

This morning, I will be summarizing the sermon series which I called “The gospel according to Isaiah” which took us through much of the Old Testament book of Isaiah. After that, I will be opening it up for testimonies. Isaiah prophesied to Judah, the southern part of Israel, from about 740-687 BC. Isaiah was what was known as a covenant mediator prophet, people who were called by God to be His spokesperson, to call out the sin of the nation and call them to repent of their sin and return to faithfulness to the covenant that God had made with them at Mt. Sinai, after He had led them out of Egypt. The book of Isaiah can be broken up into two parts. Chapters 1-39 are mainly about God’s judgment of Israel and the surrounding nations for their sins. Earlier in this series, we looked at the three main areas where God through Isaiah was calling the Israelites out for breaking the covenant, areas that we also need God’s exhortation today: Judah’s injustice, their mistreatment of the poor and oppressed, their empty worship, their performative religion, and their idolatry, specifically the ways they were trusting in other nations for their protection and security instead of putting their trust in God.

Chapters 40-66 are mainly about the restoration God will bring to His people once their time of discipline is completed. **There are two problems that need to be addressed: the physical slavery, their exile in Babylon that has kept them out of their homeland, and their spiritual sinfulness, which is the reason behind their exile.** To address their first issue, their physical exile, God would use a Persian king named Cyrus to restore them back to their homeland. But that wouldn’t solve the deeper issue that landed them in exile in the first place, their sin, their rebellion against God, their injustice, their idolatry, their empty worship. But in Isaiah 52:13-53:12, we hear about someone called the Servant of the Lord and how God will deal with their sin problem through the sacrificial death of this servant.

**Isaiah 53:1-6, 9-11** - He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we **are healed.** <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all... He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will **prosper in his**

**hand.** <sup>11</sup> After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

The final chapters of Isaiah tell us about the new heavens and new earth, the future to which this world is headed, when there will be a final judgment, all sin, evil, and death will be destroyed, and we will dwell forever with God on a renewed earth.

The reason I entitled this sermon series the Gospel according to Isaiah is because of our conviction at this church that every part of Scripture points us to the gospel of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for our sins. We draw this from two specific passages in the New Testament:

**John 5:39–40** – “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, <sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

**Luke 24:25–27** - He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Every story, every prophetic book, every Old Testament character, points us to Jesus in some way. It all finds its culmination in Jesus. The brokenness and injustice of this world, God's judgment upon sin, the need for a Savior, the provision of the Servant of the Lord who will die for the sins of God's people, and the culmination of history in the new heavens and the new earth are all part of the one grand story traced from Genesis to Revelation. Despite being written over thousands of years by many different authors in many different places, the whole Bible tells one overarching story, one metanarrative, about a world broken by sin and a Savior who will redeem and restore it all.

There are many things that I could testify about this morning. I think that one of the weeks that stands out to me was September 21<sup>st</sup>, when we read Isaiah 29:13 about God calling out Israel for their empty worship, their performative religion.

**Isaiah 29:13** - The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.”

As pastor of this church, I have had many conversations with people who come from religious backgrounds where church felt like going through motions – stand up, sit down, read this liturgy every week – and there is something refreshing about the approach to worship of a church like ours. But worship at NewLife can very easily turn into the same thing. You can sing songs without really hearing the words. You can listen to a sermon without a heart that desires to believe and obey. You can read the Bible to learn but not look for God. And you can even fast and pray focusing on your own health and not to seek the Lord. God is not after your performance, your participation in rituals. His desire is to be in relationship with you, that you would know Him, love Him, trust in Him, and that out of the love He pours into you, that you would manifest your faith in Him through loving and serving others.

What does it look like for you to engage at a heart level? To live life “Coram Deo,” in the face of God, in His presence? Come early. Prepare your heart for worship. Stop yourself if you find yourself just going through the motions and repent and center yourself on Him. Seek not to simply read and listen but believe and obey. Let your worship not be empty, your faith not a performance, but seek the Lord until you find Him.

Let’s open it up for testimonies:

What did you learn from the Isaiah sermon series, or what is something God did in your life during it?

What was something meaningful that happened in your life or God did in 2025?