

Isaiah 62:1-5 Your Bridegroom has promised you a royal future! By David Spaude January 20, 2019

In the name of Jesus, Dear fellow Christians,

What are you looking forward to? Could it be your next family vacation, your kid's confirmation or graduation? Could it be MLB's spring training, being at home relaxing, or weekend "warring"? Or are you struggling to find something to look forward to because your life is full of challenges? As a result do you feel depressed, hopeless or like giving up? Are there times when the tears start to flow from your eyes or angry words from your mouth because there seems to be nothing to look forward to?

But God has promised something for all believers to look forward to and to share with all people. It's that God, whom the Bible speaks of as your Bridegroom, has promised you a royal future that consists of the glory of your salvation and of his delight in you. I'll say this important message from God again. Maybe you'll even want to write it down. God, whom the Bible speaks of as your Bridegroom, has promised you a royal future that consists of the glory of your salvation and of his delight in you.

We understand this by what Isaiah says about the nation of Israel. The Israelites' sins of unfaithfulness, rebellion and treachery separated them from God and caused his face to be hidden from them. In addition, Jerusalem their city of worship had been destroyed by their enemies so that it was desolate. It seemed that God had deserted them and their land and they had nothing to look forward to.

But God had only left momentarily. After they had sinned God led them to repentance and faith so that they had the glory of their salvation to look forward to with his delight in them. They would not suffer the consequences of their sin eternally, but glorify God in heaven eternally as his delightful bride. God's promise to them was clear. Their Bridegroom promised them a royal future.

(1)

The language Isaiah uses at the beginning of the sermon text is bright. This bright language of righteousness *shining* like the dawn and salvation like a blazing torch contrasted the Israelites' former life of darkness. They had sinned and didn't intend to turn to God in repentance and faith. So they were "wandering in darkness" (59:9) that was of a spiritual nature. They were not following the light of Christ that showed them the way to heaven.

By God's grace they turned in repentance and faith to God, their Bridegroom, who promised them a royal future that consisted of the glory of their salvation. He said, "For Zion's sake" and "for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep silent" or "remain quiet." God would lead Zion, Jerusalem, Israel: his chosen people with his words until the second coming of Christ when he would see them to righteousness which would "shine like the dawn" (v1). God would make sure they would be made right with him. This would be a glorious event like the sun cresting the horizon at dawn. God would see them to salvation that shines "like a blazing torch." He would make sure that they would be saved for eternal life with him. These images of shining out like the dawn and like a blazing torch bring to mind the fact that light chases away darkness. The light of their righteousness declared to them through Christ crucified meant that Israel would no longer wander in spiritual darkness.

God would do this for their sake even though the Israelites had been unfaithful to him and would fall into unfaithfulness in the future. God was determined to faithfully see them to salvation according to his covenant or agreement with them because God as their Bridegroom, had promised them a royal future that consisted of the glory of their salvation.

God's command to us is, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). We fall way short of the perfect faithfulness God shows us and wants us to reflect in our lives. This is because we live in an age of hyper-individualism and ungodly devotion to self, which can show itself among pastors when their congregation isn't growing. Maybe it is shrinking or it's evident that parts of God's Word are rejected by the congregation. Pastors can be tempted in these situations to give up in their hard work because their self-centered opinion tells them that their work is not effective.

Today's hyper-individualism and ungodly devotion to self can show itself among you and me too. When we try to encourage others by our example to live a God-pleasing life and they do not change we can be tempted to join their sinful ways of life. When we share our faith with someone and instead of a "thank-you" we receive a "get lost" we are tempted to shut up to them about our faith. At times we may actually give up on leading our neighbors, who are anyone God places in our lives, to live God-pleasing lives. God should rightly give up on us, but he leads us to repentance and faith and as our Bridegroom he has promised us a royal future that consists of the glory of our salvation!

How can we be sure he has promised us a royal future? By faith we are part of spiritual Jerusalem, Zion and Israel. We are part of this communion of believers that God loves dearly and for whom he sent the Suffering Servant Jesus to die for.

So God does not give us sinners the silent treatment, but speaks to us in the Bible, reminding us time after time of the covenant he has made with us that the Holy Spirit will be with us and his words of truth will always be on our lips. Then we know the way to heaven and can lead others to heaven with those words. His covenant is also that those words will stay with us and with our children and their children. The prophet Isaiah tells us, "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever" (Is 40:8).

Trust that God will not forsake you but will bring you to heaven because he, your Bridegroom, has promised you a royal future that consists of the glory of your salvation. So with these comforting truths about the faithfulness of our God pastors faithfully serve the flock of God and we continue to serve our neighbors by showing them with our lives and telling them with our words what is God-pleasing for their lives.

(2) Your Bridegroom who has promised you a royal future has done so also with his delight in you.

God promised Abraham that he would not forsake Abraham's descendants. Two of Abraham's descendants would be Isaac and Jacob. Jacob, who was later named Israel, would have twelve sons and their descendants were known as the nation of Israel. God wouldn't forsake them, right? Well, hundreds of years later it seemed to Israel that God had forsaken them. Israel said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me" (Is 49:14). The people of Israel felt God's absence in their lives. It seemed to other nations that God deserted Israel too so they called Israel "Deserted" (v4a).

Why did it seem God had deserted Israel? Part of God's nature is to be angry at sin and let his people feel his anger. The psalmist said to God, "You put me in the lowest pit . . . your wrath lies heavily on me" (Ps 88: 6, 7). God is not willing to let his glory be given to another as if this were an "open marriage." So when God's people sin he is angry.

God hid his face from Israel for a moment, but another part of God's nature is that he is there all along. For the Israelites who repented and trusted in God, God's anger was much like a flash flood whose water bursts suddenly across the countryside and then subsides. In the past God said to Israel, "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away?" (Is 50:1). God never deserted Israel permanently. God wanted to lead them to repentance quickly.

God used the destruction of Jerusalem to lead Israel to repentance too. The land was called by other nations “Desolate” because Jerusalem was destroyed and no one passed through it or by it anymore. Having turned to God in repentance and faith, God would give Israel new names with which to identify. They would be called “Hephzibah” which means “my delight is in her” and “Beulah” which means “married” (v4). Isaiah wrote, “As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you” (v5).

“So will your sons marry you” (v5). Was Isaiah saying there would be intermarrying of sons and mothers? No, the point was that God, the Bridegroom who had promised them a royal future would delight in them. His delight in them would be like a bridegroom rejoicing over his delightful bride. Through this marriage he would be carrying out his plan of salvation for his people which gives him so much joy that nothing can snatch his people out of his hand.

When God promised his faithfulness to Abraham and his descendants he was promising faithfulness to you too. You are Abraham’s descendants by faith in Jesus. In faith you delight in following God’s commands. But in weakness of faith when you or I think we don’t need God and his commandments to live a fulfilling life we may find ourselves deserted by God and find our land desolate. Not thanking God for his gifts of time, talents, and treasures by not using them to his glory may result in his taking our time, talents, and treasures away. Not valuing his commandments, but rebelling against them may result in his discipline. Thinking that the good we do in this life contributes to our eternal salvation when in reality God is the only reason we will be saved may result in our loss of salvation. If we do what we think is fulfilling rather than following God’s guaranteed plan of what is fulfilling we ought to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.

But he will give a new name to you who turn to him in repentance and faith. Like a woman takes on her husband’s name in marriage so also will you have a new name at your wedding in heaven. The bestowal of your new name is a guarantee because your Bridegroom has promised you a royal future that consists of his delight being in you.

There are so many things to look forward to in this life. I’m sure you can think of some. But there are days it seems there is nothing to look forward to. Maybe once in a great while when it comes to material things that can actually be the case and all you want to do is forget all about your life.

But remember there is a guaranteed event you all get to look forward to. It’s your future wedding to your heavenly Bridegroom. God will not keep silent until that day. He will lead you with his words to heaven where your righteousness will shine like the sun. You will receive a delightful new name as his bride. This is certain because Your Bridegroom has promised you a royal future that consists of the glory of your salvation and of his delight in you.

So when there is a bad day with seemingly nothing to look forward to, remember the promise your Bridegroom has made to you. Your Bridegroom has promised you a royal future that consists of the glory of your salvation and of his delight in you. Amen.