

## Who Has brought us Good news? 17/12/2017

Isaiah 52:7-10

If you were to read this verse on its own you would most likely feel as though you had read a beautiful verse full of wonderful promise. And you would be right! However, if you had first read the preceding 51 chapters, you would see that this is glorious hope, as deep as the ocean and nourishing and life-giving to the reader as bread and water.

My deep and sincere desire is to show with all my might just how “beautiful upon the mountains” the person of this text is.

Precious Holy Spirit, please make possible what is impossible for me. Open our hearts and speak to us, mould us and fill us. And Lord, please keep me from error, by your grace. Amen.

I want to ask two questions to begin and I will show you and hopefully you will see from the text where my answers are coming from so you might marvel at the truth of this text.

Firstly: Who is proclaiming the beauty of this man’s feet upon the mountains? Who is talking right now?

We know that Isaiah the prophet is the author from the very first verse of the book, in **chapter 52 verse 3, Isaiah writes, “For thus says the Lord”** So it is important to note that Isaiah is a prophet who speaks the words, or writes the words, that God tells him to say. So thus looking back 4 verses, we can see that it is God speaking via his appointed prophet Isaiah. So when we read Isaiah say “thus says the Lord”, we should stand to attention, expecting to hear God speak through Isaiah. And I should add that when I read these words “thus says the Lord” I do take it to mean these are the words of the living God. He spoke through Isaiah and by it gave the scriptures which are his words for then and now but I also take it to mean that theses same words are being spoken still by God to us by the Holy Spirit, so I

encourage you to consider how seriously you listen to the words of scripture, or any scripture for that matter.

The second question we must ask is: to whom is God speaking?

If we don't know who God, through Isaiah, is talking to it will be very difficult to work out His meanings of many of the things that he says. Isaiah wrote and proclaimed to the people of Israel in a time when they had been in rebellion and disobedience to God for many years. **Chapter 1 v 2 "Children have I reared and brought up have rebelled against me"**. At the same time, the Assyrian empire was rising and dominating and Israel was doing all in its power to protect itself from being conquered, even to the point of forming an alliance with Egypt rather than devoting themselves to reliance on God. Isaiah warned that they would be judged for their rebellion and called them to return to God. So in the one book, Isaiah speaks of coming judgement from their God because of disobedience, rebellion and he speaks of the provision from God of coming salvation and peace. And that is where we arrive at this text.

So the people are at this point worshipping foreign gods in various captivities, scattered, starting to feel as if the promises of God to deliver them were over and too weak to save them.

**God 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,  
who say to Zion,  
"Your God reigns!"**

**<sup>8</sup> Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;  
together they shout for joy.  
When the LORD returns to Zion,**

**they will see it with their own eyes.  
9 Burst into songs of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.  
10 The LORD will lay bare his holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth will see  
the salvation of our God.**

Why is this person called beautiful? I believe and I want to show you that it is because of the amazingly good news that they are bringing.

This messenger brings good news, news of hope to a people who could not see God at work, they could not see their circumstances changing or any end to their suffering and they could see no hope, and could not see any light at the end of the dark tunnel of foreign oppression.

This messenger proclaims news to Jerusalem and to Zion of peace, when they were in constant war with surrounding nations and often just to protect themselves from being destroyed. Not only that, but they were in rebellion against God, they were as a nation and as individuals in a broken and fracturing relationship to their God with no hope of fixing it in their own strength.

This messenger brings news of joy and happiness, not just news that they would survive or that they would be at peace but that they would be joy-full and happy.

The messenger comes proclaiming salvation for the wrong that the people have done to God. That the sin would be washed away and the debt paid by another. Because there is no possibility for them to pay back the debt themselves, they could not save themselves.

The messenger says to Gods people “Your God is Sovereign” He is Ruler and Creator and Sustainer. Despite every suffering and captivity and ruling and trial and tribulation Your God Reigns!

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news.

Do you see where this good news comes and meets you?

In your captivity to a work week too long in a job that seems to never end, or a university debt, or a mortgage that seem not to relinquish their hold on you; the messenger says I have good news! **51:5 “My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out”!** I haven’t forgotten you! I won’t leave you in captivity

Or in your family which is on the rocks, the boss you fight with every week, and if the last little bit of calm in your mind seems to be falling apart; there is peace for you; not peace and quiet peace, but a wholistic contentment and unbreakable joy in your soul! So do not despair! For Our God says: **54:10 “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed says the Lord.”** and again **2:4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.**

If your habitual sin is rising over you head like a tidal wave and you are struggling to breathe he cries to you **1:18 “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool!”**

O Church if you are scattered and if it is becoming hard to find one shred of unity on any corporate decision, or power to live Godly lives or life that is full because you see little hope that God will keep his

promise remember: “YOUR GOD REIGNS!” Even though you are in a strange land, despite your wandering faith, your rebellion and sin, many burdens and fighting, your deep suffering and mourning: your God reigns! He rules, He is sovereign, He is God. Even in this world that hates him.

Do you see “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news?”

Do you know who he is, this bearer and bringer of good news?

If you go on from the end of this passage to verse 13 you will see that it is God’s Servant that; **“shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted”, 53:3 “ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows acquainted with grief” :4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”.**

Where in Isaiah’s day these words from God were by faith for future fulfilment in an unknown servant, we know them as purchased and fulfilled in Jesus who was born in Bethlehem to the virgin Mary. And if you, by faith, believe and receive Jesus as the good news and the bearer of good news, then these promises and their fulfillment is yours. All these promises are for you in Christ Jesus by faith. Jesus is the bringer, the bearer and establisher of good news, and he did so by being crucified on a cross and raised to life again.

O precious church do you know that these promises, for those who believe in Jesus, are more solid than the seats on which you sit.

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Now to exhortation:

If you, by hearing these things, perceive a stirring in your hearts and minds, if these things are precious, if these words are new to you like never before and if Jesus and the good news he proclaimed and is proclaiming feels beautiful to you, would you praise him. Look at verse 8 and 9: when the watchmen hear the good news and see it fulfilled with their own eyes they ‘shout for joy’ and ‘burst into songs

of joy together'. So with your whole being and would you allow that praise and the feeling and knowledge of his preciousness spill out of this service into your week so that your very lifestyle would be coloured by it. I know these promises for us have not been received in fullness yet. Nation does still rise against nation. We are the latest generation of watchers for the return of Jesus to his people. So be full of joy, and be full of hope because as surely as the sun will rise, he'll come to us.

Would you make it your aim to share this good news with someone who does not know it and celebrate with someone who does? Would you join with our Lord in his proclamation of good news so that V10 "in the sight of all the nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God".

Would you make it your goal to memorise this verse if only verse 7 this week so that you might carry it with you daily wherever you go: write it on the wall, paper, your hand, anything so that it might become embedded in your heart and mind.