

Sermon Isaiah 9 : Waiting With A Mission

Our advent series this year is focusing on what it means for us to wait for our King Jesus. We are all waiting for Jesus to come back, to set up the heavens and the earth, where righteousness and peace and love will reign forever and ever. We are waiting for this.

And there is a way to wait poorly and there is a way to wait well. A way to wait for Jesus that dishonors God, and a way to wait for Jesus that honors God. In the first message Drew spoke to us how we need to be waiting on the Word, anchored in, believing, trusting in God's promises. Last week Chris spoke to us about God's design for us that we wait together, not in isolation from one another.

This week, we are looking at how we wait for Jesus from a missional lens. That while we wait for this incredible, glorious future to come, and our King to arrive, we are not passively waiting, we are actively waiting. Part of this activity is us being on mission, and this morning's message is about.

You see, when I was little, and I'd be waiting for Christmas, the last thing I cared about was what other people were getting. It was all about me. That is a sad reality. And that is the way often treat the Christian life. We simply wait for what's coming for us in the new age, not giving a rip about anyone else. The Christian life is full of abundant blessing to you. But the attitude runs contrary to the Christian life.

When we come to Christmas in America, it's easy for us to get so wrapped up in culture of it and the craziness of it that it's easy for the true meaning of Christmas to get lost. Christmas decorations, dinner parties, business meetings, gatherings, families, travel, cards, presents, marketing. Part of what makes us lose the Christmas story in all this is because there is this subtle effect that craziness has on us where it pulls us into the here and now and it's kind of all we can think about, puts a fog on our vision for eternal things. In truth, inside the Christmas story is much more than about 2016, inside the Christmas story is the true story of the whole world.

We are going to work backward today, before we can understand how to live in 2016 we need to get the full picture of what's going on. So we will be working from a wide lens to a narrow lens as we look at the mission of God in the Scriptures.

The first main point I want you to see this morning is that . . .

God Is On A Mission

In the beginning God Creates the World, creates man and places him in that world, and then gives man a mission.

Genesis 1:28, And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it . . . "

What God is asking man to do in this first command, is to fill the earth with worshipers. Worshipers of the One True God. You have to get this, because this is God's design for the earth! That it is filled with worshipers! He tells man to multiply. How did that turn out?

But that mission gets frustrated very quickly as sin enters the picture. Now you got a race of, not righteous, but sinful humans populating the earth. The earth is being filled, but not with worship, with wickedness.

How God is going to carry out this mission, is now the big question? He's already said that there would come someone from the seed of Eve to crush Satan. But that's vague, and as we trace God's activity through the Old Testament the promise becomes more and more clear.

God determines to work through Noah and his line, and we get further clarification when it comes to Abraham.

Listen to this..

Genesis 12:1-2, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Ah... Here is the mission of God in the OT. Blessed to be a blessing. And the vision gets narrowed that out of Abraham would be the nation that would bless all nations. This is the nation of Israel. God stamps His favor on Israel, not because He didn't care about the nations, but precisely because He did care about other nations. Israel is His plan to reach the nations.

But... what happens in the OT with Israel. Failure after failure after failure of Israel to do what God asks them to do. Israel would be the blessing to other nations as long as it obeyed God. In this way Israel would stand out from other nations and put God on display and make God look glorious! Obedience looked like worshiping God and God alone. Failure. Obedience looked like being holy and righteous. Failure. Obedience looked like trusting in God's guidance. Failure.

This is what we see over and over again in the Old Testament. Can anyone relate to Israel this morning? Have you been worshiping God with all your heart? Have you kept yourself holy to the Lord? Have you been sensitive and obedient to His Spirit to go where He leads?

Therefore the covenant promises could not come about. Israel could not be the blessing to the nations that they were called to be, and therefore the only thing they deserved was judgment. And judgment happens. Israel suffers significantly. Hardship, exile, oppression. It's what Israel deserved for disobedience, their sin left them in a hopeless situation. Israel is on the verge of being wiped out. and the same goes for us. We deserve God's judgment and wrath to be poured out on us. Have you acknowledged your failure?

By the time we come to our text in Isaiah, around 735 B.C. Israel had split into two kingdoms, and the smaller Judah was on the verge of being wiped off the map. This was due to their disobedience. But right in the middle of this judgment we also find grace. God will do for Israel what Israel could not do for itself. Listen . . .

Jesus Fulfills The Mission

Isaiah, 9:1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

2 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

3 You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Our King is promised. Jesus. The Righteous Ruler.

What's interesting about this passage, is it begins with the the glorious way beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. These are the gentiles. The people that walked in darkness are gentile nations here. These are not God's first chosen ones.

This light that has now dawned on darkness is Christ. This is Christ doing for Israel what Israel could not do. Israel could not bless the nations because they were a disobedient people. But Christ reigning In Israel as their King, becomes this light to all nations.

Isaiah 49:6

**“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”**

Christ Fulfills the Mission, and that's what Christmas is all about. Each year on dec. 25th we celebrate that the savior and redeemer of the world was born. How would he save and redeem us. He would live a perfect, sinless life, and die a death in our place, bearing the judgement we deserved.

Christmas is the story of Jesus fulfilling mission of God.

We celebrate this “child that is born, a son that is given.”

We see this text in Isaiah fulfilled . . . quoted in Matthew 13, as Jesus begins His earthly ministry. He begins it with the gentiles.

12 Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

**15
“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— 16
the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.” 17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**

and i love how it says in v.17, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.. in other words, you are looking at the King.

In other words, the King is here, the new age is beginning. The King of Israel and the King of the earth.

Jesus begins His ministry with Gentiles. To the outcasts, the unwanted, the sinners. to those in darkness.

Is that you this morning. Are you an outcast, reject, sinner, suffering. Jesus comes to save you. To forgive you of your sin, to bring healing, redemption, and restoration. Have you embraced Jesus as the one sent from God on your behalf? He brings you eternal life?

Now.. Those are pretty amazing gifts from Jesus. We would all do well to worship and rejoice in the gift of Christmas.

But there is more here.

Jesus Continues The Mission Through The Church

Let me connect some things for you. Let's go back to Isaiah. Look at

It's again talking about Jesus, right? Yes, it is, more blessing that this light will bring salvation to the nations. Glory to God! So where is this going...

Well now flip to Acts 13: Paul and Barnabas preaching on their first missionary journey,

44 The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

Yes, Isaiah 49 was pointing to Christ, but the revelation of God continues with Paul, its like a double fulfillment. You see what Paul is saying. 47, For so the Lord COMMAND **US**, i have made you a light for the Gentiles.

Woah! Get this. Jesus dies, resurrects, appears to his disciples, gives them the great commission,

matthew 28

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

a rehash of Gen. 1:28, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, go therefore and make disciples of all nations (be fruitful and multiply), this time not physically, but spiritually.

He ascends to heaven, then sends His Holy Spirit to empower them, that's Pentecost, to be His witnesses with His Spirit.

You got to understand that Christ is in **you** trying to reach the nations. He is in You. He is sovereign over you. We are His body, the Church on the earth. It's like when Paul was persecuting christians, Jesus says, why do you persecute me!

here's the deal guys. This is what i hope lands on your heart. We were once a people, as eph. 5 says, without hope, cut off from God, who walked in darkness. And we have seen the light. We are of the light. God has been so gracious to us. But... there are people that still walk in darkness. And to them

there is no light shining. The light shines to them when you share the gospel with them. That's how they get the light.

It's more like when my wife and I got engaged, we had like 3 months to go. It was all very quick. And to make it more chaotic we both had been out of the country for a year, and then we decide to get married in another state from where we were, in GA. Her family from Mass, mine from here. Those three months were filled with nothing but serious scramble mode. You see there was a waiting. We were waiting to get married, it was happening on Nov. 13, 2011. And because of the nature of the event, we were scurrying around.

What's coming for us is a glorious wedding banquet as christians. But this does not lead us to sit on the couch, or to fix our gaze merely on what we will enjoy. God wants us waiting for eternal life while on a red hot mission to tell as many people as we can about Jesus.

We have a mandate from God to be the beams of light that reach out into the darkness. And church, there is darkness all around us. Where are you, and to whom are you going to take the light of Christ this Christmas?