

Here is Your God

Isaiah 35:1-10

Père Thomas keeps telling us in his sermons that the days before Christmas must be days of deep prayer to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. We must be really ready to receive him. Christ wants to be born in us, but we must be open, willing, receptive, and truly welcoming.

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- A consideration from the 5th Gospel (Isaiah)
- Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' (Isaiah 35:4)
- A word of hope and motivation

I. Here Is Your God

From Desert to Garden (v1-7)

1. From Scarcity to Abundance (v1-2)

- The wilderness, dry land, and desert – a trilogy of words demonstrating scarcity
- But dry land shall be changed (v2) to a place of abundance – rejoice and blossom like the crocus or rose
- It will become like the verdant lands (Lebanon, Carmel, Sharon)

God's Presence

- The reason for the change is the presence of the Glory of God (2b)
- God's presence changes everything

Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.'

Isaiah 35:4

2. People are changed (v3-4)

- Disempowered people are also changed with God's presence
- A command to strengthen weak hands and feeble knees (v3)
- 'Be strong and courageous' – Joshua's words to the nation (Joshua 1:6,9)

Those with 'weak hearts' (v4)

- 'be strong and do not fear'
- 'Here is your God!'
- 'He will come and save you' – he will come in vengeance to redeem and overcome chaos

God comes to us

- God comes to us – we cannot go and find God (v4)
- God's grace raining down on us
- Grace upon grace
- "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

Isaiah 35:5

3. Results of God's Intervention (v5-7)

- Healing for those who are receptive – the blind see – the deaf hear – the lame leap (v5-6)
- Jesus' words to John the Baptist: "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them." (Luke 7:22)

- Creation language of restoration used again to end the unit (v7)
- The dry, desolate place becomes like a garden
- A place of no water becomes fully watered

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."'

John 7:37-38

- Streams of flowing water
- God's presence in Jesus bringing life

II. God Providing the Way Home (v8-10)

A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

Isaiah 35:8-9a

- A highway/a Holy way shall be provided through the desert
- Similar text in Isaiah 40:3

4 Attributes of the Holy Way

1. For the clean – not the unclean (v8) – those cleansed by God

- Recall Isaiah's own cleansing by God (Isaiah 6:6-7)
- 'Blessed are the pure in heart'

2. Not a way for 'fools' (v8b)

- "The unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray." (Isaiah 35:8b)
- Fools are those who reject God - the way is for those who seek God

3. A Safe and Secure way (v9)

- It will lead you home
- No need to fear from 'wild animals'

4. A way for the Redeemed/ Ransomed (v9b-10)

- Redeemed – a familial term – saving a family member
Boaz redeeming Naomi & Ruth
- Ransomed – an economic term – a sum paid; a transaction to purchase freedom

The Result

- The result of this work of God is joy – the seminal word in v2, 6, 10
- Our 'great joy' is found in God's work for us in Jesus

Claiming Your Joy

- Don't allow your joy to be covered up by many things
- Clear away the clutter
- Keep your relationship with God strong and you will know his joy
- Stay close to the fire and feel the heat in this new year - 2017