

Sermon #99

Series: Isaiah

Title: The Threefold Message of Evangelism

Text: Isaiah 40:1-31</P>

Subject: *The Message God's Servants are Sent to Preach*

Date: Sunday Evening – January 12, 1992

Introduction:

The title of my message tonight is **The Threefold Message of Evangelism.**

Historically, Isaiah 40 is God's promise of grace and restoration to Judah. In Chapter 39:5-7 Isaiah told Hezekiah and Judah that the nation would be carried away into Babylon as captives. This was God's punishment for the sins of the nation. Yet, there was an elect remnant in Judah. Lest their hearts be overcome with grief and despair, Isaiah was instructed by God to assure his people of the nation's restoration and of the certainty of God's promise. In this 40th chapter we have a record of what God told Isaiah to say to his people.

Yet, in its scope this passage reaches far beyond Judah's restoration from Babylon. It speaks of the salvation of God's elect by Christ.

Proposition:

In these 31 verses the Spirit of God tells us what every man sent of God to preach the gospel is required of God to preach.

God sends his prophets to minister to different people in different ages and circumstances. These men who are sent of God to preach the gospel vary from one another in many things. Some are educated and refined. Some are uneducated and rough. Some are scholars. Some are fishermen. Sometimes God's messenger is a Moses, an Elijah, or a John the Baptist. Sometimes he is an Isaiah, a John, or a Paul. But God's messenger is always:

- A Man among Men.
- God's Man among Men.
- God's Man with God's Message to Men.

And God's message to me never changes! Every man who claims to be a prophet, or a preacher, sent from God must be examined, not by his personality, persuasiveness, or success, but by his message. Tonight, I want you to see from this chapter what that message is that God sends his servants to proclaim.

Divisions:

1. The Work of the Gospel Preacher (vv. 1-5).
2. The Word of Grace we are Sent to Preach (vv. 6-31).

I. In verses 1-5 Isaiah shows us **The Work of the Gospel Preacher.**

What are preachers supposed to do? What is involved in the work of the ministry? Most people think preachers are supposed to build up the church membership, visit the sick, marry the young, bury the dead, attend to civic affairs, and serve the whims of people. By modern standards any good social worker, any good coach, any good business man, any good band leader, any good motivator would make a good preacher. But, as with all other spiritual matters, the opinions of men are diametrically opposed to the word of God. Here is what God says his servants are to do.

A. The Preacher's Job is to Comfort God's Elect (vv. 1-2).

“My people” are those sinners whom the Lord God has chosen in electing love, redeemed by the blood of his Son, and called from death to life in Christ by the power of his Spirit. “My people” are those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who are saved by God's almighty grace.

1. In order to comfort God's people we must speak to their hearts.

The words “speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem “ might be better translated, “speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem.” True preaching is delivering a message from the heart of God to my heart, and from my heart to your heart.

2. The basis of comfort is redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ- (v. 2).

Nothing comforts the hearts of needy sinners like the good news of salvation accomplished. False prophets talk about “salvation made possible,” “salvation offered,” and “salvation if...” God's servants preach salvation accomplished (Isa. 51:7). We declare to every sinner who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ that...

- a. His warfare is over- The Daysman has won the day!
- b. His iniquity is pardoned- The debt is fully paid!
- c. He has received, from the hand of God, double for all his sins- God has not only put away your sins, he also makes you perfectly righteous in Christ.

B. It is the Work of the Gospel Preacher to Prepare the way of the Lord (vv. 3-4).

We know that these two verses were given as a direct prophecy of John the Baptist who was sent of God to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1L3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23).

As John the Baptist came to lay a highway right across the desert of apostate Judaism, so God's servants today, by preaching the gospel of Christ, lay a highway across the desert of apostate religion upon which the Son of God comes to men and women in saving Grace. The preaching of repentance and faith in Christ is like building a big house- Some excavation must be done.

1. Every valley of hopeless despair must be filled.
2. Every mountain and hell of self-righteousness must be pushed down.
3. Every crooked bend of works religion must be made straight.
4. Every rough place of legality must be made plain.

C. As we faithfully perform our work, we have this word of assurance from our God- "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed!" (v. 5). At the cross- In the gospel- At Judgment (Rev. 1:7)

That is to say, Christ will come to his people all over the world by the preaching of the gospel, revealing the glory of God in redemption and grace. God's elect shall be saved! "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

That is the work of the gospel preacher. It is my responsibility to:

- Comfort God's elect by proclaiming redemption accomplished.
- Prepare the way of the Lord.
- Confidently wait for God to save his people.

II. Now, in verses 6-31. Isaiah shows us **The Word of Grace we are Sent to Proclaim.**

Our object in preaching the gospel is twofold.

- The Glory of God.
- The Salvation of God's Elect.

How shall we accomplish this twofold object? By what means can we both glorify the Lord our God and persuade lost, ruined sinners to come to Christ? What message shall we preach?

The world tells us to appeal to man's dignity. God tells us to declare man's depravity! The world tells us to preach the power of positive thinking. God tells us to proclaim the immutability of his everlasting purpose! The world tells us to talk about the love of God. God tells us to proclaim his greatness!

In verses 6-31 Isaiah shows us the threefold message of evangelism. This is the word of grace God has sent us to preach. In nearly twenty-four years of preaching, I have never deviated from it, not even an hair's breadth; And, God helping me, I never shall.

A. This is the first message of all true evangelical preaching- **“All flesh is grass!”** (vv. 6-8).

It is the business of the gospel preacher to destroy all hopes of self-righteousness by showing the utter inability and total depravity of man.

1. All flesh is worthless grass! Not hay for feed! Grass! Weeds!
2. All of man's goodness is like the pretty bloom on worthless weeds!
3. Soon God will destroy the grass and its flower!

B. Here is the second message of the gospel- **“The word of our God shall stand forever!”** (v. 8).

1. **The Scriptures-** The Written Word of God!
2. The Decrees, Purposes, and Promises of God can never be thwarted, altered, or even hindered!
3. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Living Word of God shall stand forever!

C. Here is the third thing we are sent of God to declare to men- **“Behold your God!”** (vv. 9-31).

The preacher who brings good tidings to Zion is told to proclaim from the high mountain, lifting up his voice with boldness, saying to all the cities of Judah, all the cities of God's domain- **“Behold your God!”** (margin- v. 9).

Note: The Lord God we tell men to behold, to look to with the eye of faith, is the God-man, our Savior, the embodiment of the only true and living God- **“Behold your God!”**

1. He is the mighty Savior (v. 10).
2. He is the good Shepherd (v. 11).
3. He is the omnipotent, omniscient Creator (vv. 12-14). (Rom. 11:33-36).
4. Compared to Him all the nations and peoples of the earth are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity (15-17).
 - They cause him no concern- Dust!
 - He rules them with ease.
 - The whole world has nothing to offer him. (v. 16).
 - All creation, before the great Lord God is vanity.
5. So great is our God that nothing can be compared to him- Idolatry is foolish nonsense! (vv. 18-20).

6. He is sovereign Monarch of the universe (vv. 21-26).
7. "Behold your God!" He is able to save them that wait upon him, them who trust in him (vv. 27-31).
 - a. God is greater than your need (vv. 27-28).
 - b. He gives power to the faint and strength to the weak (v29).
 - c. He preserves and keeps his own when others, who appear stranger and greater, faint, grow weary, and fall.
 - (1.) "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength as eagles"- "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." (Duet. 33:25).
 - (2.) In the beginning of their pilgrimage, God's saints soar and fly like the eagle.
 - (3.) As they continue and grow in grace, God's pilgrims run their race and never grow weary of it, though many do.
 - (4.) In their mature years, Thy walk, making steady, but tranquil and almost unconscious, advancement and faint not, though many fall.

Application: "Behold your God!" To behold him is to...

1. Know your need of him.
2. Realize what he has done (v. 2).
3. Trust him alone as your Savior.
4. Be saved by him.