

Get Ready for the Ride of Our Lives

Part 2

December 3, 2017

I So, what next?

A) **SLIDE Romans 2:1-4 (NIV)** ¹ You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

- 1) We are to make a way in the desert
- 2) We are to light that way so the darkness does not obscure the narrow path
- 3) We are to do so without passing judgment, without showing contempt for God's kindness, and without losing our patience
- 4) One way to do this is to soften our message so it is not offensive or condemning
- 5) In other words, we become tolerant, accepting
- 6) Yet, that is not Paul's point at all

B) **SLIDE** Christmas?

- 1) We enter the Christmas season
- 2) So, how do switch from these messages about a world that rejects God which could very well lead to His judgment to the message of Christmas
- 3) Seems awkward, even disjointed
- 4) However, too often, we speak about the Christmas story as an isolated event
- 5) We bring out the decorations, the songs, the story of the Christ child after Thanksgiving

- 6) We seldom speak about the Christmas story throughout the rest of the year
- 7) So, honestly, I asked the Lord, "How do we transition from Paul's message to the Christmas story?"
- 8) God answered, "They are the same story."
- 9) So, we are not shifting gears, as they say; instead, we are looking to the only One Who can show us how to be Ambassadors of Promise in a world without promise

II **SLIDE** Christ, the Son of the Living God

A) Isaiah

- 1) **Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)** ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.
- 2) This verse is quoted quite often
- 3) It gives us hope and peace in the midst of trying situations
- 4) Notice, it begins with "but"
- 5) So, we need to look at what comes before this verse to understand the real impact, the real meaning of God's words
- 6) Doing so will help us wait and understand our times
- 7) Doing so will help us prepare the way

B) **SLIDE** Brief History

- 1) Israel had been carried into captivity
- 2) Judah was enveloped in idolatry and every kind of evil
- 3) Assyria and Babylon were rising powers
- 4) The international landscape was changing rapidly and for the worse
- 5) Great danger and disaster loomed for everyone, especially the children of God, as people chose lifestyles and morals contrary to God's word
- 6) Sound familiar?
- 7) **SLIDE** In the midst of this, God calls Isaiah to be a light and a voice of truth.

- 8) But nothing seems to change, and Isaiah feels as if he has failed.
- 9) It is a time of waiting.
- 10) What do we do when it seems nothing is changing?
- 11) Do we give up and join the world?
- 12) Do we compromise our message to fit in?
- 13) Does church become optional?
- 14) Do we fill the waiting time with other activities to hide the discomfort of waiting for something to happen?
- 15) Do we assume what God is saying and act on those assumptions?
- 16) Do we wait for God to raise us up on wings like eagles?
- 17) Or do we get to work knowing that all those who hope in the LORD will gain renewed strength?
- 18) That we will soar on wings like eagles?
- 19) That we will not grow weary or faint?

III **SLIDE** What we are called to do?

- A) What does God call Isaiah and us to do at times like this?
- B) **Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV)** ¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- C) **SLIDE** How do we do this? We follow Jesus' example
 - 1) **Luke 4:1 (NIV)** ¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,
 - 2) **Luke 4:2 (NIV)** ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

- 3) **SLIDE Luke 4:16-21 (NIV)** ¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁷ The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

D) Christmas

- 1) Time to celebrate the birth of a child Who would show us the way
- 2) The way to forgiveness and restoration
- 3) The way to salvation
- 4) The way to the Father
- 5) But, He also showed us the way to make straight the highway in a corrupt world filled with arrogance, disdain, darkness, idolatry
- 6) This brings us to the central question to all that we say, do, and believe

- E) **SLIDE Matthew 16:15-18 (NIV)** ¹⁵ "But what about you?" [Jesus] asked. "Who do you say I am?"

- 1) We answer this with our mouths and with our actions
- 2) Night in Bethlehem is one to tell others Who and what we believe