit the throne of glory. But not only is he the one who is high and lifted up exalted he is the one who inhabits eternity.

Wherever there is there is God. He is here he is there he is everywhere he is in the furthest reaches of space he is beyond the barriers that separate us and in the distances that we can't even begin to imagine he is in the infinitude of heaven above he is God and he dwells in all of this space and in all of this time and it's staggering to us isn't it?

It staggers our imagination how great and how vast is the home the abode the dwelling of the almighty the one who is high and who is lifted up and yet in his greatness he is unchanging a great encouragement to us that he is the same yesterday today and forever he is the one who inhabits all space and time eternity unending God is there for the Christian eternity is to be spent with him eternity is not merely living forever that sounds like more of a sentence than anything else eternity doesn't just mean living forever but an eternity spent in the presence of the

Lord an eternity spent in the presence of our saviour Jesus he inhabits all of eternity one writer said eternity has neither beginning nor end time has both eternity comprehends in itself all years all ages all periods of ages and differs from time as the sea and the rivers the sea never changes place and is always one water but the rivers glide along and are swallowed up in the sea so it is so is time by eternity eternity in some senses is beyond our natural comprehension because in this body we are finite and we are temporal and yet eternity awaits but who is in eternity well the

[9:45] Lord our God the one who is high and who is lifted up is the one who inhabits eternity not only is he exalted worthy of praise high and lifted up not only does he inhabit all of eternity but his name is holy this God high and lifted up exalted eternal mighty who lives in unbounded eternity on one hand would seem incomprehensible and yet my heart can understand a star cannot his universes are insensitive to his presence but I can see his handiwork I can watch him in his laws

I can see him in his movements movements I can be given a revelation of his thoughts in his word this great God who inhabits all of eternity is also the God who indwells the Christian saint who dwells with us in our hearts and in our lives who makes his dwelling within us John 14 if we love him the father will make his dwelling within us he is holy kadosh in the original language he is set apart he is separate we talked about that this morning that we are named saints as we come to faith in Christ Jesus we become holy we have been called to be holy and blameless in his sight but he is the definition of holiness he is altogether lovely he is altogether holy we can struggle to understand that sometimes can't we impurity oh impurity we can understand but God is not that iniquity we understand iniquity but God is not that pride and deceitfulness and sin and everything that is wrong and wicked well we understand that but God is not that he is holy he is separate he is set apart from sin he is of such purity that Habakkuk says he cannot bear to look upon iniquity

Paul writes of Jesus that he was made to be sin for us and it's then we begin to understand the call of Christ from the cross my God my God why have you forsaken me when the sun refuses to shine and the light of the world was extinguished and God turned his face away from his only begotten son why because he couldn't bear to look upon iniquity and yet this mighty God who inhabits eternity who is great and infinite in himself in inhabiting all space and time as he is holy and set apart and pure and righteous and there is no crookedness within him yet he reveals himself to broken sinful men like me he is

God do we have a vision of his greatness of his majesty of his holiness holiness do we understand that though he is exalted and eternal and holy he has made provision for us because what we have here is not merely a revelation of his person but we have a revelation secondly of his presence I dwell in the high and holy place and also with him who is of contrite and lowly spirit to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite this God who lives in the high and holy place yet he lives in the human heart yet though he is high and holy he stoops to the lowly and to the oppressed and don't we see that most perfectly in the servant who stooped into his incarnation among us

Jesus Christ this is the love of the God that we talk about this is the provision that this one who is exalted and eternal and holy makes for his people that he will stoop to our level if we will humble ourselves before him that he will make his dwelling within us this is good news this is encouragement for us in our lives that this God who is so mighty and so far removed from anything that we know or experience in this life reveals himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ who makes provision for us to be reconciled to him in our saviour

[16:06] Jesus nothing that we have done nothing that we can do other than humble ourselves in gratitude and in thanksgiving for God's goodness to us so we have here a revelation of God's person we have here a revelation of God's presence and then thirdly we have a revelation salvation of God's purpose I have seen his ways verse 18 but I will heal him I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners creating the fruit of the lips peace peace to the far and to the near says the Lord and I will heal him this is the revelation of his purpose firstly God offers help to a sick age

I will heal him what we're talking about here is forgiveness one writer said I can comprehend somewhat of the infinitude of God by looking into the starry heavens I can certainly comprehend the iniquity of the human heart but I cannot comprehend how one can be encompassed in the other how does God who inhabits all infinity and eternity dwell in a human heart Jesus Christ God sees our ways I have seen his ways but I will heal him that small word with such significance so often in the word of God but he knows the failings of our hearts and our hands and yet he loves us greater love has no man than this that he would lay down his life for his friends in all of his greatness and majesty and eternity he loves and cares for and provides for those whom he loves this is the gospel isn't it that we don't deserve it and yet we're offered grace and peace just as we considered this morning this is the work that we give ourselves to this is the life that we invest ourselves into to tell people of the hope that there is in

Jesus that though he knows what we have done though he sees our past and our ways he will heal us he has come to bring healing he has come to restore we're all people who have been unwell at different times in our lives I'm sure and sometimes the doctors can help us and sometimes medicine is prescribed for whatever illness we may have and yet there is a greater sickness there is a greater sickness that spiritual sickness that only the master physician can heal it is only he who can bring that which was dead back to life it is only he who can change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh it is only God who can do it he made us and only he can restore us whatever our sickness is heal the master physician can heal us because if he is God if he is the one who is high and lofty who is eternal who is holy then there is no limit to his power come then with the blind eye of darkened understanding come come with the limping foot of wasted energy come with the maimed hand of weak faith the fever of an angry temper or the shivering despondency come just as you are for he who is

God can certainly restore you off your plague none shall restrain the healing virtue which proceeds from Jesus our Lord all his patients have been cured in the past and in the future and thou shalt be amongst them my friend if you will rest yourself in him this night C.H.

Spurgeon the Lord God the one high lifted up eternal and holy has come to heal he has come to give healing to a sick age secondly he has come to bring guidance to a confused age I will lead him he says there is confusion all around us is there not people are darkened in their minds and their understanding why because they have turned from God and walked in the opposite direction they have turned their backs on this one who is high and holy they have rebelled against him go right back to the beginning of this book hear oh heavens listen oh earth for the Lord has spoken I reared children and brought them up but they have rebelled against me the ox knows his master the donkey his owner's manager but

[22:22] Israel does not know my people do not understand the world around about us is grappling around in the darkness because they have turned their backs on God they do not understand they do not know people are seeking meaning and seeking wisdom and yet they find none because their vision extends no further than themselves self has been exalted to a place where God alone should be exalted we are told to put ourselves on the pedestal to please ourselves to suit ourselves but that is not the way it was meant to be we were created in his image in his likeness to bring glory to his name that is our goal that is our purpose to bless him as he has blessed us to take this hope this gospel into a world which is broken and which is needy and which is dark

God comes to bring healing he comes to bring leading to bring guidance but thirdly he comes to bring comfort in a despondent age I will heal him I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners this God this majestic one is the God of all comfort as we read in chapter 40 he is the one in whom we find solace he is the one who is worthy of all praise he is the one who has overcome sin and death and as Paul David Tripp said God will not rest from his redemptive work until he has once and for all presided over the funeral of sin and death he is the one to whom we go to and we find comfort because in him we have been created in him we find our purpose in him we find our meaning he is a

God who has come to heal to guide to comfort but then fourthly he is a God who has come to offer peace in a disturbed age our world is disturbed all around us there is war there is injustice there is violence rebellion self seeking it would be easy for us to give up hope wouldn't it it would be easy for us to cave into the temptation which surrounds us and yet we serve a God who is exalted who is eternal and holy controls all things in his sovereign goodness and as we surrender ourselves to him as we submit to his hand and to his will he offers us peace peace to those who are near and to those who are far away we're not talking about that very thing this morning just how much the human heart craves peace to be at peace to experience contentment godly contentment but where are you this evening are you far or are you near close to the throne of grace looking to the one who is high and exalted who is eternal who is holy experiencing healing and guidance and comfort and peace from him or have you wandered away from him are you as yet in the far country how do you gain how do you experience peace in days that are difficult by turning to the one who is high and lifted up who inhabits eternity whose name is holy there are times in life and in our experience where we go through times of trial and loss and difficulty and it's easy for us to become very introspective it's easy for us to focus on that which is right in front of us it's easy for us to lose ourselves in the problems that surround us but we did not be better for us to have a clearer vision of God we did not be better to lift our eyes to our

God the one who is high and holy the one who is lifted up who inhabits eternity the one who is stooped to our level and though he inhabits the infinitude of eternity will indwell our hearts if we obey his commands mourn with those who mourn and weep with those who weep but rejoice today in the provision made for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ that gospel that says our God will bring healing though he sees our ways that he will bring leading and guidance that he will restore comfort to all those who humble themselves before him and follow him in faith that we will know peace that peace which passes all understanding and that peace which is available to us if we are near or if we are far may we have a clearer vision of the

God we know as Lord let's pray thanks