

Title: Waiting on the Lord
Text: Isaiah 30: 15-23
Date: Nov 9, 2023
Place: SGBC, NJ

Our text in Isaiah 30 is one of my favorite passages. I have preached from it 5 times. Each time I read or study it, the Lord blesses my heart. It is something I always need to hear and so do all the Lord's people. It has been almost 4 years since I last preached from it. Recently a brother was telling me about the message he preached from it and again the Lord blessed my heart. There is never a time that this passage is not needful for the Lord's people.

Proposition: Isaiah 30: 18...blessed *are* all they that wait for him.

RETURN AND REST IN CHRIST

Isaiah 30: 15: For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength:...

This is the Lord God speaking to us, brethren. These are not merely Isaiah's words. These are the words of God our Savior—*"Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel."*

Our Savior declares, *"In returning and rest shall ye be saved."* In returning to the Lord GOD himself. In returning to the Holy One of Israel. In returning to our triune God in Christ himself And resting in Christ by faith. Rest in Christ. He is the Holy One of Israel in whom all his elect Israel are holy. Christ Jesus is the Salvation of God's people. Christ is the Righteousness of his people. He put our sin away and justified us by his blood. But he, himself, is the Righteousness of everyone that truly believes on him. Christ is the Sanctification of his people in whom and by whom we are made holy and kept partaking of his holiness. Christ is the Redemption of his people. He freed us from the curse by being made a curse for us. He freed us from the dominion of our sin-nature and keeps freeing us from it. He shall free us from this body of death when he redeems us into the glorious liberty of the Son of God. So in every step of our so-journ in this life, rest in Christ to work effectually in every heart; rest in Christ to be your Refuge and Protection and Provider and your Salvation.

Thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, *"in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."* In quietly submitting to Christ with confidence in Christ, he shall be our Strength. He settles our hearts so that we are not shaken, not troubled, not stressed and disturbed. Submitting with confidence in Christ, you wait on the Holy One of Israel to save you and your brethren, confident Christ is able to perform his promises, confident he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, confident he is able to make you and your brethren stand.

This is the word of Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel. In returning and rest shall ye be saved; Christ shall be your salvation and the salvation of your brethren. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength; Christ shall be your strength.

2 Corinthians 12: 9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10: Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

What is the evidence that a sinner sees himself a ruined sinner? What is the evidence a believer sees himself totally weak, incapable of saving himself? He turns from every other help and quietly submits at Christ's feet having his confidence in Christ his Salvation and Strength. Trusting Christ is rest. We don't have to strive to save ourselves. We don't have to be hasty, running about. We have Christ our Refuge and Protector. Rest in Christ our Shield and Defender.

BUT ISRAEL WOULD NOT

Isaiah 30:15...and ye would not. 16: But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses;

What was going on here in Judah? Years before this, the 10.5 tribes of Israel entered alliance with Syria and threatened war against Judah. Back then the Lord sent Isaiah preaching this same gospel to Ahaz, king of Judah. This was the word of the Lord Isaiah delivered to Ahaz, the same gospel.

Isaiah 7: 4: And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted...7: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

God declared he had set the bounds of Syria; Damascus would be the only country their king would govern. And God declared in 65 years the children of Israel shall be broken that they be not a people

The Lord told Isaiah to take his son with him. Isaiah's son was named *Sherjashub*. I picture Ahaz saying, "That's a fine boy you got there Isaiah. What's his name?" Isaiah said, "His name is Sherjashub. It means *the remnant shall return.*" The Lord preached the gospel to Ahaz even using Isaiah's son.

But above all, the Lord gave Ahaz the one sign that guaranteed Judah would be saved and not destroyed.

Isaiah 7: 14...Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Lion of the tribe of Judah was coming through Judah. For the sake of Christ, the tribe of Judah would be saved. That is our gospel and our hope: Christ has justified God's elect, and for his sake, God will not impute sin to his people. By Christ bringing us the whole way, the remnant shall return to God and be presented by Christ, holy and without blame in Christ's holiness and righteousness! But the Lord declared to Ahaz through Isaiah, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Is 7: 9). King Ahaz would not believe on Christ. He made an alliance with Assyria. But after helping Judah, all these years later in our text, Assyria has declared war on Judah. The Lord sent Isaiah again with the same gospel. Trust Christ to save you, rest in Christ, have all your confidence in Christ and he shall be your salvation and your strength.

So what did the children of Judah do this time? We find the answer back in chapter 30.

Isaiah 30: 1: Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: 2: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!...7: For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength *is* to sit still.

They listened to man's counsel instead of hearing the word of the Lord that Isaiah preached. Instead of trusting the Lord GOD, God said, "*They trusted in the SHADOW of Egypt!*" where they had once been in slavery. The Lord sent Isaiah again with the same gospel declaring,

Isaiah 30: 15: thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. 16 But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses.

Brethren, God would not permit horses in Israel for this very reason (Deut 17: 16). Egypt bred horses for war. God knew they would go back to Egypt for horses and end up in slavery. Brethren, no true believer would say, "I am made righteous and justified and saved by the work of my own hand." But when God sent this trial, that is exactly what Judah was saying by trying to save themselves from the trial. Judah fleeing on horses is a sinner looking to his own strength rather than believing on the Lord Jesus.

THE SOVEREIGN UNCHANGEABLE LOVE OF GOD

This is the good news. God saves by his sovereign, unchangeable love and grace. God has an elect remnant who shall return. Christ has redeemed us by his precious blood. God will not take "no" for an answer from us.

Isaiah 30: 16: But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses. therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17: One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill. 18: And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you,

Our gracious Lord brings each of his elect to the end of self. When he first calls or when his believing child tries to save ourself in the trial, the Lord first brings us to the end of self. As believers, when we won't wait on him, he waits. Why? Do you ever wonder why the Lord waits? When we will not wait, the Lord says.

Isaiah 30: 18: And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you,

This is why the Lord waits, that he might save us by grace. When he shows us we were saying "no" to God and trying to save ourselves yet he would cast away. He would not take "no" for an answer. He waited. He still saved us. He still made his love known to us. That is how we know that we are saved entirely by his grace. Child of God, it may be painful. But the Lord waits because his love is sovereign and unchangeable in Christ. His loving purpose is to teach us we are saved entirely by his grace alone!

Isaiah 30: 18...and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you:

Salvation, beginning to end, is by the mercy Christ performs for his people. Zacharias, the father of the John the Baptist, said that of Christ, "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,... To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers (Lu 1: 68, 72).

Christ was exalted on the cross. He is exalted in the preaching of the gospel. The Spirit of God exalts Christ in our heart. We behold Christ exalted in providence. "*Therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.*" Christ said, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Mt 9: 13) He shows us we are sinners that he is calling to repentance from the first hour to the last. Mercy does not exalt the person who receives it, mercy exalts Christ. We see ourselves the sinner and we see Christ exalted that he might save us by mercy. Mercy exalts Christ alone who has mercy on us. Why does God save this way?

Isaiah 30: 18...for the LORD is a God of judgment:

He makes us know he is a God of judgment in how he made justice and mercy meet in harmony in Christ on the cross! God makes us know he is the God of judgment in how he calls us and corrects his saints. He does it, not in wrath, but in judgment as our tender Father.

Jeremiah 10: 24: O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

He brings us to behold his wisdom and knowledge to do all things after the counsel of his will to work for us in the best time so we will see his grace and mercy magnified and behold him exalted.

HAPPY ARE ALL WHO WAIT ON THE LORD

Isaiah 30: 18:...blessed [happy] *are* all they that wait for him.

Our all-wise Shepherd is teaching us this through every affliction to wait on him. There is no happiness in trying to save ourselves nor save ourselves out of the trial. We end up fretting, hasty, running here and there for help. But happy are they that wait God's own time to do them good.

Isaiah 28: 16...he that believeth shall not make haste.

Isaiah 49: 23...they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

Isaiah 30: 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Christ shall not lose one because he justified all his people. You may not think he hears your cry. But Christ hears our cry. Still, he waits until he turns it into a pure cry for mercy!

Isaiah 30: 20: And *though* the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

When Judah prospered, they thought they had no need of God. But through adversity and affliction, the Lord teaches us our need of him to guide us. That is why he calls adversity bread and affliction water. Better to suffer and see our need of Christ than be prosperous and perish. By this he makes us cast off our vain religion and our vain trust in ourselves.

Isaiah 30: 22: Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. 23: Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

So our Lord keeps us persevering in faith, watching and waiting for him to return.

Luke 12:37: Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Amen!