

Sermon Notes & References

Joy of Redemption
Isaiah 44:21-23

March 20, 2011

A. Introduction

1. sad events

2. happiness vs. joy

B. Remember

44:21

1. who is addressed?

2. what are they to remember ...

a. ... from what precedes^A?

b. ... from what follows^B?

C. Return

44:22

1. where and why to return^C?

2. how is it possible to return^D?

D. Rejoice

44:23

1. why should creation rejoice with us^E?

2. when will such rejoicing be complete^F?

E. Conclusion: because of this truth I should ...

^C Judges 2:11-19, Proverbs 3:12

^D Isaiah 59:2

^E Genesis 3:17-18, Romans 8:19-22

^F Colossians 1:27

^A Isaiah 44:1-20, Galatians 1:8-9, 1 Timothy 1:15-16

^B Psalm 100:3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:20-24, Luke 9:23

A. Introduction

1. this hasn't been a happy week on a number of fronts
 - a. renovating our bathroom
 - (A) took a step backward Friday
 - (B) as some of the new tiles were not adhering to the old walls owing to a number of factors, the main one being that they were not flat
 - (C) so this means redoing a lot of work
 - (D) but really this is only a minor annoyance
 - b. the accident that Rita's brother had in the Philippines
 - (A) is a more serious affair
 - (B) as issues and complaints keep coming up
 - (C) which he and his family must address and solve
 - (D) and so we are praying for a speedy resolution for them
 - c. but on the global front we need only mention 3 words
 - (A) Japan, earthquake, tsunami
 - (B) every day this week the news has become graver
 - (C) the number dead, the number missing still uncertain
 - (D) the situation respecting the nuclear reactors
 - (E) and yesterday there was yet another earthquake
2. in the face of such a world as this
 - a. one that is often full of tragedy and unhappiness
 - b. how can we talk about joy?
 - c. well, let us distinguish between joy and happiness
 - d. Nathaniel Hawthorne, author of Twice-Told Tales, wrote 'Happiness in this world, when it comes, comes incidentally. Make it the object of pursuit, and it leads us on a wild-goose chase, and is never attained.—{2}.'
 - e. but, William Barclay, an excellent expositor on Paul's letter to the church in Rome, has this to say about

joy: 'Joy has nothing to do with material things, or with man's outward circumstance ... A man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched, and a man in the depths of poverty can overflow with joy.'^{3}.

- f. the essence of the difference seems to be that happiness depends upon what happens to a person, while joy is independent of such happenings
- g. and these verses in Isaiah describe the source of such joy

3. our outline today is very simple

- a. Remember
- b. Return
- c. Rejoice

B. Remember

- 1. Verse 21: Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me.
- 2. Remember; memory is a tricky thing, specially as we get older
 - a. three women were talking
 - (A) #1: sometimes I go to the refrigerator and forget what I wanted to get there
 - (B) #2: sometimes on the stairs I can't remember whether I'm going up or coming down
 - (C) #3: I'm lucky, I guess – knock on wood – that I don't have that problem. Oh! there's someone at the door.
 - b. one older comedian says he can always find his car in the parking lot – it's the one with the lights left on.⁻⁽⁴⁾.
- 3. this and the surrounding verses are addressed to God's people
 - a. ... O Jacob and Israel ...
 - b. a people in whom we find two natures
 - (A) the old nature, represented by Jacob, the deceiver
 - (B) the new nature, represented by Israel, who wrestled with His Angel and prevailed, having power with God

- (C) two natures, which the apostle Paul tells us, are ever in conflict the one with the other until we go to heaven
 - c. so it is compulsory that we become part of God's people if these verses are to apply to us – but fortunately the verses also tell us, prophetically, how that can come to pass
4. Remember these things ... – what things?
- a. certainly the things in the preceding verses of Isaiah 44
 - (A) in verse 1-5, of the salvation that God will provide
 - (1) a spiritual salvation
 - (2) described as water for the thirsty
 - (3) identified by the pouring out of God's Spirit
 - (4) realized in Jesus Christ, the water of life
 - (B) in verses 6-8, that the Lord, He alone is God
 - (1) there is none like Him
 - (2) a prophetic God who holds the future
 - (C) and in verses 9-20, the folly of idolatry, the stupidity of putting one's trust in any man made God
 - b. so we should remember that God is the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the folly of adding anything to this message of the gospel
 - (A) small wonder then that Paul uses such strong language in Galatians 1:8-9, '8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!'
 - (B) and let us remind ourselves of that gospel message from 1 Timothy 1:15-16, '15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. 16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.'
 - c. remember He is the God of Salvation
5. but verse 21 goes on to give something else to remember

a. ... for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant ...

(A) that word 'for' can equally well be translated 'that'

(B) God's people need to remember that, in the words of the Psalm 100:3 which we sing,

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;

Without our aid He did us make;

We are His flock, He doth us feed,

And for His sheep He doth us take.

(C) '... it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ...'

(D) as God created the nation of His people, Israel, in the OT, so also God creates the nation of His people, the church in the NT: 'Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature (or, creation); the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.' (2 Corinthians 5:17)

b. God created that OT nations with a purpose

(A) there is the twice repeated, 'you are my Servant'

(B) this was a nation created to serve the Lord God their creator, the One who formed them, that they should be a witness and a source of blessing to the world

c. how often do we as disciples of Christ forget that we have been called for a purpose!

(A) to learn Christ, to lay aside our former manner of life, our old self or nature; to be renewed in the spirit of our minds and to put on the new self or nature, created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ephesians 4:20-24).

(B) and to follow him: 'And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."' (Luke 9:23)

d. remember that He saved us to serve

6. the next point is ...

C. Return

1. Verse 22: I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.

2. Return to Me

a. In the history of Israel, the people of God there is to be seen a sad cycle of failure

- (A) nowhere is that cycle more clearly painted than in the book of Judges
 - (B) Joshua had died, along with the elders who had with him followed God and entered the land of promise
 - (C) but they had not obeyed God and driven the immoral Amorites and other nations out of the land; nor had they destroyed their pagan gods
 - (D) that cycle is summarized in the prologue to the book in Judges 2:11-19
 - (1) God's people forsook their Lord for other Gods
 - (2) God's punished them by the surrounding nations
 - (3) God took pity on them in their distress
 - (4) God raised up a judge to deliver His people
 - (5) the people returned to God to serve Him
 - (6) the judge died
 - (7) the people went back to following false gods
 - (E) seven times in the book of Judges that cycle repeats
- b. but, sadly, there is often a similar cycle in the lives of Christians today
- (A) through some ministry or program of the church they come to the Lord and find salvation and follow Jesus with great excitement and fervour
 - (B) then something changes: a spiritual mentor dies; a program ceases; a pastor leaves; and they drift away – oh, they may still attend church, and even serve in some part of its ministry – but their relationship with the Saviour has grown cold: secret and open sin has come between them and their Lord
 - (C) then distress comes: some hardship, some loss
 - (D) ['For whom the Lord loves He reproveth, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.'](#) (Proverbs 3:12)
 - (E) and, hopefully, there is repentance and recovery of spiritual health; but at oh! what a cost during that period of estrangement!
 - (F) but how difficult it is for the prodigal to swallow his or her pride and return shamefaced to the Saviour
- c. yet, hear God's gracious invitation: ['Return to Me'](#)

3. because God has already dealt with the problem
 - a. the problem that keeps His people from the communion, the relationship with Himself, that God desires
 - b. that problem is sin, as we are told in Isaiah 59:2, 'But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.'
 - c. yet, in this verse, we are told very clearly that God has already dealt with that sin
 - (A) the redemption spoken of has nothing to do with the bringing back of the people of Israel from exile
 - (B) it is a spiritual redemption
 - (C) it is NT salvation from sin
 - (D) God has dealt with the transgressions – the rebellion of man in crossing over the forbidden boundaries
 - (E) God has dealt with the sin – the falling short of the righteousness of God's requirements
 - d. I have wiped out I have blotted out; I have obliterated
 - (A) regardless of the translation, the message is clear: sin and iniquity and transgression have been fully handled
 - (B) what a graphic description of how God has done it
 - (C) it is not 'with a thick cloud' but 'as (or like) a thick cloud'
 - (D) a thick, black cloud can bring darkness over the land and shut out every glimpse of the sun
 - (E) but God, by the breath of His wind can send that cloud scudding away, breaking up and disappearing even as it is swept off;
 - (F) so it is with sin which stands between us and God
 - (G) by the merciful and gracious breath of His Spirit, that sin has been taken away; even before the world was, God in His eternal plan laid every sin, past, present and future on Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross
4. if you have never come into a living relationship with God
 - a. it is because of the sin problem
 - b. this is the time to make that right
 - c. by trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, then you are in the state to receive joy, and to

D. Rejoice

1. Verse 23: Shout for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the Lord has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory.

2. Rejoice! and again, I say, Rejoice!
 - a. in a fashion that we cannot understand
 - b. and that is more than incomprehensible to the unbeliever
 - c. when man sinned in the Garden of Eden, all creation was placed in bondage; and the physical world was cursed
 - d. Genesis 3:17-18, '17b ... Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field'
 - e. but with redemption – and we yet await the fulness of the effect of our redemption from sin by Christ's death – that bondage will one day cease: '19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, ... 21 ... the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption ... 22 ... the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.' (Romans 8:19-22)

3. Isaiah prophesies this deliverance of the physical world
 - a. in many places
 - b. here, we see unmistakably that this deliverance can only come to pass because of the deliverance by God of man from His sin
 - c. this is the message of Isaiah, the evangelical prophet
 - d. this is the message of the evangelical church
 - e. and this is the message that we bring to you today
 - f. that because your sin has been covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, shed upon the cross
 - g. you may have joy; you can rejoice in what God has done
 - h. and in this God will be glorified in you, as you one day shall be glorified in Him: 'Christ in you the hope of glory'

E. Conclusion

1. Remember – that our God is the God of salvation: He and He alone has saved you that you should serve and worship Him
2. Return – do not let sin interfere with your relationship with your Saviour God, but trust in His victory over your sin
3. Rejoice – take joy in His redemption and plan for your eternity

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Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
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NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
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NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
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PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
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2. *Quotes on Happiness and Joy* – Kerux illustrations #386
3. *Ibid*
4. From Kerux illustrations, #3012