

Almost There – Isaiah’s Song

12/24/23

Isaiah 7:14 | 9:6 | 53:4-11

Christmas Eve

I’ve often wondered what Isaiah must’ve thought when God gave him a front-row seat to His Divine plan. Was he confused? Conflicted? Confounded? Did it compute that God was going to step out of heaven into humanity in the person of *Immanuel* to lay down His life to rescue you/me from the wages of sin?

SEE – some 700 years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah wrote – *The Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and He will be called Immanuel – which means... God w/ us!*

Then in Isaiah 9:6, he further discusses Immanuel – *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders – and He will be called the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*

I’m not sure if you know this or not, but today, what we’re celebrating yet again is this holy, prophetic proclamation that’s reached across centuries to find its fulfillment in the little town of Bethlehem – where the Virgin Mary gave birth to Immanuel – and miraculously – God was w/ us to save us.

For on that holy night, God’s divine plan began to unfold as Isaiah’s prophecy became a living reality as Mary cradled the newborn King in her arms.

But it was so much more than a nativity scene – it was God’s love breaking into our world to span the gap b/w our desperate need and His redeeming grace. It was God becoming flesh to make His dwelling among us so that He might seek and save the lost.

As such – God never intended for us to camp out at the manger. For as miraculous and timely as the advent of Immanuel might seem, the birth of the Christ-child was just the beginning – **God entered humanity for a purpose** – and this purpose is foretold in Isaiah’s prophetic narrative in ch. 53 – *where the prophet details the soul-stirring truth of the suffering servant.*

Surely, He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered Him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds, (His wounds alone) we are healed.

The Reason – b/c... *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; yet the Lord has laid on Him (Immanuel) the iniquity of us all.*

So... *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment, He was taken away. Yet who of His generation protested? For He was cut off from the land of the living; and for the transgression of my people, He was punished. He was assigned a grave w/ the wicked, and w/ the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.*

Yet it was the Father’s will to crush Him and to 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 Lord’s will, will prosper in His hand.

SEE – the birth of Jesus is more than a cute story of a baby in a manger; it was God saying – ***I’m here in this mess w/ you – only I’ve come to fix it.*** Meaning... His 33-year journey to the cross was NO tragedy but the greatest expression of love ever offered to you/me. For the cross is the ultimate act of love – and God’s ONLY solution to the problem of sin – it is where God offers all of us a way back to Him.

It also means that this tiny baby in the manger that we worship tonight is the same Savior who laid down His life on an old rugged cross to give life to anyone who'd choose to believe/receive His provision of grace.

So, on this Christmas Eve, let's embrace the profound truth woven into Isaiah's prophetic words – that in the birth and crucifixion of Jesus, God not only entered our world but He secured our eternal hope – helping us to see that Christmas/Easter are not isolated events; but (2) related chapters in the same redemptive story.