



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Defeating Sin – Restoring Joy

November 28, 2021

Isaiah 9:1-7

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9 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.*

(Pastor prays)

It has been said that the darker the cloud, the brighter the rainbow. And the more severe the pain in life, the more pure the joy that can be found in Christ. Many of you who have shared the tears of anguished loss have found real comfort in the arms of Jesus. Jesus.

Christmas is about the coming of Jesus Christ, the one who, on the day He was born, was eons older than His mother. The one whom the world was made through has come into the world like each one of us. He became like us to save us. He was born to a humble girl in a forgotten nowhere. He came in weakness that meant He might save us in strength. Even in the text that I read you, Isaiah looks forward to the savior and gives Him the fourfold name of a victorious king. This child will be called wonderful counselor, wise. Mighty God, strong. Everlasting father, eternal caring. Prince of peace, Shalom.

Then we are told down in verse 7 that God Himself is going to do this. *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.*

We didn't do this. God does. More than that, it is the passion of the Lord of hosts, the God of armies. Christ comes because of His zeal, passion. That translated in the Old Testament is "jealousy." In proverbs 6 we see a husband's jealousy for the love of his life. In the Song of Solomon the word "zeal" is used to describe the love that burns in the heart of a bridegroom.

This zeal describes God's passion for you and your salvation. And to understand that we've got to go back through the history into the context of Isaiah 9. That is 700 years before Christ is born. We go back beyond the minor prophets in exile and into a nation on the brink of utter collapse. And there we find Isaiah. He is a man in anguish. There is a warlike people from the north with a leader named Tiglath-pileser, and he is a brutal man. His chariots with their iron wheels are going to decimate the beautiful lands of the northern Kingdom where Isaiah lives. Don't forget, there king Uzziah is dead. And it's been a long time since Israel or Judah have actually honored God in the context of Isaiah 8-9.

God is bringing judgment on His people and you can read the terror in Isaiah 8: 21-22. There is distress, darkness, depression and anguish. Some of you can identify. And in the midst of all

that, Isaiah points forward 700 years to Christ. He points us to this child that will be born. It's what every mention of Christmas *must* do. It should remind us that we can live with joy and strength and contentment because of Christ. And after all we've been through this year, after all that you have carried this year and how spiritually drained and genuinely tired your soul is, I want to use this passage to help you do the next thing and do it with a seed of joy in your heart. Because...

When Jesus Comes He Defeats Sin and Restores Joy

Let's take a couple of steps through this passage.

Quit trusting people and start trusting Jesus

Even now as you wrestle with your own pain, junk, sin, disappointments, hurt, this passage reminds me I can trust him. Let me show you what I mean. Chapter 8 tells us that God's people are under judgment. In 8:22, we see distress, darkness and anguish. But then in Chapter 9, Isaiah looks forward. *9 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.*

There was enormous spiritual darkness over Israel. The prophets lied, the people floundered, the religion was dead, and for 400 years God would be silent. There was no word from God, just judgment. We see in verse 1, Zebulun and Naphtali. But keep reading. *but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.* Then you get to verse 2 and it becomes a runway of grace. Let's read it, it speaks of Christ.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.* This verse is quoted in Matthew 4:16.

Christmas, the coming of Christ is the light of salvation and the Gospel of grace. Even the best of us, the most educated and well behaved of us, are spiritually disabled and born without eyes to see. And Christ who is the life-giver and soul-saver comes, as John says, in Him was life and that life is the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and no darkness can overcome it. Jesus Christ is the *only* savior of sinners and the *only* hope to escape God's judgment. He is the *only* reason to celebrate Christmas. By God's grace and through His Holy Spirit I'm asking you to trust Him today. Quit trusting people to help, fulfill, hold you up or make you happy. Quit trusting people and start trusting Jesus.

Push yourself to rejoice in Christ

Join me in verses 3-5 as the prophecy of Isaiah gets specific. 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.*

Look at verse 3 and notice the way the joy that Christ brings is described. It is joy that is a result of the light of Christ. Isaiah speaks to God the Father regarding God the Son and the liberating effects of what Christ does, it brings joy. 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.*

You see the word “joy” and they rejoiced. You see joy again and they are glad. The joy is compared to the harvest festival when all the hard work is done and it's been a great year. Or at the end of verse 3, the joy of Christ is like dividing the spoil. It is compared to a great victory or VE Day. It is compared to VJ day or the Emancipation Proclamation. To enter into God's grace in Christ is to finally find joy. All the gladness is found in Christ and thereby the joy of the Lord becomes your strength. Notice verse 4. Verse 4 tells us why the joy is so great. 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.*

You see the word “for”? Here's the reason. The words “yoke, staff, rod,” they are all words of slavery that has been broken and set free. The yoke was the harness that hooked to a person and animal to pull a load. It was a burden and the weight of the world. It is the guilt of sin and the worry of tomorrow. And by the blood of His cross, this coming Christ removes the yoke and says, “take my yoke upon you, my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Here is the slave set free. God removes the yoke. His grace gives us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart to believe. He sets us free, and when the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. There is a deep, profound and lasting joy in the forgiveness and restoration Christ brings. And look what else the light of Christ is compared to. Look again at verse 4 and the staff and the rod. “The rod of his oppressor has been broken as on the day of Midian.” What happened at Midian? That's over in Judges where Gideon's army was whittled down to 300 men which meant insurmountable odds

and God miraculously, astonishingly, incomprehensibly saved His people. And Isaiah is saying that the light of Christ is a saving grace. Just like that.

In verse 5, Isaiah gives us another image of victory in Christ that if you're not too careful you can go flying right by. Let's read it. ⁵ *For every boot of the ramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

It's kind of graphic but what Isaiah is telling us is that because of Christ and what He has done, His birth, perfect life, death and resurrection, because of that, all of the gear for battle that the enemy has, the boots and spears and swords and garments, they are all heaped up into a pile and set on fire. And as they blaze up, the freed slaves dance as freed men by the cross of Christ.

This text tells us that because of Christ, Isaiah will say later that “no weapon formed against you shall succeed.” So what do we have? In the text it says, when you are in Christ, the weapons of the enemy are destroyed. In the light of what we read, Paul tells us something astounding and beautiful happens at the cross. It's something for you to grasp. He tells us that God has forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. Jesus set it aside by nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and the authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them. The cross of Jesus gives us propitiation to God and the wrath is gone. It gives us justification to man and we have forgiveness and it defeats Satan.

When Jesus comes, He defeats sin and restores joy. Quit trusting in people and start trusting in Jesus. Push yourself to rejoice in Christ. Push yourself to think how His victory gives us forgiveness, healing and the love of God.

Find your hope in the one true king

In verse 6, there is the fourfold name. It is absolute, sovereign rule. Verse 6 says the government is on His shoulders. He is in control, not Trump or Biden or COVID or Bill Gates. But God. Your life is in His hands and no one else's. It is God's Providence and cannot be confused with my purpose. He is the wonderful counselor. He gives advice, a plan, a plot. It gives you a course of action. His counsel is full of wonder. It is beyond human reason. His counsel is infallible and unflappable. My hope cannot be worried about my ability. The title “mighty God”

means nothing is impossible for Him. There is no sin beyond forgiveness, no marriage so estranged, no hole so deep or life so messed up that He can't save. All authority is given to Jesus.

This hope does not leave me feeling like an orphan. He is the everlasting father. Here is His tender dealing with us as His children and the security that fights all the lies and always provides.

This hope does not put me in a panic. He is the Prince of peace. He is the chief and the only peace-giver. He is the sovereign ruler who gives peace to His people and through His cross declares that the war is over. In Romans 8:1 it says, *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* Because...

When Jesus comes He defeats sin and restores joy. Quit trusting people and start trusting Jesus. Push yourself to rejoice in Christ and find your hope in the one true king.

Before we leave here today I would like you to contemplate a few questions:

What sin needs forgiving? What sadness needs grieving? What doubts need removing? What actions need taking? What truth needs confessing?

Take these questions to our wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father and Prince of peace.

(Pastor prays)