

Through the Bible at 30,000 Feet

Isaiah | First the Bad News, Then the Good

North Center | February 6, 2022

Pastor Jeremiah Knoop

- Open your Bibles to Isaiah Chapter One.
- This morning we have reached the 4th section in the OT.¹
 - **Law:** *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*
 - **History:** *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*
 - **Wisdom:** *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*
 - **Major Prophets:** *Isaiah, Jeremiah (& Lamentations) Ezekiel, Daniel*
 - **Minor Prophets:** *The Twelve*
 - Called “**Major**” Prophets, not because they are more important or somehow better than the “**Minor**” prophets, but simply because of the size of the book and the scope of their message.
 - For example: **Isaiah** is a “Major” prophet because his book is 66 chapters long and deals with prophesy on a global scale; **Obadiah** is one of the “Minor” prophets because it is only 1 chapter long and gives a prophesy about one nation in particular.
- A **Prophet**: someone who was called by God communicate His message to the world, and oftentimes that message involved something that was going to happen in the future.
- As we’ll see in the opening verse, Isaiah’s ministry took place during the reigns of 4 different kings in Jerusalem, and it was during a time when Assyria was beginning to conquer all the nations around them. Eventually, Assyria put their sights on Jerusalem. Isaiah was the man God sent to speak to His people...
 - about the problems they were facing
 - about the enemies that were knocking on their door
 - about how to face their problems & how to respond to the threats of the enemy
 - about their need for God to save them
 - and ultimately about the hope that is found only in the Messiah: Jesus.

PRAY

Intro: Liz’s high school senior picture on the dashboard of my car.

- Two reasons:
 - Because I really enjoyed looking at it.
 - Because of the car that I was driving when we were dating.
- **Toyota Corolla**
 - The man I bought it from charged me \$200 for it, and that was a fair price.

¹ **Sermon Series:** Through the Bible at 30,000 Feet.

- To get a big picture view of each book in the Bible
- To see how each book connects together in this story that God has written
- Ultimately, to see how it points sinners like us to the glorious hope of Jesus Christ.

- The **passenger door** didn't open from the outside, so I had to get it before I could open the door for Liz.
- The only problem with that...was that **the driver's door** didn't open from the outside either. So, I had to open the back door, reach up to open my door, and then get it to open Liz's door.
- But I had to be careful not to knock over the piece of **wood that was holding up the ceiling**.
- The **shocks and struts** were totally destroyed, so it kind of felt like you were riding a stagecoach as you went down the highway.
- One or more of the **tires** had a slow leak, and so I had to stop by the gas station on my way to school every day to fill up the tires with air, and then I would stop by on my way home and fill them up again.
- It was especially tricky driving in the winter because I had to **jump start** it every time I wanted to go somewhere.
- And then if you were to open up the hood to examine the engine, the first thing you would have noticed was **the duct tape and rubber bands** holding stuff together.
- You would also notice that the engine was **covered in oil** because of the time that I forgot to put the oil cap back on after filling it up – so the oil had exploded everywhere. And I was too poor to buy a new oil cap, so I plugged the hole with a Lipton Iced Tea lid. So you would have also noticed that...
- That was the car that I had as I was wooing Elizabeth!
- Now, those of you who only drive newer cars may not know this, but the dashboard of a car has all kinds of icons that light up with a bright red light whenever something is wrong with your car. For example...
 - If your tire is low...an icon will light up to let you know (and it will stay lit up so that you don't forget).
 - If your oil is low...
 - If your gas tank is low...
 - If something is wrong with your engine...
 - If it thinks that one of your doors is open...
- So the dashboard of my car looked like a Christmas tree – which was discouraging because every time I got in my car I was reminded of all the problems that needed attention – and that's not fun.
- But...I found that I could make all those problems magically disappear by putting a photo on the dashboard.²

² Fast forward about 10 years, and my family was on vacation in **the Black Hills of South Dakota**, and we were driving a big old **Chevy Suburban!** This particular vehicle was one that I got for free! And while we were driving around the Black Hills, the engine began to make a noise that was extremely annoying. And the longer we drove around, the louder and more irritating the noise became.

- There was **HOPE** for both of my vehicle, but that meant that I had to face the problem instead of ignoring it.
- My vehicle would never get fixed so long as I pretended like there wasn't anything to fix.

I share this story because they're a pretty **accurate picture** of the way many people live their lives.

When you come to the gathering on Sunday mornings, you are surrounded by people with problems.

- The Bible says that no one is righteous, no not one (**Rom. 3:10**)
- It says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God – which is why we were created (**Rom. 3:23**).
- The prophet Isaiah says that all our righteousness is like filthy rags (**Isa. 64:6**)
- The apostle Paul says that in my flesh nothing good dwells (**Rom. 7:18**)
- The apostle Peter says that we have an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion (**1 Pet. 5:8**)
- Jesus promised that in this world you will have trouble (**John 16:33**)

...which means that when you ask somebody how they're doing, and they say “**good**” – there's a really good chance they are **lying** to you.

If you come to the gathering and you feel broken, brother and sister, you are in really good company.

- We're all broken
 - If we could see the brokenness in this room this morning, my guess is that it would take our breath away.
- Every Sunday morning, this room is filled with hurts and fears and regret and disappointments and brokenness and sin...because that's the world we live in.

Now, it won't always be this way...

- There will be a day with no more tears, no more pain, and no more fears.
- There will be a day when the burdens of this place will be no more, and we'll see Jesus face to face...

...but until that day, we live in a world broken by sin and full of sinful people.

Eventually, I came to the conclusion that I had two choices: I could take it into the nearest auto-mechanic to have it examined and fixed, or I could turn up the music as loud as it would go so that it drowned out the noise of the engine. So as my family was taking in the beautiful scenery around Mt. Rushmore, our suburban was rockin!

Once again, instead of facing the fact that there was clearly a problem with my vehicle, my response was to do everything I could to ignore it. The first time, I tried covering up the problem with a photograph. The second time, I tried covering up the problem with music

In his letter to the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul said that “*all creation groans*” (8:22)

- It’s not just you...
- It’s not just your marriage...
- It’s not just your family...
- It’s not just your relationships
- It’s not just your heart...

ALL creation groans...

If you ever feel like you’re the only one who is really struggling with something, it’s probably because everybody around you is trying so hard to cover up their own struggles.

- We put the picture up on the dashboard of our heart to cover up the warning signs
- We turn up the stereo to drown out the cries of our heart...

And most of us are pretty good at it. We have ALL KINDS of ways of ignoring our problems:

- Turning off our mind by turning on the **television**
- Spending hours on **social media**
- **Working** longer hours
- Throwing ourselves into **hobbies**
- **Medication**
- **Alcohol** or drugs
- **Pornography**
- **Seclusion**

If you think about the time you spent this past week engaged in all these things and then **compared** it to the time you spent engaging with God (in His Word & time alone in prayer), I think many of us would discover that we spend much more energy filling our heart with distractions than we do in filling our heart with hope.

But then I come to the Gathering with my Sunday morning smile, and you ask me how I’m doing, and I say “*I’m good, how are you?*” – when what I really mean is “*I’m broken, but I don’t want to think about it, and I certainly don’t want you to know it.*”

That’s **the first truth** about every single one of us is that all of us are sinners; all of us live in a sinful world; and so all of us have PROBLEMS.

The second truth is that there is HOPE for every single one of us in Christ Jesus.

There’s a letter in the NT where we hear the apostle Paul praying that Christians would know “*the hope*” that they have in Jesus Christ and that they would know “*the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe*” (Eph. 1:18–19).

Whatever might be weighing heavy on your heart this morning, the message of this book is a message of hope.

- The God who parts waters...and walks on the waves...and calms the storm with His word is the same yesterday, today, and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**).
- The God who surrounds His people with chariots of fire...who shuts the mouths of lions...who opened the eyes of the blind...who defeated the most power nations in the world in order to rescue His people is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- The God who gave hope to the slave girl in the wilderness...and who spoke life into the despised woman at the well is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- The God who breathed life into dry bones...and who cast out demons...and who raised dead people out of the grave is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

What does this mean?

- It means that there is hope for whatever problem may be staring you in the face right now
- It means that the only way for a Christian to feel truly hopeless about a situation in this life is for them to forget who their God is.

I may not know exactly what you are going through this morning, but if you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, then I know that you are literally being held this very moment in the arms of Hope.

At this point, some of you might be thinking, “*I thought we were going to be looking at the message of **Isaiah** today.*”

We just did!

1. **Part one:** All of us are sinners – which means that we live a world that is full of problems. And the biggest problem (for all of us) is that God is holy, and we are not.
2. But there is hope because the sovereign God of the universe is the same God who made a way to save us from the hopelessness of our sin. **Part Two.**

If you were to fly over the book of Isaiah at 30,000 feet, that’s the big picture.

So now let’s take the final few minutes that we have and put our eyes on several key passages in Isaiah that help give us the big picture of this book.

1. **THE PROBLEM** | *Chapters 1–39*
 - a. God’s people had traded the glory of God for the pleasures of sin | **Isaiah 1:1–4**
 - b. **Q.** Why is this a problem? **A.** Because (as you read about in **chapter 6**, the God who created them and who called them into a relationship with Him is holy.³
 - c. Isaiah knew that unless God somehow steps into our sinfulness, we are “**undone**” (**we have no hope**), because God doesn’t ignore sin; He punishes it.⁴
 - d. As a result of sin, God’s people face all sorts of problems & threats during Isaiah’s day (and the most serious threat wasn’t Assyria in the present or Babylon

³ *Isaiah 6:1–5*

⁴ *Isaiah 13:11–13; 27:11*

in the future – it was the coming judgement of God for their sin), but instead of trusting in the power and promises and goodness of God, the majority of the people in Isaiah’s day were either attempting to ignore their problems⁵ or trying to fix them on their own.⁶

That’s a major theme in chapters 1–39

- But for God’s people, the story doesn’t end with their sin
- It doesn’t end in them being “undone”
- It doesn’t end with brokenness and judgement
- For those who are willing to face their problems by looking to God,⁷ the story ends with HOPE!

2. THE HOPE | Chapters 40–66

a. In the midst of rampant sin and problems on every side, God says, “‘Comfort, yes, comfort My people!’ Says your God” (**Isaiah 40:1**).

b. What was supposed to comfort them?

1. God is **Sovereign** over your life | **Isa 40:28–31** (45:5–7; 46:9–10)⁸

- a. *There is no sin that God cannot forgive.*
- b. *There is no hurt that God cannot heal.*
- c. *There is no relationship that God cannot restore.*
 - i. He is the EVERLASTING GOD.
 1. He is not tired of you.
 2. He is not weary of your burdens.

2. God is the **Savior** of your life | **Isa 45:22** (Isa 43:1–4)⁹

- a. There is salvation for all who look to God.
- b. He does not promise to save you from your problems. Problems are simply part of what it means to live in a world that is broken by sin. Rather, He promises to give you a living hope in the midst of your problems.
 - i. Salvation means that, in the midst of our problems, we have HOPE because we have HIM.
 - ii. Salvation means that, in the midst of our problems, “we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (**Rom 8:37**).

⁵ Isaiah 22:12–13; 28:7

⁶ Chapters 30

⁷ Isaiah 45:22

⁸ See also Isaiah 55:8–9

⁹ Not only did God promise to save His people from the **penalty of our sin** in the future (*Isa 43:25*), but He also speaks of saving His people from the **power of our sin** in the present (*Isa 61:1–4*). The power of sin is hopelessness. The power of sin is shame. The power of sin is feeling worthless, unlovable. The power of sin is thinking the world has better answers to your problems than God’s Word does. The power of sin is trading the glories of God for the fleeting pleasures of sin. Not just a future salvation; this is a “right now” salvation. God means to **rescue** you from the power of sin **NOW**.

3. God is the *Sacrifice* for our sin | **Isa 53:4–6**
 - a. 700 years before Jesus carried my cross to Calvary, Isaiah wrote these words.... **Read 53:4–6**
 - b. Hope has a Name, and Isaiah knew it! That Name is Jesus.

So what are we to do with this message of sin and hope that we find in Isaiah? We get the answer in **42:6**.

3. **THE CALL** | **Chapters 42:6** (49:6; 52:7; 66:18)

We live in a world that is broken and full of problems – a world that is covered in darkness because of sin. And people need to see that there is hope for their problems, that there is healing for the brokenness, that there is a light in the midst of their darkness, that there is salvation for their sin. They need to see the message of Isaiah, and God means for them to see it as they watch our lives and listen to our words.

PRAY

As our music team prepares to lead us in our song of response, I want to encourage you to really think about the words you are singing. Ask God to implant these truths deep into your heart.

- That when you sing, “I will not fear when the darkness falls” – that that would be true.
- When you sing, “My hope is hidden in the Lord” – that that would be true.
- When you sing, “The grace of God has reached for me” – that you would know and believe and feel that this is true – because you know that the Lord is My Salvation.

COMMUNION

In communion, we celebrate the truth that Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 53.

Read **Isaiah 53:4–7**

This is a prophetic picture of the price that Jesus would pay to redeem us from our sin and to give us hope. This whole chapter is about this sacrifice, but then notice the very first word after this chapter is over. **Isaiah 54:1** says, “**Sing!**”

Jesus’ sacrifice is not the death of our hope, it’s the source of our hope. Because Jesus endured the prophecy of Isaiah 53, we can sing “*My debt is paid the victory won. The Lord is My salvation.*”

In communion, through the symbolism of the bread and the cup, we celebrate the salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.