

Sweet Righteousness

Isaiah 31:1 – 32:20

Halifax: 31 January 2010

Introduction:

Last week, we took a close look at Isaiah 30...

- In chapter 30, Isaiah was addressing a serious problem in Judah that occurred not too long before the failed attempt of Assyria to overthrow Jerusalem in 701 BC...
 - Namely, King Hezekiah and the people of Judah went down to Egypt, the do-nothing dragon, for help!
 - What a foolish thing for the people who have the true God as their God to do!
 - The Lord is going to have to severely punish the people of Judah for this,
 - Nevertheless, He will also punish both Assyria, the aggressor,
 - and Egypt, the pretended defender.
 - And then, He will restore His people and bless them once again.
- We also took a brief look at chapter 31 last week.
 - In Chapter 31, Isaiah basically reiterates what he had said in chapter 30...
 - He says,
 - “Woe to those who go down (lit, are going down) to Egypt for help!”
 - Then, in the third verse, he goes over a very basic lesson with them...
 - He explains to them that the Egyptians are men and not God, and that their horses are flesh and not spirit.
 - It seems that they had not noticed this!
 - They have God in their midst at Jerusalem,
 - But they are trusting in that which is flesh and not spirit...
 - That which is flesh must be given life by that which is spirit.
 - That which is spirit is that which gives life to that which is flesh.
 - These foolish covenant people of God are trusting in men and horses who are dead without God...
 - when they might have trusted in God whose altar fire as at Jerusalem.
 - Isaiah then tells how God is going to be like a lion (v. 4) and a bird defending its nest (v. 5) in delivering His people...

- And so he calls them to return to the LORD against whom they have deeply revolted (v. 6).
 - They ought to repent now, in view of the coming judgement when those who are still holding to their idols will cast them away as worthless.
 - No doubt, Isaiah is looking to the immediate future when Assyria will be destroyed,
 - in which day they will see how worthless their idols and their trust in Egypt really are...
 - but He is also looking beyond the immediate future to the coming of Jesus Christ!
 - Chapter 31 is a link to chapter 32,
 - And in chapter 32,
 - He tells them what the kingdom of Christ is going to be like...
 - that kingdom of sweet righteousness that He is going to establish!
 - The world always supposes that righteousness is an ugly thing,
 - but Isaiah shows us rather how desirable and freeing it is!
 - What an encouragement this must have been to the remnant who were yearning for that kingdom while living in a society that was far from the promised righteousness!
 - What hope it must have given to them to keep looking to the Lord despite what their leaders and so many of their fellow Jews were doing at this time!
 - What an encouragement it is to all you to trust in our Lord Jesus Christ,
 - to see how wonderful His kingdom is that you might embrace it with joy!
 - So let's take a look now at what Isaiah has to say about this excellent kingdom of righteousness that we might have comfort and hope from the scriptures.
 - He begins with the words:
 - I. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness!**
 - The word *behold* is used to get our attention!
 - It means,
 - "Look!" "Look at this!" "This is important!"
 - "This is something you don't want to miss."
 - "A king shall reign in righteousness!"
- A. It is clear that Isaiah is speaking about Jesus Christ here!

1. Isaiah has already spoken about a king that establishes a kingdom of true righteousness—so different than what Israel had in His day...
 - a. In Isaiah 9, He told us of a king whose throne would be marked by righteousness...
 - And He said amazing things about Him...
 - He said that He would be born, a son given to us, and so would be man...
 - Yet he also said that His name would be Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—
 - names that can only belong to one who is truly God!
 - And he said that there would be *no end* to His reign and that He would establish judgement and justice from that time forth and forever!
 - He is presented as the only hope of righteousness for the people of God.
 - b. And Isaiah spoke about Him again in chapter 11 as a king whose *character* would be righteousness!
 - He speaks of one who will come after the Davidic kingdom has fallen—
 - a Rod from the stem of Jesse, a branch from his roots...
 - when David dynasty had been cut down so that only a stump was left.
 - He spoke of Him as the one who would be anointed with the fullness of the Spirit,
 - endowed with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
 - And then Isaiah speaks of His righteous reign:
 - Isa 11:4: But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.
2. And here you see how Isaiah speaks of a king with the same characteristics...
 - There is no doubt that it is the king He spoke about before, for no one else can fit this description.
 - a. He says in verse 1 that He will reign in righteousness and that princes will rule in justice!
 - He Himself will be righteous,

- and He will change the way things are done so that the princes who rule under Him will rule in justice.
 - Our world wants to make you think that righteousness is an ugly thing,
 - that it stifles you and binds you and destroys your joy.
 - But the righteousness in view here is one in which every man lives for the good of His neighbour and uses His power and energy for the glory of God.
 - There is nothing ugly about it at all!
 - It is an end to selfishness that takes advantage of others and that is full of strife and contention!
- b. And look, Isaiah describes the righteous King as both God and man...just as he did in previous prophecies!
- Look at verse 2:
 - Isa 32:2: A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
 - Do you see?
 - He calls Him a man,
 - yet He says that He will do things that only God can do...
 - What man could be called a protection from the wind and cover from the tempest?
 - What many could Himself be as rivers of water in a dry place and as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land?
 - Kings who are but man have to obtain all their resources from their people—they cannot provide these things.
 - Here is a king that will protect His people from every threat and provide them with every need!
 - Politicians make some pretty bold claims...
 - but none would dare to make such claims as this!
 - This One is the Son of God.
 - He is the One whose name is *Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

B. And just look at how the people are changed—even transformed—by this righteous king!

1. They will be given four things that completely change them.

a. They will be given revelation by this king, the ability to see the truth

- Verse 3 says,
 - “The eyes of those who see will not be dim.”
 - Those who see are the prophets...and when Jesus comes, they will see what kings and righteous men had longed to see of old!
 - When Jesus came, He flooded the world with light so that God’s glory was seen as never before.
 - Even Isaiah only saw through a veil as, with the other prophets, he sought to understand what could only be fully understood by the coming of Christ.
 - So revelation is the first thing that Christ gives to His people that changes them...
- b. Secondly, they will be given receptivity; the ability to hear the truth...
- It would do little good to give revelation if the people are not given ears to hear what the Lord says.
 - Verse 3 says, “And the ears of those who hear will listen.”
 - They will quit closing their ears to truth.
 - They will know that God’s word is good and that they need it.
 - They will hunger for it...
 - Do you have this hunger?
 - It is something that God gives His people who love Him.
- c. Third, the people will be given knowledge, the ability to grasp the truth...
- In verse 4 it says that even the rash will understand knowledge!
 - Those who used to be rash or thoughtless will be guided by true wisdom when Jesus comes.
 - Instead of acting with rashness apart from wisdom,
 - they will live intelligently by truth.
 - How it grievous it is to see those who have access to this wisdom, but live apart from it in our day...
 - making one foolish decision after another...
 - sowing seeds of their own destruction...
 - following a pathway that leads straight to ruin!
 - How strong are the warnings in Proverbs!
- d. Fourth, they will be given fluency of speech, the ability to speak the truth...
- Those who before could only stammer—
 - who could not pass the truth along to their neighbours or their children or those under their care—now speak truth.

- Isaiah says,
- “The tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly”

TRANS> What a blessing this is!

- We are radically changed by our Lord Jesus Christ!

2. But how does Christ bring about this change?

a. He brings righteousness into the world by His life...

- He is righteous, and so He shows us what true righteousness was always meant to be...
 - Until He came, there was no example of true righteousness in the world.
- When we see this pure and holy Son of God, submitting to His father even to the point of death on the cross...
 - and also giving Himself for His people...
 - we learn what true righteousness is really all about—
 - It is a beautiful thing indeed!

TRANS> And not only is righteousness learned as it is embodied in Him...

b. He also brings righteousness into the world by His work...

- and that in two ways...

1) First, in what He accomplishes by His work...

- He actually establishes a righteous kingdom by doing all that is necessary to establish His elect in righteousness.
 - He Himself because a sacrifice to God for our sins, offering Himself to the Father for our pardon...
 - And then, having obtained our pardon, but giving us His Spirit to transform us so that we are changed into His likeness and filled with spiritual life.

TRANS> That is the first way He brings righteousness into the world by His work...

2) Secondly, He brings in righteousness In what He demonstrates (introduces into the world) about righteousness by His work.

- He shows us just how righteous our God truly is!
- He shows that our sin was so reprehensible in God’s sight that Jesus,
 - this pure, holy, meek Lamb had to be brutally crucified and had to bear the full brunt of God’s rejection and curse on the cross...

- So great was our sin that it caused this mighty lion of the tribe of Judah to be overwhelmed in the Garden of Gethsemane as He anticipated the Father's rejection of Him...
 - such that He was in such anguish that blood was mingled with his sweat!
 - Here our unrighteous world is awakened to see what our crime did to Him!
 - We so lightly esteem our wickedness, but here we see out great our demerit—
 - Now the prophets see what they could not see before He came so that even the least in the kingdom is greater than the greatest of them!
 - Now that He is crucified, the ears of his people are opened and they know God and His righteousness as they never knew it before!
 - And they are able to speak of Him without stammering!
 - Oh brothers and sisters, Jesus said that even the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist!
 - The prophets longed to see this beautiful king!
 - The world and even the covenant people did not know what real righteousness was until Jesus came!
3. Isaiah goes on to explain how our transformation affects our judgement!
- a. Verse 5 says,
- Isa 32:5: The foolish person will no longer be called generous, Nor the miser said to be bountiful;
 - There is a great play on words here in the Hebrew...
 - The foolish person is Nabal... and the generous person is Nativ...
 - A Nabal is a person who lacks moral sensitivity and is selfish, and a Nativ, often translated prince, is a generous person who freely gives...
 - Until Christ establishes you in His kingdom,
 - Your perception is all wrong.
 - You think a Nabal (a selfish fool) is a Nativ (a noble person, a prince, a generous person).
 - Your judgement is totally distorted so that you bestow honour where honour is not due...

- You give honour to fools and misers who elevate themselves by trampling on other people!
 - You think they are princes because they are mighty!
 - In Luke 22, Jesus talks about how the rulers of the Gentiles are called benefactors when they were far from benefactors!
 - He says that the greatest in His kingdom is the one who serves—and of course, He Himself is the greatest servant of all!
 - Every thing is different in His kingdom!
 - The noble one is not the one who is gotten the top place, but the one who lays down His life for others!
 - This is so beautiful!
- b. Isaiah speaks about all the selfishness and scheming that goes on apart from Christ in verses 6-7.
- He says:
 - Isa 32:6-7: For the foolish person will speak foolishness, And his heart will work iniquity: To practice ungodliness, To utter error against the LORD, To keep the hungry unsatisfied, And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; He devises wicked plans To destroy the poor with lying words, Even when the needy speaks justice.
 - Everything about Him is wrecked...
 - His speech, His heart, His behaviour, His view of God, His lack of care for others, His counsel and plans, His perversion of justice...
 - As God told Noah, the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually!
 - But we don't see it until Jesus comes and establishes His kingdom and establishes us in it.
 - We think we are noble! We think we are okay!
 - until we learn what true generosity—true nobility—is!
- c. Isaiah tells us what it is...
- Isa 32:8: A generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand.
 - He plans generosity and he lives by giving out to others.
 - The true noble among us is Jesus Himself. He is the prince. He is the generous man. He is the nadiv!
 - He is the One whose plans from of old were devising generous things—
 - How He could bless His people—what He could do to save them!

- He is the One we come to honour and to strive to imitate once we have been brought into His kingdom!
 - Brothers and sisters, we can never again be the shame...
 - We, who used to say, “your life for me,”
 - Now say, “my life for yours.”
 - At least, that is what we aspire to as members of His kingdom!
 - And how ashamed we are that we do not live up to it.
- Did our noble master not say:
 - John 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.?
 - Indeed He did!
 - How ashamed we are to be Nabal...
 - How we admire our Nadiv!

TRANS> But Isaiah returns to the reality of the nation before him—the people he is addressing.

- The righteous king had not come.
 - The change of which he has spoken has not yet occurred...
 - Oh yes, there is something of his Spirit and life in the remnant...

II. But right now as Isaiah looks at the people He sees that they are far from this ideal of this kingdom!

- They need Jesus to come.

A. Isaiah speaks about the reality of Israel’s condition in verses 9-14.

1. He shows that even the women are cold hearted.

- The women, who are usually far more caring and compassionate toward others than men are complacent and thinking only of their own comfort.
- See how Isaiah addresses them in verse 9:
 - Isa 32:9: Rise up, you women who are at ease, Hear my voice; You complacent daughters, Give ear to my speech.
 - Isaiah’s words should have cut them to the heart as they saw how selfish and uncaring their society had become...
 - But it is no matter to them as long as they have their comforts—their jewellery and their parties and their clothes and their furnished homes.
 - There is no care for others!

- When even the women become cold and hardened to the needs of others—
 - it is a sign of a very sick society!
 - You all know that women ordinarily excel in this regard...
 - I mean, if you ask a man and a woman if they have treated each other well,
 - the man will often say that he has because he did not do anything wrong to his wife...
 - the woman, on the other hand, will describe what good things she has done for her husband.
 - In this way, men are not at all like Christ!
 - They take the authority and strength God has given them and use it to oppress and exploit others for their own benefit...
 - Women are often far more excellent in this regard.
 - Men will abandon their children without a thought, but a mother must become very hardened to leave her little ones.
- No doubt, then, Isaiah is addressing them in particular here to shame the whole nation!
 - He is showing them how low they have come.
 - They are comfortable and that is all that matters to them...
 - As long as my needs are satisfied, all is well!
 - Wretched, wretched women!
 - They are not Abigail's, but Nabab's.

2. But we are not much different my brothers and sisters!

- It is true that when Jesus came, there was a great transformation of those who truly enter His kingdom...
 - Even though the whole world was introduced to the novel concept that we ought to love one another...
 - And that is still the case!
 - There was a change in the way we look at everything because Jesus came and revealed the Father to us as He had never been revealed before,
 - and He poured out His Spirit as the Spirit had never been poured out before.
- But we are still not at all where we should be.
 - The kingdom of righteousness is still being established, and Jesus must yet return to purge all the false sons and daughters from His kingdom...

- And not only that, but He has yet to perfect those who do belong to Him.
 - We have the beginnings of His work, but the change in us is not complete.
 - And when you consider that according the last census, over 85% of us in Nova Scotia are baptised into the name of the Triune God,
 - it is very shameful to see how far we have fallen!
- We ought to be a society where there is love and giving of self, but instead we see that even our women have become crass and vile...
 - concerned only for their own interests and not for the interests of others...
 - They are so complacent that they even destroy their own tiny children within their womb....and say they have done no wrong!
 - And more and more they become violent—cutting instead of bandaging, tearing instead of healing, cursing instead of blessing, terrorising instead of comforting.
 - Isaiah’s exposure of the selfish women of His day who did not care for anyone but themselves comes back on us—
 - and it is worse for us because we have the light of Christ!

B. And look at what the LORD says that He will do because of this selfish wickedness.

1. He tells them that in a little over a year, He is going to put a complete end to their complacency and ease.
 - He is going to destroy their fields and their vineyards, no doubt a reference to the Assyrian invasion!
 - Isaiah 32:10-12 says:
 - Isa 32:10-12: In a year and some days You will be troubled, you complacent women; For the vintage will fail, The gathering will not come. Tremble, you women who are at ease; Be troubled, you complacent ones; Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare, And gird sackcloth on your waists. People shall mourn upon their breasts For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
 - Interestingly, Isaiah shifts back and forth from the feminine to the masculine,
 - showing that it is not just the women, but the entire nation represented by these complacent women that will be brought to mourn.
- Our righteous Lord who purposes to establish a righteous kingdom will not allow wicked complacency to go on unpunished.

- If they will not mourn over their sin, He will see that they mourn over the destruction of all the things they hold dear—their ease and security and wealth.
 - Isa 32:13-14: On the land of my people will come up thorns and briers, Yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city; Because the palaces will be forsaken, The bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks—
 - This is as much as to say that He will drive them from their cities and their houses—
 - the only inhabitants will be thorns and briers, and wild animals.
 - Where there was comfort and ease, there will mourning and sadness.
2. We cannot say that such is going to happen to us in a year and a half,
- But we can certainly say that inasmuch as we have become like them,
 - despite our greater privileges in Jesus Christ,
 - judgement will come upon us if don't repent.
 - The selfish party will come to an end!
 - Either you are glad about that or you are terrified by that.
 - If God is to continue to be like Himself, and of course He will, then we can expect Him to destroy our wicked complacency and ease.
 - Already, we are feeling the effects of His judgement upon our society.
 - Alas, even the very consequences of our own selfishness has made it such that it is very hard to find a family that gets along with each other...
 - We are so shallow that our happiness only goes as deep as our possessions and as deep as a short-lived affair or two.
 - Yet, we are complacent and unconcerned about our own selfish hearts—
 - we want others to change, but we do not see our own need to change—we are complacent
 - God is very patient with us, but His judgement is already upon us.

TRANS> But our selfishness and sin will not keep our LORD from establishing His righteous kingdom!

III. Isaiah declares that God is going to pour out His Spirit, and that when He does, everything will change!

- You see that having just told of the coming desolation in verses 10-14,

- in verse 15, Isaiah tells us how it will all change!
- It will be desolate and ruined,
 - Isaiah 32:15: **Until** the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

A. This speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit!

1. The prophets began to speak of the outpouring of God's Spirit as something that would occur when the LORD came to establish His righteous kingdom!

- a. We saw in verse 1 that a king would come and reign in righteousness...
 - We saw that His kingdom would be one in which the greatest one is the one who serves all the rest.
 - That the perverse standards of man would be replaced by the beautiful standards of God's righteousness.
 - Jesus crucified would reveal true righteousness to us as it had never been revealed before!
 - He would show us that our sin is far worse than we ever thought it was,
 - and that God's righteousness is much more excellent than we ever thought it was.
- b. But Jesus *showing* us all of this, and even Jesus dying to take away our sins does no good for us unless He brings life into us by His divine power!
 - And here is the promise of the Spirit!
 - The Spirit who is poured out from on High—straight from God!
 - The Spirit who gives us life from above when we were dead in our trespasses and sins.

2. How necessary the Spirit is!

- Without Him, we remain dead—we remain flesh without life—in this case, without the life of God.
 - Empty people who walk about in our selfish independence from God.
 - People devoid of the life of God to animate us and fill us with love that gives and serves.
- You see how Isaiah illustrates the life-giving effect of the Spirit—
 - Where there was a barren wilderness, there will be a fruitful field!
 - And what was thought to be fruitful field before, will now be considered a forest.
 - We who were dead in sin will burst forth with new life!

- We who were a barren wilderness with will bring forth all kinds of fruit for God.
 - Jesus said that unless a man is born of the Spirit, He cannot see the kingdom of God.
 - He can be taught the gospel, and He can be shown the crucified Lord,
 - but without the Spirit and the new birth of the Spirit, the man is not changed by the gospel.
 - He remains as dead as ever.
 - We all have to be given life from God if we are going to come alive in this kingdom!
 - We have to receive the Spirit of life.
3. And I ask you brothers and sisters, when was the Spirit poured out like this?
- The Spirit was poured out when Jesus came to establish His righteous kingdom.
 - The two events go together—
 - Jesus taking His throne and the outpouring of the Spirit.
 - Peter makes this very clear at Pentecost when He explains,
 - Acts 2:32-36: "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - The Spirit was poured out as soon as Jesus began to reign at God's right hand!
 - Having taken His throne, He has poured out the Spirit to give life to His people.
 - This is how He establishes us into His kingdom!
 - This is what baptism symbolises—
 - the new life of the Spirit that cleanses us as water cleanses our bodies!
 - the new life of the Spirit that makes nabavs out of nabals.
 - Let us cry out to God for the fullness of the Spirit!
 - Even as we are baptised with water, let us look to God to baptise us with the Holy Spirit.

- Let us seek for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Let us ask Him to show us Jesus Christ so that we may behold the true God who is revealed in Him...
 - and beholding may be changed from glory to glory into His likeness.

B. Isaiah speaks about the great change that comes when the Spirit of Christ is poured out!

1. Isaiah presents the new life that comes to the community...

a. He does not present an individualistic righteousness, but a community righteousness.

- This is very important.
 - As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are brought into a kingdom where we live together as brothers and sisters.
 - We are not just concerned to have the Holy Spirit for ourselves, but we want to share the new life of God together as a people.
 - We live in the communion of the Saints.
 - We are reconciled not only to God, but also to each other to live together in peace.

TRANS> Do you see?

b. You can't isolate yourself and live as a Christian.

- You can't be generous by yourself.
- It will not work.
- You can't lay down your life for others if you are not with others!
 - You may have a false version of complacency and ease in a selfish life that excludes others...
 - the life that finds complacency and ease by isolating yourself...
 - But that is not the complacency and ease that Christ gives us in His kingdom!
 - The complacency and ease that He gives us is a living together in love—as nabivs (noble persons who are generous) rather than nabals (selfish fools)...
 - a community life in which we give and give and give—in our homes as well as in the larger community.

2. Look at how Isaiah describes the kingdom when God's Spirit is poured out and see if it is not what I have just described!

- a. In verse 16, he says that it is a place of righteousness and justice:
 - Isa 32:16: Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field.
 - Life in righteousness springs up where there was death in sin—
 - and where there was some life already, righteousness remains and increases.
 - See how he is using the field and the wilderness to talk about communities of people?
 - Isaiah is not just concerned with fields and vineyards, he is talking about our lives.

- b. In verse 17, he uses some of the same words he used to speak of the complacency and ease of the women in Zion...
 - only now, it is a complacency and ease that comes from living together in righteousness—
 - where the generous noble man devises generous things!
 - In verse 17-18, He says:
 - Isa 32:17-18: The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,
 - This is so different than that kind of righteousness that isolates itself to stay pure and holy.
 - This is the righteousness that remains pure and holy while pouring out itself for others...
 - not that it becomes unrighteous to get along with others...
 - but it retains righteousness *while* giving itself to others.
 - It is the righteousness that Jesus exemplifies and gives by His Spirit.
 - And when it is brought into the community, it brings peace and security and quietness!

- c. And Isaiah says that it is a peace and quietness that abides even through the storm of God's judgement!
 - 1) That is what verse 19 is speaking of:
 - Here, let me read it together with verse 18 for the context:
 - Isa 32:18-19: My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, though hail comes down on the forest, And the city is brought low in humiliation.

- There were those among Isaiah's disciples who were already partakers of the Holy Spirit in a measure...
 - not yet in the fullness that would come when Christ appeared in the world—but they were truly sanctified...
 - And when the judgement that took away the complacency and security of those who were trusting in the flesh came,
 - These would find security in Christ as their hiding place as we saw in verse 2—
 - He would be a shadow as a great rock in a weary land.

TRANS> Do you see?

2) This applies to us expressly as those who live now that Christ has come and poured out His Spirit.

- Those who are brought into Christ's kingdom continue in peace and quietness even when tribulation comes!
- Jesus constantly told us that we would have tribulation in the world, but that we would also have peace in Him.
 - We cannot read the New Testament without seeing it...
 - It is all through Acts where the apostles and their disciples are constantly opposed...yet continue to give...
 - It is in Philippians where the believers are not terrified by their adversaries...but shine as light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, having the mind of Christ...
 - It is in Thessalonians where they are said to have received the Word of God in much affliction...the word sounding forth from them into all the world...
 - It is in Peter's first epistle where the saints are slaves who are beaten even when they have done no wrong...and yet they live in peace and love, knowing the hope they have in Christ...
 - It is in seen in Hebrews where they have had to suffer for their faith, but continue in assurance and peace...
 - We go on with peace and quietness, living together in love by the power of God's Spirit through the face of Jesus Christ.

TRANS> So what is the conclusion of all this?

Conclusion: The conclusion is given to us in verse 20.

- Isaiah says

- Isa 32:20: Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, Who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.
- It is admittedly a difficult passage, but I would suggest that Isaiah is pronouncing a blessing on those who look for fruit from Christ and His Spirit...
 - Those who give themselves to sowing seed by the waters—
 - that is, beside the place where God has promised to give life...
 - These ones are blessed because they have given themselves to seeking the Lord for life,
 - They continually send forth their ox and their donkey to plough the fields...
 - They look to spread the life of God’s kingdom wherever they can—they are life-givers, freely and bountifully sowing that they may bountifully reap.
 - They sow in their own lives,
 - They sow in the lives of their families,
 - They sow in the lives of their communities,
 - They even sow in foreign fields...
 - And blessed are they!
 - This blessedness is set in contrast with the woe that was given at the beginning of chapter 31...where this section began...
 - Isa 31:1: Woe to you who go down to Egypt for help...
 - Isa 32:20: Blessed are you who sow beside the waters where God promises to pour out His Spirit...
 - Yes, brothers and sisters...
 - Do not be a lazy farmer who does not sow!
 - Sow into God’s kingdom now and you will surely reap with joy!