

Intro: Welcome to Christmas! By now you, like everyone else in the US, are fully engaged in the Christmas rush! Turkey is eaten, Game watched or played, Black Friday has taken place, and the countdown has begun. Day 1...24 to go!

This year as you have already seen, we are going to be approaching Christmas, and Advent in a different way. Jesse tree! The Jesse Tree celebration is a countdown based on Is 11:1 looking at promise of God to provide a Savior
Traces that promise through the genealogy of Jesus and the generations leading up to His birth,

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Today I want to look at that promise with you, and talk about the significance of that promise.

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.”

To fully appreciate The Promise of Is 11, you have to understand the background of what is going on when he spoke it:

- There Was A Need For Hope.

~Isaiah lived much of his life in a time of great prosperity

~That prosperity led the people of Israel to forget God...and to wander spiritually

External worship Idolatry Forgetting and Ignoring God Wickedness and abuse of others

~Because of their sin Isaiah’s message was twofold

Judgment of the unrighteous: (God allows surrounding nations to discipline them) Ultimately going into captivity

Salvation of righteous: (God promises grace and restoration to those that turn to Him)

Illus: Commentator says of Isaiah, *“There are thunderclouds of judgment in one verse followed by rainbows of promise next”*

Here is what Isaiah is saying...Promising: *“It Doesn’t Have to Be This Way!”*

Yes, things are bad. Yes, judgement is here, Yes, everything is falling apart...But God is still in charge, and *“It doesn’t...”*
On what looks to be a dry and dead stump...a new shoot is growing...Hope is present, God is at work, Savior is on the way!

And that is my message to you today.

Our country is not that different from Israel in Isaiah’s day! Prosperous, Busy, Many thriving...

But Often our Worship is external, Idolatry all kinds is rampant, People are forgetting and ignoring God Wicked and abusive

But...It doesn’t have to be that way...Because God can make a difference:

3 Ways God Works

1. God Can Work To CHANGE The Most Seemingly Hopeless Situation.

~Is 6:1-6: God is present and working:

(He showed up in worship)

~Is 7:13-14 God promised a savior!

(Promised a sign and a son)

~Is 9:1-7 God will change the judgment to salvation

(Said he can bring good from bad) (Darkness to light)

~Is 11:1-7 God send a Savior

(Promised more than we think possible)

That is the Promise: Yes it is awful...but it doesn’t have to be that way...and for those that turn to God, those that walk with God, those that depend upon Him and trust in Him, Salvation is right around the corner.

That promise is echoed in the NT. Paul in Eph 3:20-21 said it this way.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

Here is what I would challenge you to do. Pick the WORST challenge in your life...whatever it is, and take it to God

- ASK Him for what you want. Don’t limit your ask by what you think is POSSIBLE...Just ASK
- IMAGINE the very best possible outcome. If EVERYTHING were possible...what would it be?
- Now...take it to an entirely NEW and BETTER level...and prayerfully leave it in His hands!
- Wait...with expectation to see what HE will do...

You see...God is Able to change it...we should never discount His great power on our behalf.

But...He doesn’t always...Sometimes instead of Changing our situation...

2. God Walks WITH Us Through Whatever Is Going On.

God doesn’t promise that He will always remove us from the situation.

When judgment came Some of the righteous people of Israel went into captivity as well!

Judgement came upon the country...and they were not spared just because they were righteous. Suffered with the rest

Much of Isaiah is a promise of comfort....to those that walked through judgement...and a reminder of God’s presence

~Is 40:1-5 God speaks comfort to those in difficult times

~Is 43:1-3 I have redeemed you

At the cost of His only son!

I have called you by NAME

Not some random, hey you!

I will be with you in waters

Noah

I will be with you in fire

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego

You will not be consumed!

God promises comfort and His presence...Just like He did David. “Valley of Shadow of Death” I am with you!

God offers US that promise as well! That's what He promised Paul in Corinth, when he was abused and mistreated preaching Ac 18:9-10 "One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

Applic: And God will be with you as well. Regardless of what you go through, God is present. You may have to stop and pray. You may have to wait quietly. You may have to search the Scriptures You may have to look for Him in places and ways and people and situations that you never imagined...But he is there!

And, Whether or not God changes things...and However He walks with you through your situation...One other promise
3. God Can USE What You Go Through For Good...If you will allow Him to Do So.

That is the message of Isaiah. The whole second half of the book, Ch 40-46 can be outlined this way.

~Redemption Promised Is 43:19-20 *Behold I am doing a new thing! Even now it springs up*

~Redemption Provided Is 53:4 *"He has born our griefs and sorrows, pierced, crushed, we are healed!"*

~Redemption Realized: Is 61:1ff *"The spirit of the lord is upon me...anointed me, sent me*

Just as God could USE the discipline of the captivity for the good of the nation, So God can use whatever YOU might be going through for you good...and or for others!

Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."

He comforts us

So we can comfort others

There is nothing so powerful to someone in pain than to say...I understand...and they truly know that is real

Joy is multiplied when it is shared

Sorrow is halved

If you will allow God to bring you comfort...if you will trust Him

If you will allow Him to work,

If you will learn the lesson you need to learn

If you will grow strong in the middle of the trial

And If you will learn how to lean into Him...and see the healthy outcome

God can use it.

But if you struggle, and resist, and complain and deny and refuse to learn...refuse to lean...refuse to let Him heal ...NOTHING to share! You waste the potential lesson...and the potential help you can offer to others.

Applic: We learned the key to this principle when we studied 2 Cor a little while ago: It is asking the RIGHT QUESTION

~Wrong Question: *"Why is this happening to me?"*

~Right Question: *"Who do you want me to help with what I have learned?"*

CONCL:

Regardless of whatever difficulty you may be experiencing...God gives you a promise: *"It doesn't have to be that way!"*

God offers HOPE:

~He can change it...

Beyond what you could ever imagine, Just ask!

~Walk w you thorough it

You don't have to do it alone...He is there, every step of the way

~Use it

For you...for others...If you allow Him to bring healing...and Help

Won't be wasted...It can be used!

Come Pray: Ask for what you need...and want

Come Pray: Ask for His presence in the midst of the trial

Come Pray: Ask Him to show you WHO the right person is for you to help