



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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December 25, 2013

The Festival of the Nativity of our Lord

Sermon Text: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 98](#)

Second Lesson: [Hebrews 1:1-9](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 1:1-18](#)

Promises Kept! Proclaim the Good News: God Has Kept His Promise

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Maybe it's already happened to you today. I'm guessing if you've got grandkids or little kids and you see them they are going to rush up to you and tell you what they got for Christmas, what was in a stocking, what they got here or there or everywhere. They're going to come up and they won't be able to stop telling you about it because they're pretty excited. They're excited about what they got.

I don't think any child got up and ran into mom and dad's room this morning and said, "Hey! Guess what? The sun came up in the east!" That's not really good news. That's something we're used to. But if they got that toy they wanted and they see anyone different, they are going to tell them. It's that kind of spirit that God has Isaiah talking about in Chapter 52.

Isaiah has a really unique ministry in that he spent the first 39 chapters of his book warning God's people and telling them, "If you don't repent, you're going to get carried away into captivity." That's what we looked at last Sunday in the first service. That's what we looked at last night in some of those prophecies. In the middle of them, God put some shining beacons of the Gospel about how the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and talking about a light shining in the darkness.

But in the second part of his book, which is what we are looking at today, King Ahaz and his wickedness now is gone. Other kings have come. He is speaking to the people now, not that are going to be carried off into exile. Now he's talking to those that have been carried off into exile, even though it hasn't happened yet. The whole second part of his book he writes to those people that one day are going to be sitting along the banks of the Euphrates River in Babylon in captivity just depressed, just worn down, just beaten down because they can't go to the temple anymore. What they had neglected at times when they were living there, now they are going to think of it as though it was the greatest thing in the world because they can't be there.

God sends Isaiah and tells them to speak about the deliverance that would come to those exiles even though they hadn't been carried off into captivity yet. In Chapters 49 and following, he has the Servant speak. The Suffering Servant talks about everything he would go through to keep all of God's promises.

Shortly before what I read to you a little while ago, the Servant said, "God said to me 'It's too small a thing for you to just be the deliverer of Israel. You are going to be a light for all nations. You're going to be the redeemer of all people.'" Even though the people were told that, God uses their captivity to picture for them a larger truth, as we've seen him do through Isaiah all through Advent. He takes this gloom and doom that they're living in and he talks about it as though now you have been delivered, what are you going to do? You're going to talk about it. When the messengers come back and say, "God's people are returning," the watchmen are going to be crying it out from the walls so that all the people in town can know that the victory has been won. He's not just talking about being delivered from exile in Babylon. He's talking about being delivered from the exile that we all have.

We are all sinners. We all live in the darkness that is sin and unbelief. That's what we're born into. I don't care how cute you think you're baby is, you're baby is a sinner. I don't care how cute you think you're spouse is, you're spouse is a sinner. This is what we all are.

So when God comes to us and says, "*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation,*" he's talking about something bigger than Babylon. He's talking about something bigger than whether or not a quarterback is going to play. He's talking about deliverance from sin. This is what he's talking about. So our God is telling us not to set our eyes too low. The beautiful feet belongs to those who tell other people about Jesus. And who is that?

That's God's people. That's you. You believe that Jesus lived and died in your place and took away your sins. If you know that you have been delivered from the sin you were born with, this is what God wants you to do and expects you to do. You're the watchman on the wall. You're the one that gets to go and tell people that are living in fear and uncertainty, that are living in worries and troubles, you're God reigns.

Seventy years in captivity... it didn't feel like he was reigning to the Israelites. It didn't matter. He was. And in your life as you face difficulties and troubles and you wonder where God is and it doesn't feel like God is reigning in your life, don't rely on your feelings. Go to the certain Gospel, the certain good news, the certain peace, the certain good tidings, the proclamation of salvation that is a certainty, that is guaranteed, because it doesn't depend on you. It depends on the One, the Servant who was born to live and die in your place. Tell that message to yourself when you're doubting that God rules. Tell that message to those closest to you when they are struggling with worries and fears and anxieties. Tell it to those who don't know it, who are still living in that darkness of not knowing what their God has done for them.

I think for us today our God wants us to move beyond just rejoicing because it's Christmas time and there's snow on the ground and it's 30°F outside. He wants us to rejoice because of the joy that our Savior has brought us. The joy of certainty of sins forgiven. He wants us to proclaim that message. Not just talking about peripheral

things, but focusing on the God who laid bare his holy arm and loved you so much that he left heaven to live and die in your place.

If that has become to you the sun rising in the east so that you take it for granted and don't think it's any big deal, then you really need to just sit down and look at the mirror of God's Law again. You need to sit down and see what your God says should happen to you. When you see that he loved you in spite of how sinful you are, you will feel the joy that we always say passes all understanding because it's a joy that's based on God loving you when you were unlovable. Don't neglect that message. Don't let traditions crowd out that message. Let that message be the central thing that brings you joy at this time of the year and every day of the year. Amen.