



Getting Started:

- Share a story about your favorite relative. Why is this person your favorite?
- What is the one thing you look forward to the most during the holidays? What do you dread about the holidays and why?

Going Deeper:

- What is God showing you this week as you read his Word and pray?
- What decisions or life struggles do you need Biblical direction or prayer for?

Message Summary

Isaiah 35:1-10

December 12, 2021

This week we continue in our Christmas series, *Repeat the Sounding Joy*. We began our time by looking at the song Mary (the mother of Jesus) sang: a song of joy as she rejoiced in her God and Savior. Then we turned our attention to the reason that we can rejoice today as well. The reason we can rejoice with confidence is because of redemption, not just our redemption but the redemption of all of God's creation. What is redemption? It is hard to find joy in something that you don't know what it is or means. We learned a simple definition of redemption: *"deliverance from a situation or from enemies. Most often, this involves paying a price" to deliver "someone from slavery."* Redemption comes at a price. There was a price for mankind's rebellion against God. *"Including every single person - you and me included - are born slaves to Satan, sin, death, and Hell and are in desperate need of redemption - of being set free."*

The first aspect of redemption we looked at was the redemption of creation. Because of the sin and rebellion of mankind, the land will be deserted by people and the animals will ravage the land. Smoke will rise and fires will burn where rivers once flowed. *"God will measure it out for chaos and destruction. It will be called the Land of Nothing."* We see a picture of a land in need of redemption. Upon redemption of the land, we will see it be glad. Plant life will flourish and blossom abundantly. Water will flow in the rivers once again - even in the desert. We learned that *"the deserts will become more fruitful and beautiful than these three places put together. The desert will become a "garden of glory."*

Continuing, we turned our attention to the redemption of God's people. Before redemption comes, we see a dark landscape of desperation, destruction and hopelessness. This may not seem that great for a Christmas series, but we need to be reminded of our pre-redemptive story. *"To remind ourselves of what it means to be redeemed. Remembering what we were enslaved to - what destruction we were headed towards. It's when we forget or ignore what we were enslaved to that our joy of redemption wanes and fades away."* But our joy comes in knowing that God promised that he would save his people. He would be their Redeemer, and they would know him because of all he would do. He would heal the lame so they could walk again, heal the ears of the deaf, open eyes for the blind to see, and cause the mute to sing a song of joy. All of the redeemed *"will follow a path that he will protect them on and ensure they persevere to the end. Not all will walk on this path. Only those who have been redeemed will walk this path that will lead them to an eternal city of everlasting joy and gladness. A place where the people fear no more - for they are protected. This is the place where they will live in the presence of their Redeemer."*

That promised Redeemer was Jesus. If you are familiar with his ministry, you know that he healed the lame, the deaf, the blind, and the mute. *"And so often - the response to being healed by Jesus - was a response of joy. They were prisoners set free - and they sang and danced and joyfully told others about the One who set them free."* But their redemption - as well as ours - came at a price for the One who redeemed us. Christ joyfully gave his life for our freedom. Yes, his death was extremely painful and unjust. *"But it also gave him great joy because he knew what his life was purchasing - us. All who put their faith in him. His life was the payment for our freedom and us being free gave him great joy even as it cost him his life. There's no greater love than that. No greater reason to be filled with joy."*

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to read our sermon text:

Isaiah 35:1-10

After briefly reviewing the message summary, use these questions to further examine the sermon and to discuss how these truths apply to daily life, so we can “be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas.1:22). Based on your knowledge of the people in your life group, select the questions that will best help you frame the group’s discussion of this sermon and sermon text.

GENERAL SERMON QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the key message of these verses? Explain why you think this.
2. After hearing the message and reading the scriptures, what was your biggest takeaway and why?
3. In what ways do these truths, which were written thousands of years ago, apply today?
4. Which point in the sermon spoke to you the most? How did it affect you?
5. In what ways do these passages point to Christ? What can we share with others about Him from what we just heard and read?

Read: Isaiah 34:1-17, 35:1-10, Hebrews 12:1-2

1. Why was Mary (the mother of Jesus) singing and rejoicing in Luke’s gospel?
2. What is redemption? What did we learn it means to be redeemed?
3. Why is it important to know what redemption is, especially if we are to find joy in it?
4. In what way did creation need to be redeemed? Why was it called the Land of Nothing?
5. Once creation is redeemed, what did we learn it would become? What will be different about the desert?
6. Why was mankind desperate for redemption? Without redemption, what would be our fate?
7. Christmas is supposed to be a time of hope, so why are we talking about the hopelessness of our lives without redemption?
8. How do we know that Jesus is the Redeemer that God promised? What are the similarities between what God promised and what we see Jesus do during his ministry?
9. Why should we be reminded of our pre-redemption story? Why should this cause us to rejoice like someone Jesus healed?
10. What is the cost of redemption? Why did Jesus face his death with joy in spite of the agony and pain he would suffer?
11. Are you filled with joy when you think about Jesus as your Redeemer? If not, what distracts you?
12. Why is this time of year a great opportunity to invite people to church and introduce them to Jesus?
13. Pray as a group for those people you need to invite to one of our weekend services.

The Challenge - Life Application

- Read the passages used in this week's message. Write down any scriptures you need to be reminded of on sticky notes and place them around the house. Try to memorize as many as you can.
- Reflect on the message and ask God to give you His strength as you follow Him.
- Pray that, as Christ-followers, we would reflect the change God has made in us.
- Go back and listen or watch the sermon if you missed it or you need to be reminded of its truths.

Weekly Prayer Focus

Pray for Our Church:

- Ask God to use us as instruments for His purpose and glory.
- Pray that we are a GOING church, proclaiming the gospel to the nations.
- Ask God to help each of us to live a life that reflects Him.
- Pray for all of our campuses.
- Pray for our pastors and leadership here at Gateway.

Pray for Our City:

- The government and civic leaders
- Those in need in our community and the services that help them
- The fire and police departments
- Schools, students, and teachers

Pray for Our World:

- Pray for the Christ-followers in Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Cuba, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.
- Pray for all of those who are being persecuted in harm's way for the Kingdom.
- Pray that the message of Christ will reach all of mankind.

Pray for Life Groups at Gateway:

- Pray for those who are leading our groups.
- Pray that everyone involved in our groups would continue to be rooted in the Word and connected to each other.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers and that we will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for discipleship opportunities.