

Read as text- Isaiah 26:19 to 27:2

Full text is Text is Isaiah 26:10 – end of 27

Isaiah 26:10-21 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Let grace be shown to the wicked, *Yet* he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD. ¹¹ LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For *their* envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them. ¹² LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us. ¹³ O LORD our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; *But* by You only we make mention of Your name. ¹⁴ *They are* dead, they will not live; *They are* deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And made all their memory to perish. ¹⁵ You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land. ¹⁶ LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them. ¹⁷ As a woman with child Is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O LORD. ¹⁸ We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. ¹⁹ Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. ²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. ²¹ For behold, the LORD comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.

Isaiah 27:1-13 (NKJV) ¹ In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that *is* in the sea. ² In that day sing to her, "A vineyard of red wine! ³ I, the LORD, keep it, I water it every moment; Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day. ⁴ Fury *is* not in Me. Who would set briers *and* thorns Against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. ⁵ Or let him take hold of My strength, *That* he may make peace with Me; *And* he shall make peace with Me." ⁶ Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit. ⁷ Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him? Or has He

been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him? ⁸ In measure, by sending it away, You contended with it. He removes *it* by His rough wind In the day of the east wind. ⁹ Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; And this *is* all the fruit of taking away his sin: When he makes all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, Wooden images and incense altars shall not stand. ¹⁰ Yet the fortified city *will be* desolate, The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down And consume its branches. ¹¹ When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; The women come *and* set them on fire. For it *is* a people of no understanding; Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, And He who formed them will show them no favor. ¹² And it shall come to pass in that day *That* the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. ¹³ So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

Remember how we were talking about the 2 cities. We are given more insights this morning into the city of God and the city of man. We start with this.

¹⁰ **Let grace be shown to the wicked, Yet he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.** ¹¹ **LORD, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For *their* envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.**

Grace is unmerited favor. They get a **good thing** that they **don't deserve**. Mercy is when people don't get a **bad thing** that they **do deserve**. So what happens when the wicked get good things even though what they have done deserves something bad?

We see this all the time in our world. A man or a woman does an evil thing. There is no bad consequence. In fact they seem to even have a greater window of opportunity. They seem to be blessed for the evil thing they have done. Evil works for them. What happens?

What happens is that they learn a lesson. They learn that this is the way to live. Their evil seems to be positively reinforced. And they will take this path until they have learned to never give it up.

What happens when grace is shown to a believer? It eventually produces a completely different result. In a believer, that person learns to despise the evil they have committed. They think it is amazing that they have not been punished for their sins. They hate the sin for which there seems to be no consequence, because there was a consequence. Christ was killed for that sin. Believers become even more addicted to God's grace and have a greater determination not to disgrace this God who has been so good to them.

Yet he will not learn righteousness; In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, And will not behold the majesty of the LORD. ¹¹ LORD, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed For *their* envy of people; Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

The rebels against God waste grace. It isn't going to inspire them to love God. They will not give credit to God for His goodness. It will only be when they taste God's wrath that they will suddenly get it. It is only when they are being devoured that they will understand their demise. Then they may actually be ashamed.

I read a book about the predominant Arab mentality. It gave generalities that while not always true are usually true. The mentality in that area of the world is profoundly different than an American mentality. When we want something, we have learned to get in line and cooperate. We wait. We tend to be orderly. The mindset in many Arab lands is very different. If a truck shows up with supplies that truck is likely to be mobbed. People have learned that they must look out for themselves and they cannot trust anyone else.

Forgiveness tends to be viewed as a sign of weakness in Arab culture. It is not understood as a virtue. It is a foolishness. It does not soften the heart of the receiver. That is why so many of our efforts to counter Muslim aggression have failed us. When we refuse to retaliate for evils done to our people, this mercy is seen as a weakness. The Muslim mindset tends to thank their god for our foolishness and they plan even more how they will exploit **it** and **us**.

This mindset is an extreme of our text. Grace has no good effect in much of that culture.

Now in our culture we tend to view kindness as a virtue. If someone does harm to someone who was showing them only kindness, most people see that as a great evil. But even that has its limits. Christ has done the greatest kindness, the greatest act of grace that has ever been done. But He still has enemies. There are many who vehemently hate Him and His people. Christ still has people who will not surrender their lives to His will, even though He has shown them

tremendous grace. He still has people who will not actively and willingly praise Him as Lord and King. This passage describes what will happen to these “nice” people as well, people who value grace but will not respond to it.

Yet he will not learn righteousness

I am afraid for just how much we have become desensitized to evil. It is not unusual that our world has not learned righteousness. We read the headlines and listen to the media and the entertainment world and we see there is a larger disconnect with **what they say** and **what God says** every day. The world is not learning righteousness. It is not learning to know and evaluate and adjust to what God says is right and what God says is wrong. That is no shock. But what is shocking is how our evaluations as Christians have changed over time.

I fear that I, and maybe we, have been seduced, image by image and story by story until our evaluations of good and evil have been blurred. We call a movie nice, even though it is based on a story of blatant immorality, blatantly going against what God says. A hundred years ago many of the things we watch would have had Christian people standing up in movie theaters and leaving. It would have stricken their sensibilities powerfully. To us, we barely notice. And if that has happened to us, what will happen to our kids?

What would happen if we prayed before every single entertainment decision? What would happen if we would turn off the tv or pc every time a character did something that God forbade that was regarded in the movie as perfectly acceptable? What if we would no longer allow that garbage to fill our eyes or our minds? What might happen to us? Might we become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit as He reminds us what God says? Might our time not be better used to learn righteousness instead of following the path of those who will not learn righteousness? Might we become more and more concerned about these people who are facing the certain judgment of God?

What move will we make to guard ourselves from this insidious influence?

There are many today who **will not behold the majesty of the LORD**. As verse 10 says. They do not see the Excellency of God. Their minds never concern themselves with what God thinks of what they are doing. They use their resources, their time and their bodies exactly as they see fit. Their creator’s intentions aren’t a consideration. And those are the ones who are in charge of our governments, our education systems, our news sources, and our entertainment centers, and our virtual game designers. They refer to God and country if it will enhance their appeal. But how they spend their next day has little to do with the majesty of God.

When we spend our lives immersed in their productions, it cannot possibly enhance our awareness of the majesty of God. It is all designed to bring us down to their dullness. It is to lull us into a sleep where we will do no damage to the devil's kingdom. Where we are very slow to make much of God. Where we don't even see that our lives have become exactly like our neighbors.

Will we, after experiencing God's grace, learn righteousness and behold the majesty of God. Will we see and recognize what God **is doing** and **will do** on our planet?

Our world, just like isaiah's world, is not impacted by the Grace of God? Are we?

¹² LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us. ¹³ O LORD our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; *But* by You only we make mention of Your name.

OK

We have just seen how hard the human heart really is. And that is why verse 12 is such a miracle.

Look at this again.

¹² LORD, You will establish peace for us, For You have also done all our works in us.

Again I would like to read a really good quote.

The Christian life is not what we give to God but what God gives to us. And what he gives is peace, wholeness, humanness at its authentic best forever.

Moreover, it's not because we happened to catch God in a good mood. He ordained peace for us. Full, beautiful salvation is the settled will of God for weak and stupid people who don't mind being saved.

Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.

There is a kind of pride that actually humbles us and satisfies us because it's not about us. The pride of the city of man inflates the ego, yet leaves the self empty. But the boast of the city of God is God himself, because he is enough to enrich us forever ([Romans 5:2, 3, 11](#), NRSV). Everything good that we are and have is his doing, not ours. Our place in the city of God is his gift of grace. He even preserves us in the mentality of faith: "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you" ([Isaiah 26:3](#)). God stimulates in our hearts a longing for him: "My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you" ([v. 9](#)). Faith and longing prove that *God* is at work in our hearts. That yearning he is awakening in you is the most important thing about you. It's the key to your future. Fan that flame, and never let it die.

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Are you ever tempted to look back on something in your Christian life and take credit for something? We look back at some success we had in our Christian life and we take credit for it. We say I did that thing. It mattered a lot to me because of my relationship with God and I determined that I was going to do the right thing, no matter what. We make statements like- I would have never done this or that thing, or I was going to make sure to do this or that thing.

Maybe we brag about it when we give our testimony. It is the one piece of the puzzle that we really really want to take credit for. I know I wasn't much, but I did **THAT** thing. But God's word tells us the truth even about that. Apart from God's miracle, we would not have even done **that one thing** we want to take credit for. He says **You have also done all our works in us**. Now we might look back and remember doing some powerfully hard things. And it sure seemed like we were doing it. After all, wasn't it me doing the deciding? And yes. Yes it was you doing the deciding. But it was **God doing the causing**. And without the causing, all the deciding in the world wouldn't accomplish anything.

When we really wrap our heads around what it takes to save a human being, we begin to understand just how very appropriate praise to God is for every believer. At the end of the day, all the credit belongs to God, even for those things that were so hard for us to do. Yes we did them. But we did not cause them. In that sense **God did them all**. He worked through us, through our thoughts, through our motivations, and **accomplished that fruit** from our lives. It is the vine that produces fruit. The branches are just the conduits of the vine.

Isaiah 27:1-13 (NKJV) ¹ In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that *is* in the sea.

Look at the tool the Lord is going to use here. Great, strong and severe sword. Why do you think that might be emphasized? I think the imagery is to help us to understand that whatever this Leviathan is, it is going to be dead when God is done with it.

This is what Mr. Ortland has to say about the Leviathan:

"Leviathan" symbolizes the monster of moral chaos that has raged in our world since the fall of Adam. The evil established in the city of man is worse than human. It is demonic. Isaiah borrows a mythological image from the ancient world to describe it. He sees evil as a coiling, wriggling, serpentine monster not because he's a primitive thinker but because nothing less can tell us the truth

about evil. Truth requires imagination, and sometimes we surrender that prophetic clarity.

Flannery O'Connor said, " Our age has domesticated despair and learned to live with it happily." But Isaiah wants us to grasp the magnitude of God's victory over the evil we blithely trivialize.

We continue to talk about evil and suffering, just like we have in Sunday School. We can't help it because God wants us to know about these conditions in human life on planet earth. God has restrained evil. He has made it to serve His good purposes. He will eliminate evil completely and forever. He will hack it to pieces. And that is the point. Evil will be destroyed forever.

We keep focusing on this. We keep coming back to it. It is the truth that allows us to logically overcome any gripe the inhabitants of this planet may have with their maker. Maybe God could be shown to be **not-good** if we knew he was going to allow evil to haunt us forever, if its suffering would never be removed, if there was no end game.

But evil will end at God's hand. And God will prove His absolute goodness by how He treats His people for eternity.

Now, where does this evil stand now?

Colossians 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Christ disarmed the powers of evil by His death and resurrection. So Christ has won over the devil already. The devil has no power over us any more, except the power of influence.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Death has lost its sting. As Mike so often said, sin's power cord is unplugged by Christ. It really has lost its power. It has not completely lost its appeal to the flesh. But the devil really cannot **make us** do anything. He can **help us want** to do a wrong thing. But he cannot **make us** do anything.

That is where we stand now. We are conquerors through faith. If we believe what God says and act accordingly we win the battles. But we know that

ultimately the devil is already defeated. The click of the clock just hasn't happened yet.

When Christ returns he will finish slaying the dragon. Evil will no longer be present in the lives of all believers. Romans 16:20 tells us that God will crush the devil under the believers' feet. Maybe that means we will play a role. Maybe we will get in on the destruction of the devil. Maybe we will have a chance to get in a blow or two. That is a little mind blowing to people who are called not to act in vengeance. But what if we will have a little chance to express our rage at our mortal enemy who has done every one of us such great harm?

¹³ So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

Trumpets often preceded wonderful and important events. The year of Jubilee was preceded with a trumpet. Revelation is full of trumpets.

What we see here are people leaving the city of man and coming to the city of God. God's people are coming home to be with Him forever.

Here is another good quote.

Give the love of your heart to God, even to the contempt of self. Believe that he is worth that much. Earthly-mindedness, to use an old Puritan word, will kill your heart for God, or your heart for God will kill your earthly-mindedness. But you cannot have both. Stop trying to.

How can we stop? One thing that helps is to look at the cross of Jesus. If you want to know what the city of man is really committed to, look at the cross. How can you and I kiss up to a system that made its truest statement about God by crucifying him? If you always get along with a world dead set against the glory of God, what does that say about you? Paul was glad to suffer the loss of all things to gain Christ. He considered his old life so much garbage, compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ ([Philippians 3:7, 8](#)). That is the heartbeat of the city of God. "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you" ([Psalm 73:25](#)). That passion is clear evidence of citizenship in the city of God. Abraham felt that way. He felt such a sense of possession in the promised kingdom of God that his life became a journey. He was looking forward to a city whose designer and builder is God ([Hebrews 11:10](#)). He desired a better country, a heavenly one ([Hebrews 11:16](#)). That longing for something better in God—that is what it means to be a Christian. Therefore, stop living like a resident, and learn what it means to live

like a pilgrim.

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This week read Isaiah 26 13-19

If you want encouragement, here it is. It is the picture of the failure of human's good intentions and best laid plans and the ultimate success of God. It describes every believer's life.

Isaiah laments that **masters besides you have had dominion over us**. Who of us here could not say the same? Who of us doesn't lament the effect we have allowed our flesh or the world have on us? Yes, we have picked some poor masters.

In verse 16 it says that **in trouble God's people have visited you**. Again. Is there anyone here who cannot relate to that? No. That is all of us. That is all believers. We often don't do business with God until we have to, until we are desperate with the consequences of our own failure.

Verse 18 says that **we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth**. Yep. That pretty well says it. Our paths apart from God, our human efforts and intentions on their own have done nothing to save anyone, including ourselves. Our pursuits of happiness have produced anything **but** happiness, at least in the long run. Those efforts just leave a trail of failure and humility. Not deliverance. Yes, Isaiah describes us and our efforts apart from God very well. But the story of a believer only **starts** with man. It always **ends** with God.

What is God's effect on the mess of our humanity? Verse 19. This ought to make us shout like Pentecostals. ¹⁹ **Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust**

That is what **GOD** does! That is why we are here this morning. When God delivers, He does the job perfectly and eternally. And in the end what will there be? We will wake up after death. And when we do, our **faithful expectations** will not have prepared us for **God's glorious provisions**.

I may not know what trouble you are facing in your life right now. Maybe no human knows. I don't know what **that trouble** is being used to **produce** in your life. Maybe no human knows. But if you are a believer I know one thing about it. **It will end in singing**. Every one of our lives, no matter what the suffering, will end in song that does not need to be coerced. It is a song that could not be stopped even if someone tried to. In an instant we will experience the fulfillment of our heart and soul's deepest need and longing. And on that day we will know, living for Jesus was a small price to pay for the glorious reward we will receive.

Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust. That is the end of life as we know it and the beginning of a brand new reality. That is the kind of God we serve.