

Isaiah 30 23-33

23 Then He will give the rain for your seed With which you sow the ground, And bread of the increase of the earth; It will be fat and plentiful. In that day your cattle will feed In large pastures.

24 Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground Will eat cured fodder, Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.

25 There will be on every high mountain And on every high hill Rivers *and* streams of waters, In the day of the great slaughter, When the towers fall.

26 Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound.

27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, Burning *with* His anger, And *His* burden *is* heavy; His lips are full of indignation, And His tongue like a devouring fire.

28 His breath is like an overflowing stream, Which reaches up to the neck, To sift the nations with the sieve of futility; And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people, Causing *them* to err.

29 You shall have a song As in the night *when* a holy festival is kept, And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, To come into the mountain of the LORD, To the Mighty One of Israel.

30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of *His* anger And the flame of a devouring fire, *With* scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

31 For through the voice of the LORD Assyria will be beaten down, As He strikes with the rod.

32 And *in* every place where the staff of punishment passes, Which the LORD lays on him, *It* will be with tambourines and harps; And in battles of brandishing He will fight with it.

33 For Tophet *was* established of old, Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made *it* deep and large; Its pyre *is* fire with much wood; The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, Kindles it.

Let's start with a short review of our passage. We start with the Judean leaders **taking**. "They take counsel", but not of Me, God says. In verse 12 we

see that "Because you despise this word" he goes on to describe their punishment.

In verse 15 we find the **salvation** that God is going to provide for the people and **how** He is going to provide it. He says "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not,

So what does God do? He punishes those He will punish, and He **waits** for His people **to wait on Him**. That is such a wonderful verse. It should give us all hope if we are His children. He doesn't do what **we** would do. He doesn't impulsively respond in His anger. He waits until the events in our lives beat us down to the place where we gladly call out to God. We get to the place where we give up on what **we** have taken, like what the Jewish leaders took, the **bad counsel** in our minds that got us to the point of desperation. And we call out to God, waiting on Him for His mercy and grace and provision. He drives us to the point of **quietness and confidence in God**.

And in verse 19 we are told how God will be merciful at the sound of our cry.

Then look at verse 20. Look what the Lord **gives** here. Though the Lord **gives** you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. We see this stuff is not just happening. God is **giving** it. It has been directed by His hand. But even though this is what God gives, good things are happening to this people. They are getting where God wants them.

What I want us to see here is that **first we take**. We take the counsel that most appeals to us. Then **God gives**. He gives the bread of adversity and the water of affliction. Then we cry out. God gets us to the point where we are willing to give up our idols. We surrender. We submit.

Then what happens? God gives again. That brings us to our passage this morning.

23 Then He will give the rain for your seed With which you sow the ground, And bread of the increase of the earth; It will be fat and plentiful. In that day your cattle will feed In large pastures.

24 Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground Will eat cured fodder, Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.

25 There will be on every high mountain And on every high hill Rivers and streams of waters, In the day of the great slaughter, When the

towers fall.

26 Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound.

Look at verse 23. Then God will give rain. We followed the bad counsel of our flesh. God gave adversity. God waited while adversity served its purpose. Then God gives rain. Do you see this gem? **The rain is what God always had in mind.** Everything else was a means to this end. That is what our God is like. That is how God is. **That is the God we serve.** We must get this through our thick heads. We must inject this into our stubborn hearts. God's purpose is to glorify Himself through a people that He has blessed with all good things. And He will do whatever it takes to get us prepared for that day.

God truly does give His best to those who leave the choosing to Him. That really is what God is like. If you are breathing this morning, and the evidence says that you are, you are very likely struggling with something. And odds are you can follow the breadcrumbs of that trial in your mind to an issue of trust. The core question of your life is, can you trust God to be so good that no matter what you trust Him with, trusting **Him** is the wisest decision. I am struggling with stuff. You are struggling with stuff. **But that is the issue. Can I trust God in this? And how do I trust God in this?** What do I decide to do and think about that reflects trust in God? What do I turn my back on that reflects a **mistrust** of God? We can call it all whatever we want. We can deny the truth that everyone else can see. We can claim powerlessness over whatever we want to. And God will wait, if we are His, while we waste precious time that could be spent doing something glorifying to God. But ultimately we must submit. Ultimately we must commit to the path of trusting God. Remember His goal? To give the rain.

What this whole passage gives us is a picture of what God wants for His people. Some of it may be figurative, some literal. But it is all wonderful. Most of us don't farm for our existence. But if we did, we would get the full impact of the passage.

The first thing we are told is that the rain will be sufficient to produce great crops. We are talking about bumper crops. This is like a farmer hitting the lottery. The ground provides more than he needs to survive. Now he is

making a profit. He is building up excess. All the anxiety he has felt about taking care of his family is relieved. The pressure is off.

And then the livestock. The livestock, due to the bountiful rains can now graze in areas that they could not graze before. God is taking back the usefulness of lands that were previously arid. So along with the fruit and the vegetables there will also be an abundant supply of meat.

Now, Ronald Reagan would be proud of the next verses. What we see here is the trickle-down theory of economics at its finest. Things are so very good for the farmer that even the working animals of the farm get to eat their favorite meal. Anyone who deals with cows and horses knows that there is food they prefer and there is food they will eat if they have nothing else. I didn't know that until I spent time with Mike. I just figured they were stupid and would eat anything. But that isn't true. Even though Mark's dad's cows like to eat truck headliners. Not sure how that fits in.

Anyway, look what these work animals are eating. **Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground Will eat cured fodder, Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.**

Doesn't that look like a lot of work for animal feed? But that is a picture of how the **blessing** of God works out in the **kingdom** of God. Goodness and kindness are spread. If one benefits, all benefit. It is a lot like the church in Acts. They shared the blessings that God had given them for the good of all.

Acts 4:33-35 (NKJV)

³³ And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

³⁴ Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

³⁵ and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

A stingy Christian is a person who does not fully appreciate **God's ability and willingness** to provide. Nor does he grasp the importance other believers hold in the **heart** of God. Do God's blessings trickle down through us as well? Are we so willing to pass on what we have received?

Then look at the supply of water.

25 There will be on every high mountain And on every high hill Rivers and streams of waters, In the day of the great slaughter, When the towers fall.

After God destroys his enemies, after the towers fall, there will be water everywhere. I remember backpacking on the savage mountain trail in the fall. Fall tends to be a dry time. And the path followed the top of the ridge. Eventually we could see that there was not going to be any water at the places marked as springs. So we had to come off the top of the mountain to find water. Well what we see in our passage is that water is everywhere. If you were to go to Israel today, you would see a whole lot of brown. There is not much water there. But when God wants to, he can make a place like that into a garden. And that is exactly what God does when He wants to bless His people.

Water is gold in that land. And God supplies it without end. Not are there little pools of water. We are talking streams and rivers. When God sets about to bless His people, He does not do it in a little way. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. He has had over 2000 years. Do you really think it is going to be a slum? Keith Green made the point that if God made heaven and earth in 6 days, what do you think our eternal home is going to be like if Jesus had 2000 years to work on it.

26 Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, And the light of the sun will be sevenfold, As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound.

Based on how this is worded and how similar it is to passages dealing with eternity, I wonder if this is not a **figurative picture** of what God will do for Judea in their current setting that points to a **literal picture** of what God will do for us in eternity.

The moon will be like the sun is now. And the sun will be 7 times brighter. And when will this happen? Look at this and relish it.

In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people And heals the stroke of their wound.

Doesn't this strike right at your heart? Doesn't this move you? You and I are both struggling. We are facing things that are hard. We don't know how we are going to handle it. We are bruised by what we have had to face in our lives. We have been hurt deeply. There is no sense denying it. We breathe. We suffer. We have tasted of the consequences of sin, our own and others, and even the sinful condition of our planet. We sense that the pain we feel is unnatural. We sense that this is not the circumstance we were designed for. We wish it to be better. We wish that the pain and longing and dissatisfaction and sadness and disappointment and discomfort would just go away once and for all.

And that very longing proves what the Bible says. We were created for something much better than this life, this earth as it stands. We were created for a place where God reigns, where light shines, and the wounds of this life? We were created for a place where these bruises will finally be healed. Praise God.

Oh, so much of our life is spent on handling bruises. I think Carla, Ashley and Suz probably could take this literally. They all seem to come up with bruises that they have no idea where they came from. As I was preparing this sermon I heard Carla fall up the steps with a basket of laundry. More bruises.

But the bruises talked about in this text are much deeper than that. They are the bruises we can't get away from. We can't escape. They haunt our thoughts. They remind us of the lostness that surrounds us and the evil that is in us. These bruises are the effect of life lived in opposition to God. They are the ugliness of what we and others have been. They are bruises of humiliation and regret and remorse. They are bruises we want to hide. They are the residual effect of life east of Eden.

These bruises can't be removed. We can try drinking them away, medicating them away, laughing them away, running to a life of pleasure to cover them over, denying their existence by refusing to think about them, and on and on. But at the end of the day no psychiatrist is going to fix it and no drug is going to cover it. We need a great physician to do a miracle.

And the good news of the universe- God's people have a bruise removal appointment. God's people have already had the penalty for their sin removed. But we still live in its presence. But soon, one day, the presence of

sin will be removed from us. These bruises that we recoil from will be a distant memory, like one in the life of a different person we have read about. Can we even imagine the beauty of what is presented here this morning? Our bruises won't be covered, or counselled, or consoled. They will be totally and completely healed. It is no wonder every tear will be wiped away. For once we can come to an end of our crying. We will finally have no more reason to cry. None. Oh what a wonderful day that will be. How we will commune with each other without the burdens we carry now. And the praise that we will sing to Jesus. How could we help it? We will all cry out in praise to Jesus because it is the most natural thing we could possibly do and we could not imagine doing anything else.

That is what our wonderful passage in Isaiah has shown to us today. Thank you Lord.

If you are a person of God, one day your bruise, the bruise you are dealing with right now, is going to be healed.

That is what God will do for His people. But that is not all that God is doing. I saw a short sermon by Francis Chan, I believe. He was talking about the two most dangerous lies in our culture. The first is that "I am a good person". And the second is a loving God will never punish anyone. We have just looked at how loving God is to His people. But not **all** people are **His** people. And His attitude toward His enemies is anything but pleasant. Let's look at the rest of our text.

27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, Burning *with* His anger, And *His* burden *is* heavy; His lips are full of indignation, And His tongue like a devouring fire.

28 His breath is like an overflowing stream, Which reaches up to the neck, To sift the nations with the sieve of futility; And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people, Causing *them* to err.

I saw Bill Maher, who is an avowed atheist who thinks that any religion of any kind is a wicked thing and mocks the whole idea of God all the time, I watched him interviewing a person who wrote a Christian book. Normally I get very angry as I watch Mr. Maher state his arrogant statements. But I began to think about it. This man is destined to face the most horrible moment of his whole existence and he is completely unaware of it. He will stand to face the

awesome Jesus that he spent his whole life denying, the only person who ever gave His life to save those who live in this world. And in that moment he will realize that his whole lifetime was an absolute waste. All it will have accomplished is to encourage people to share the same hell he is about to be cast into. So he is living in such a way that deserves the wrath of God. And if he does not repent, he will get what he deserves. But there is no need for me to be angry. I can relinquish that to God. Maybe it is pity that is called for.

And not only that . Verse 28 says that there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Mike used to say that God greases the tracks in the direction we want to go. Here we see it even one step more. He will actually cause us to be dragged in the direction of evil if evil is what we want. So many times God haters taunt God and I wonder why God does not kill them on the spot. He certainly could. But this verse tells us why. They are serving God's purpose. Providing for paths of rebellion is something God does. If people want to be wicked, he will not force them to be otherwise. In fact, he may force them to be wicked. This doesn't seem like God. But His sovereignty often has implications that we have no expertise in.

But in verses 27 through 29 we see that, unlike the people of God who will be **healed by God**, the enemies of God will be in a world of hurt under the **wrath and power of God**.

If you are here and have not made peace with God by receiving His Son as your savior and Lord, don't delay. Do it now. Do it today. Don't find yourself with a hook in your mouth being led into the very error you fondly love.

Now, in the midst of all this wrath what do we find?

29 You shall have a song As in the night when a holy festival is kept, And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, To come into the mountain of the LORD, To the Mighty One of Israel.

This seems a bit odd. But it will be a joyful time to God's people when we see God finally putting the record straight and claiming the honor he has deserved from these rebels all these years. The souls under the alter in Revelation ask, how long. The answer on this day from Christ will be, not one moment longer.

The imagery here will be like a person who is all prepped to go to a festival to praise and worship God. It is kind of like us when we are getting ready to go

to church camp, if we get all excited about that sort of thing. Isn't it odd that this is how the people of God are as God prepares to take what is rightfully his out of the hands of rebels? But that is how it will be. It will be like a joyous worship service. Our God is worthy to receive all glory, honor and power. Amen.

30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard, And show the descent of His arm, With the indignation of His anger And the flame of a devouring fire, With scattering, tempest, and hailstones.

31 For through the voice of the LORD Assyria will be beaten down, As He strikes with the rod.

32 And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, Which the LORD lays on him, It will be with tambourines and harps; And in battles of brandishing He will fight with it.

33 For Tophet was established of old, Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; Its pyre is fire with much wood; The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, Kindles it.

We see the immediate application of this wrath on Assyria. But Tophet appears in this passage, like Gehenna, to be a place of torment. Tophet was in the Valley of Hinnom to the south of Jerusalem. It was here that idolatrous Israelites would offer their children to the fire of Molech. Now the Assyrian king will be offered on those flames. It is a fitting tribute where **evil is destroyed** in an **evil place**. But in this case the flames originate in the breath of the Lord. Assyria will be wiped out by God.

And again how do the people of God respond? Tambourines and harps. How the mockers of God will make a mockery of this statement. Oh how unloving these people are that can rejoice in the destruction of all these human beings they say. Oh, they say, what kind of God could do such a thing? And what kind of people could rejoice?

And the answer? This is a God who is worthy of all praise and has watched what horror the children of rebellion have made out of his creation. And these are the people of God who have longed for God to be exalted and seen for the Almighty Holy God that He is. And on this day, it is all coming together.

It is time to start the eternal celebration of the glory of God. It will never be impeded by sin again. Break out the guitars and tambourines. It is party time. It is banquet time. It is time to make much of God as God claims His own.

We live now in a world where nothing is as it seems. The wicked flourish in their wickedness. They act as if there is no God and there appears to be no immediate consequence. People are basically doing what they want and God seems either powerless or unconcerned. But God's word gives us the inside scoop. **The only thing that holds back God's wrath on His enemies is God's love for His children.** That is what is really happening. The world is on a cruise, maybe a luxury cruise, maybe a dilapidated boat, but they are headed for an iceberg. And God's people are biding their time obeying a Master they cannot see and trusting that He will one day make all that faithfulness worth it. That is the truth of our reality from God's point of view.

And we come back to the question of Isaiah. Will we trust God? Will we trust God? Will we trust God this week with the realization that he will heal all the bruises we **have had** and all the bruises we **will have**? Will we trust Him when all goes well or when all goes badly? Will we honor Him when our flesh screams to us that we must do otherwise? God's goal in your life is to prepare you for the rain, to prepare you for the blessing, to prepare you for eternity with Him. Will we trust Him this week with each decision in our lives? Will we take the counsel of our flesh or will we reject it as the evil and foolishness that it is? Will we receiving the painful things from God's hands trusting that He only intends good with it? That is what Isaiah is calling us to.