

Shout It from the Mountaintop!

Scripture Text: Isaiah 52:7-10

Introduction

We have celebrated another Christmas. This is a special time of the year where we sing songs about the birth of Jesus, we read scriptures regarding the long expected Savior, and we remember the hope the world has in Him. For the one who follows Jesus Christ, it should be Christmas everyday. Most people can tolerate Christmas music for just a few weeks of the year; however, I listen to it all year round. Those who have trusted in the Savior of mankind have the greatest gift that will never grow old. We will never have to replace its batteries. We will never have to exchange this gift. We will never find a better present. For those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they have a gift that will last for all eternity. And for that, we ought to shout for joy.

We should also want the rest of the world to shout for joy with us. Salvation is a gift that is shared by anyone who believes in Jesus Christ. While it is for you and for me, it is not only for you and for me. God is making a holy people of His own choosing from people all across the world. He desires a people who will know Him and who will enjoy Him forever. Earlier in Isaiah chapter fifty-three, God declared that His people would know Him and He made the same statement Isaiah made when God commissioned him: *Here I am* (Isaiah 6:8). In Isaiah chapter fifty-three, we catch a glimpse of God's desire to save the world. After calling His people to action (52:1–2), assuring them that the oppression they had experienced was over, then proclaiming that "I am here" (52:3–6), God described a salvation for all the world that was to be celebrated and shared. What this passage is about is good news. It is about the best good news. There are at least four statements about this good news that we see in this passage:

- *It is Good News of Peace, Happiness, and Salvation*
- *It is Good News to be Celebrated*
- *It is Good News for the Whole World*
- *It is Good News for Us to Share*

Good News of Peace, Happiness and Salvation (v. 7)

It seems that most of the news we hear today is not good news. What you read in the newspaper or see on the television is oftentimes not good news. Why is what Isaiah wrote here good news? Imagine for a moment that you lived in a time of chaos, of destruction, of fear from enemies destroying you, or fear for your future and your family's future. You might feel hopeless. You might be in despair. And then, you see a messenger approaching, someone coming over the horizon who will declare some news to you. What will that news be? Will he tell you something good or something bad? You are anxious to hear it. And then the messenger arrives and tells you news of great comfort, news of peace, news of a new government that will protect the people and establish a new order. That would probably be very good news.

That is what God declared to His people. Isaiah made four proclamations in verse seven that are good news. God will create a time of peace, a time of goodness (happiness), a time of salvation, and a time of God's rule. This would be a time with no hostility and conflict. It would be marked by unity, cooperation, and good relationships among mankind. It would also be a time where evil, hatred, sickness, and death will no longer exist. People would be happy. It would also be a time when God would deliver His people from what might harm or enslave them. God would make all of this happen because He would reign as King over His kingdom. No longer would His people be subjects to bad leaders who have selfish motives. God's people would be led by His Good Shepherd Who would care for them. He would be the type of shepherd who would leave the ninety-nine sheep safe in the field to go search for the one sheep that was lost. Jesus is the Good Shepherd Who will forever protect and care for His people.

Just as God promised to rebuild the nation of Israel after their exile to a foreign land, God promises to rebuild His people who are being destroyed by sin and are separated from Him. This is the *Good News of Jesus Christ*. It is good because it gives hope to all who hear this news. The joy we have at Christmas exchanging gifts is a poor example of the joy we have in Jesus Christ. That joy does not match the hope of salvation afforded to us by a humble king born in the little town of Bethlehem. Now that God's gift to mankind has come, we now anxiously wait for a New Earth that will be without sin and suffering, where we will live forever with our Christian family. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then you have heard and believed this good news. It is good because you are no longer bound by the curse of sin and the hopelessness of death. You are now a new creation awaiting a new home in heaven. That is good news.

Good News to be Celebrated (vss. 8-9)

As with most good news, it should be celebrated. If the news is truly good, we do not receive it with sadness and wish we had not heard it. We typically rejoice. As the lone messenger in this passage approached the city of God, the watchmen on the walls of the city shouted the good news. Not only did they shout the good news, they sang together with joy. Have you ever received some good news that made you break out in song? That was the result of this good news. Perhaps if you had been in Jerusalem that day and had experienced the trouble they had and then heard the good news that a Savior was coming, a new King would reign, you might break out in joyful song. The people were not called to merely listen to the good news God had delivered to them. They were called to joyfully raise their voices as if they had really heard something wonderful. They were to celebrate because it was something worth celebrating.

That is the same response God's Church ought to have. When people come around Christians who are sad and acting like they have no hope whatsoever, how does that motivate them to believe in Jesus Christ? How does that motivate them to come to Church and find out more about Jesus? They might as well stay home. If you tell me you have a message of hope for me to hear, but all I see in you is sadness, gloom, or despair, I might think that what you have is not good news. Christians ought to be the happiest people in the world because they have the greatest hope in the world. No

matter how bad things get, and I believe they do get bad, it should never steal your joy if you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. The good news is that God forgives sin, restores our relationship with Him, provides peace, removes despair, and promises to always be with us. This is good news and it is worth celebrating.

Good News for the Whole World (v. 10)

Not only is this good news worth celebrating, it is for the whole world to enjoy. Have you ever known people who think that God only wanted them? Maybe it is a church that thinks that only their members will go to heaven. In verse ten, we read that the salvation God provides is for the whole world. Isaiah prophesied that “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The good news of Jesus Christ is that God desires to make a holy people from all nations. God revealed His plan long ago when He said that through Abraham “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). You can read God’s promise of drawing all nations to Himself throughout the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 2:2 *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it.*

Isaiah 11:10 *In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.*

Isaiah 45:22 *Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*

Isaiah 49:6 *I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

The salvation God planned all the way back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed Him and brought the curse of death on all humanity, was for the whole world. While God planned to save a chosen people, He did not set out to save just the Israelites, or just one group of people, or just one congregation. He planned to save a people from all the nations of the earth. This is a clear statement of the worldwide scope of this good news. It was something the apostles and disciples in the New Testament understood all too well. It was something that motivated them to share this good news with all nations and to turn the world upside down for Jesus Christ. This brings me to the last point.

Good News for Us to Share

What is God’s ultimate goal for the Church? What is the main reason we are here? Some may say that our purpose is to tell others about Jesus Christ. In fact, I have said many times that our mission is *to share the Gospel with all nations*. If that is true, you might believe that missions is the ultimate goal for the Church. I read a statement from pastor John Piper that made me rethink this. He said:

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship does not.” - John Piper

The ultimate goal for God is to have a multitude of people from every tribe, tongue and nation worshipping Him for all eternity. Because that is not happening right now, God is drawing more people to Himself. The ultimate goal is not missions, *worship is*. We have missions because people are not already worshipping God. The messengers bringing good news to the people are you and me. We have the good news that people desperately need to hear. The apostle Paul affirmed this when he quoted Isaiah chapter fifty-two in describing the need for evangelism:

Romans 10:13-17 ...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Why does God send us to tell people about Jesus Christ? Because people need to hear it. God has a missional purpose. The Church remains on this earth in order to tell the rest of the world about Jesus Christ, so that more people will believe in Him and will worship Him. The Good News of Jesus Christ is meant to be shared and those who have received God's grace have a duty and a privilege to share it with the world.

Conclusion

In closing, what does the Good News of Jesus Christ mean for us in the new year? How can this new year be a time where we see the good news of peace, happiness and salvation joyfully celebrated and shared throughout the whole world? The first thing is that you need to recognize that it is good news. Jesus Christ has come and has offered salvation to all those who will accept it. You no longer have to question your purpose in life. You no longer have to worry about what will happen when this life has passed. All those who turn from themselves and their sin and turn to Jesus Christ, who trust in Him as Lord and Savior, will be forgiven, will inherit eternal life, and will be adopted into God's family. That is good news and it is worth celebrating. So, celebrate it!

The other thing is that you need to really understand the need for sharing this news with others. There are about *five billion people* living in the world today who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We really need to understand the need for lost people to hear the Gospel. Imagine that you saw someone heading over a cliff and you could save that person by simply telling him about the imminent danger. Would you tell him or would you let him perish? That is the choice you have for every unbeliever you know. Without knowing Jesus Christ, those people are dying and going to Hell. What are you going to do about it? The Good News of Jesus Christ is good news, but only if it is received in time. If not, then it is not good news. What can we as the Church of Jesus Christ do this year to rescue those who are perishing? The new year is full of opportunities to celebrate and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Will you do it?