

Isaiah 52:4-12 (NKJV) Dec 2

**4 For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there; Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.**

**5 Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name *is* blasphemed continually every day.**

**6 Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore *they shall know* in that day That I *am* He who speaks: 'Behold, *it is I.*' "**

**7 How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

**8 Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.**

**9 Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.**

**10 The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.**

**11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean *thing*; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD.**

**12 For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight; For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.**

Outline-

Remember that our outline for our text is based upon Awake Awake, Awake Awake, Awake Awake, Depart, Depart

51:9-16 Awake God's comfort is invincible

51:17-23 Awake God's wrath is past

52:1-10 Awake God's salvation is spreading

52:11,12 Depart- the life of pilgrimage has begun

We have covered the material up to verse 4, which is where we begin today.

We are in the section regarding our awakening to God's spreading salvation.

And that is exactly the period of history that we are blessed to find ourselves in. We are in the end times when God's salvation is spreading to the ends of globe to bring in the last lost soul. And then project Adam and Eve is finished.

**4 For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there; Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.**

In verse 3 we got a picture of God's grace. Salvation could not be purchased. The Lord makes the claim that **Isaiah 52:3 (NKJV)**

**"You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money."**

We ended last week with the understanding that we exist in God's kingdom only by grace. Verse 4 gives us an interesting alternative to grace. It is bondage. It is oppression.

Have you ever been around someone who is extremely proud? Someone who is never wrong? Someone who can never say "I am sorry"? Have you ever felt pity for that person? They cannot be real. They can never relax. They can never just accept that they will never be everything they wish they were. They can never attain the impressions they keep propping up about themselves. What a bondage. What a slavery. And the worse thing is that they cannot ever accept forgiveness because they cannot admit to themselves that **they need it**. Anything wrong with them is **not their fault**. It is someone else's fault. They have to keep earning everything they get. They cannot accept a handout. They hate the very idea of grace because it robs them of credit.

The Israelites experienced oppression because they could not accept the grace of God. They could not live in the joyful life of submission to a God that loves them for no reason. They could not say, I am yours Lord. I have nothing to give you but my sin. But I trust you for my salvation. You deserve everything I am for the price you have paid for me. So they lived in their legalisms and self righteous hypocrisy in prideful rebellion against God. And into oppression they went. It did not have to be that way. But that is what they chose because Grace was too hurtful to their pride.

**<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name is blasphemed continually every day.**

I think every parent has come across a situation with their children where internally at least they must say, "What have we here?". It is usually a predicament that is going to require some action on behalf of the parent. Maybe it is Crayon artwork on the wall. Or forbidden candy residue on their hands. Or any number of things. And we as parents are forced to determine a course of action that is appropriate for the situation. That is the situation here.

The Lord looks at the situation of His people. They sold themselves into a situation for free. No one gained a benefit from their sales price. It was like junk that someone might haul away for free. Now notice the focus here. God

is not saying, these people did not deserve this kind of treatment. Of course they did. Given how they treated their God, they deserved every bit of it. Have you ever tried to make a case with God with the reasoning, God, I don't deserve this? You know what? You will never get any leverage with that reasoning. No matter what we face in life, we have always deserved worse. We have sinned. We deserve damnation. So we might have **some** usable arguments with God, but **that one** will never work.

So notice what pulls at God's heart strings here. My name is blasphemed continually every day. That is what moves God to act. He will not allow His name to be blasphemed. God will guard His glory. He is worthy of all glory. And He is not ever in a situation where He cannot act to glorify Himself. Even Jesus died for the glory of God. God never has His glory stolen from Him. It is amazing that God even allows us **to make** decisions that rob Him of His glory. Think of the things we have done that say of our Savior- we do not trust Him to give us the best. We think what sin will grant us is better than trusting our savior to obey Him. Pleasure now is worth **more** than pleasure **for eternity**. Comfort **now** is worth more than comfort **for eternity**. It is amazing that God is as permissive and long suffering as He is with us when our words and our actions blaspheme Him. But there is always an end. God will not put up with it forever. He will not allow a state of blasphemy to go on forever. And we see the "what do we have here?" is going to be met with action.

**<sup>6</sup> Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: 'Behold, it is I.' "**

God will always have a people who He will make Himself known to. But notice that it is **His drive for Glory** that assures that people will know Him. We do not see here a people who have shown themselves highly qualified to be known of God. They have not reached some moral plateau where God will meet them at. No. God is tired of having His glory maligned so He picks people to whom He will reveal His true character to. He will have His glory. We have got to get this. Deep in our souls we need to get this. Our salvation will always be more about the glory of God than any quality or value we may have as human beings. Our flesh craves to see this exactly backwards. We still want to be the "I am and there is none besides". We crave to see ourselves as the focal point. It is the sinful self residue that resides in us. It is our default setting if we will not walk by the Spirit of God. But the reality is displayed in our text. What God is doing is to display **the glory of who He is**. He saves people like us **to display who He is**. He picks us to **show off who He is**. That is what our salvation is all about.

Now our next verse is a verse that is used in the New Testament.

We are told that God is going to display who He is. Now how is He going to carry that out? What is His program for doing such a thing? And what we find here are messengers. We find proclaimers. We find tidings bringers. That is one of God's primary ways of spreading His glory.

**7 How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

It is always best to interpret the Bible with the Bible. In Romans Paul uses this scripture and it helps us to know how we should understand the verse and how we should apply it.

**Romans 10:14-15 (NKJV)**

**14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?**

**15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!*"**

Paul applies our verse in Isaiah to those proclaiming the gospel of Christ. So that lets us know we are perfectly safe to make a New Testament application of this passage. We have been doing that a lot through Isaiah, mostly because the New Testament affirms it with so many quotations from Isaiah.

Now we start with beautiful feet. If we were to stress the literal and only the literal, we would imagine that we have messengers with beautiful feet. But we all know that is not the emphasis of the text. All of the emphasis is on the beauty of **the good news**. And everything that supports and portrays that good news is just wonderful.

There is an application here. A question comes to mind. How do we want to be valued? This is a bigger and more important question than it might first seem. Because it is an issue to every one of us. We all want to be esteemed in the eyes of others. If you don't believe me, ask yourself this. What have you given up in order to get the esteem and approval of another person? Have you stretched the truth? Have you covered up blemishes? Have you disobeyed God's clear instructions in order to get the the approval you so much desired? We all want esteem. Flesh craves esteem.

Our text gives us a way to be esteemed. It gives us a way to be beautiful. But to our flesh we will find this to be a tremendous disappointment. It will not involve someone noticing our attractive appearance. This won't be about our winning personality or our sexy appeal. It won't be about our superior wisdom or sage like advice. It won't be about our clever conversation or

amazing insights. In fact, it won't be about any attribute **of ourselves**. It will be about one thing and one thing only. The beauty of the message we carry. Is that good enough? Really. Let's get beyond our religious demeanors here. We are talking about real life. Is it good enough for us to get our value and beauty and status and strokes from only one thing? Is it good enough to us to find our only beauty in accurately representing the salvation that God offers to every human being? That is really a soul searching question. What are most of our gripes about? What bothers us when people don't like us and when people don't respond the way we want them to? Is it because they do not like the gospel we represent? I think that is rarely the case of our disillusionment. We are usually upset because they don't think we are as personally wonderful as we want them to think we are. We want them to think of us as being more physically attractive or spiritually mature or personally insightful than they see us. But what is held out to us this morning is not something so fleeting or arbitrary. Can we really find our only beauty in the message that we carry? Could we be satisfied with the only appreciation we receive as being directly proportional to the message we carry? Wow, this takes a kind of faith that really puts its money where its mouth is. There go all the personal peeves and being upset with people because they don't appreciate the wonder of us. This is being absorbed into an agenda that has nothing to do with flesh and ego. Think about this. Have you ever sulked once in your life because a person was not enthralled with the beauty of the message of the gospel that you carry? We might mourn their loss. But I think it is extremely rare that this would cause us to be depressed or disillusioned. This is a huge application for us. Will we take it on? Will we find our beauty in how well we represent the gospel? That is radical and rare. Yet that is a mark of true Christianity. Now next we have good news. When we read the whole verse it looks like there are four messages. But we know that it is really only one message.

**7 How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

OK, we have good news. The goodness means it is from God. It has its source in God. Because only God is truly good. And it is information that is unknown. And it is being made known. That makes it news. Now what are the other descriptions?

**A proclamation of peace.**

All of us were born at enmity with God. We are surrounded by people still at enmity with God. What they need more than anything in their lives is peace with God. Do we believe that? Do we believe they need that more than they

need to be impressed with us? Or to like us? Or to think we are funny? Or to think we are clever?

Our church is making a concentrated effort to do 2 things. Preach the gospel and make disciples. And actually that is ultimately just one thing- to make disciples. Why? Because that is what Christ came back from the dead to tell His disciples. It must be important. It is central to being a church. We will soon have cards that we will ask you to fill out and put in the offering plate to report on evangelistic attempts and gospel presentations. We don't need your name on them. They are simply an attempt to track and applaud work that our church is doing toward this central mission of Christ. If we are the church, we must be about those things that Christ said were most important to Him. And as elders we want to encourage and enable that in whatever ways we can. We have a message of peace to proclaim that will allow human beings like ourselves to stand before God without fear of condemnation. That is an amazing message.

### **Glad tidings of good things**

We sometimes lose sight of the truth of the gospel. We might think that it is going to tell people that they are sinners and that they will need to give up their freedom to do fun stuff. And there is truth in that. But when a person feels lost, when they experience the implications of their meaningless life and their hopeless pursuits, they do not feel like they are **giving up** good things. They are **longing** for good things. We need to keep **that** in mind when we present the Gospel. Our message is beautiful to people who are tired of the things that are not truly good. They are beginning to see through their false gods. They want things that are truly good. Because ultimately God is calling them to Himself and He alone is truly good. And when those people hear it, we will know because it will make them glad.

### **A proclamation of salvation**

Sometimes it is really amazing when we think about what God has trusted us with. Do you realize that you have the words of God that can save a human being from everlasting destruction? It is amazing, if we were to see it in its truest perspective, that a believer could ever be bummed out or depressed. Here we are, the most important people on the globe. We have the most important answers to the human dilemma. We have the secret to the greatest problems in life. We can see through the charade to the truth of our reality. We are the proclaimers of how to live forever. Wow.

It is important for us all to understand that we are all proclaimers of salvation. Every single believer is one of these. This is not only for the professionals. It is not only for the elders. It is not only for the seasoned believers. It is for

every single believer. If you were saved by the Gospel, you know enough of it to tell someone else who needs it. We are all to be proclaimers of salvation.

### **An announcement of the reign of God.**

**Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"** I think if Christians really believed this one thing and acted like it was true it would make such a profound effect on our culture that it could not be ignored. In just about any group of people you can speak to in America you will find people on medication for anxiety. We have a culture that is desperately afraid of what **might** happen, what **could** happen, what **will** happen. Believers are people who believe in a God who controls everything that **does** happen. And not only that. They are a people who believe that God has **absolute power** to see that every single thing that happens to one of God's people will be for the good of God's people. How about them apples? In that one statement, "Your God Reigns", is the answer to the dilemma so many of the people around us face. We have the answer they need. But do **we** believe that our God really reigns in a way that we can completely rely upon? That is the million dollar question. That is our message. That is our doctrine. But does it describe our reactions to life's situations? We all need friends who will remind us of this, even when we don't want to be reminded.

It is interesting that the people this was spoken to would have had trouble believing this was true. It did not **look** like it was true. The Babylonians still held these people captive. How can someone say that **their** God reigns? How can this be a beautiful message of peace? Isn't it just a pipe dream? Isn't it just wishful thinking? No. Faith sees farther than our circumstances. Faith sees farther than common sense and logic. Faith looks to the God that created everything and bets everything on **His willingness and ability** to intervene in our lives. Our God reigns absolutely no matter how it might look at the moment. Our God reigns, no matter who **claims** to have power or who **looks** like they are in power. What God says will happen will happen. And there is nothing that any human or demonic power can do about it. That is the reign of God. And we are inviting everyone to join the kingdom of God. What an amazing message we have. What an important position we have.

What were we whining about this week? Think about it. What were we thinking? How did we pity ourselves? What did we gripe about not having? Where did we lose control in the midst of life's circumstances? Right there is our problem. What would have happened if we would have believed this one statement. **OUR GOD SUPREMEY REIGNS OVER EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE AND PERSON IN THIS LIFE.** That, brothers and sisters, is the truth we must constantly and continuously orient to.

Now, what does the future hold for the people who are receiving this message from people with beautiful feet?

**<sup>8</sup> Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.**

**<sup>9</sup> Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.**

**<sup>10</sup> The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.**

The picture we get here is wonderful. It is what every one of our hearts crave for. When do you break out in singing? It is when you are happy. That is the picture here. These watchmen, the people who are paid to pay attention to the state of things, they are breaking out in song together. There is no embarrassment. There is no hesitation. Singing is called for. What else could they do? And what are they singing about? God is doing the thing that God said He would do. He is bringing into completion His redeemed people. You and I suffer in this sinful world. Oh, we might have relatively good circumstances. But we know this world is not our home. It is not satisfying. As good as a human relationships are, they are not perfect. They always leave us with things we long for. Even when life is as good as we can imagine it, there is still something missing. And most often life **is not** as good as we can imagine it. Sometimes we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death. Sometimes we are watching while the Philistines rule the day. Sometimes the Pharaohs have all the power. Sometimes the enemies of Christ are free to reap the destruction they desire. No, this life is never what it promises. We all yearn for more, no matter how much God has blessed us in this life.

But we know this one thing. God will one day bare his arm. What this means is that He will deliver on His strength. He will apply His energy for our deliverance. And when that happens the outcome is absolutely certain. On that day there will be those who sing and those who watch. And it is far better to find ourselves in the company of the singers than in the company of the watchers.

The point here too is that God is going to display His salvation. Finally all of the scoffers will be silenced. All those who say that there is no God, He is a fairy tale we have made up, all of them will be silenced in that moment. They will know a dread that they could never have imagined up to this moment in history. They will realize all the things they were worried about were



misplaced. They should have feared the God who had enough power to engineer heaven and earth.

On that day every believer will be seen to be geniuses and all disbelievers will be seen to be fools. Finally the scales will be balanced and the truth will be seen and the glory of Christ will be inescapable. What a wonderful day that will be.

So. With all this awakening that happened, what is the conclusion. If all this is true, what should the people of God do?

**11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean *thing*; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD.**

There is always a principle in scripture of fleeing. We are always to be running **to** something and running **from** something. Here we are told what we should be running -+++++. We should be running from the unclean things. We should be running from those things that God is opposed to, that He hates. We are to leave the world that the world around us loves.

**1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NKJV)**

**9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.**

**10 Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.**

**11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.**

**12 For what *have I to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?**

**13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "*put away from yourselves the evil person.*"**

We as a body must be running from the things that God hates. We need to depart the worlds principles and devotions. And we are to be clean. We are to only enjoy those things that we can thank God by faith that He has given to us to enjoy. Because, after all, we are the vessels of God. We are the temples containing the Holy Spirit.

I like how our brother Ortlund puts it.

**Anything about us that might make the victory of God ambiguous or unattractive must go. The gospel is so beautiful, we have no right to**

**contaminate it. We must purify ourselves of every "unclean thing."**

Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.

Now how certain is our end destination?

**<sup>12</sup> For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight; For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.**

Look at the confidence here. Our final deliverance is displayed as an absolute certainty. There will be no reason for hurry or concern. Why? God is in front. God is behind. We are in a God sandwich. How much safer can we be?

So what is the chance that the truths that God has given us this morning will impress us longer than it takes to get out of this building? Will we allow it to have an impact on us when our car breaks down or we forget a password?

Will we begin to see that the greatest beauty we possess is when **we declare** the saving message of God or when **we live** like it is true? We tend to be hard to impress. Yet we need to be impressed. What we have is that which we need. All the other stuff is just chatter.

Just imagine what our lives would be like if we really only wanted to be as appealing as the message of the Gospel. To those who **don't** love it, we do not expect any admiration for anything about us. To those who **do** love it, we only expect for **our participation in it** to be the part that is to be admired?

Imagine, if you can, how that one change would change so many of the dilemma's we create in our own hearts.