

12/17/23 - Isaiah 11:1-10 - "A Telescope For Longing Hearts"

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- [0 : 00] The text today is the book of Isaiah chapter 11, and it reads, There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
- And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.
- He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist.
- And faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat. And the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together.
- [1 : 12] And the little children shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall be grazed. Their young shall lie down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra. And the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. There shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.
- For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In that day, the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples of him, shall the nations inquire.
- And its resting place shall be glorious. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Now, telescopes have to be one of the most fascinating devices, in my opinion.
- Telescopes. Growing up as a child, I would often find a toilet paper roll. And boy, was I in my element.
- [2 : 28] I had my telescope. Sometimes I would get an upgrade to a paper towel roll. And boy, the magnification would just increase as a child.
- Right? My mind was open to the wonder of my imagination, of seeing things from a new perspective, from my little toilet paper roll or paper towel roll.
- But it's not much imagination anymore. Today, we have the ability to see 13 billion light years away.
- 13 billion light years away. Now, a light year, let's talk about some distance here. Rick, correct me if I'm wrong. A light year is 5.8 trillion miles in length.
- 5.8 trillion miles. And so, that would mean that just the distance of one single light year would be over 24 million laps around Earth's equator.
- [3 : 36] To be one single light year. 24 million laps around the Earth's equator. One light year. And we can see out 13 billion of those.
- Isn't that incredible? The telescope is so incredible. And trust me, I saw all 13 billion as a young kid with my paper towel roll.

I'll tell you. But to see something far away and removed from anything that's occurring in our lives is often difficult to fathom as well.

We get caught up in the present. We get caught up in the things that are going on. When trials come. When health is struggling. When we're saying goodbye to loved ones or a plethora of other significant ordeals that we're facing.

It is difficult to see anything but what's in front of you. And we long to see something else, don't we? Well, this passage today is doing just that.

[4 : 50] There are national crisis after national crisis going on in the text today. In Isaiah's day.

In the historical time frame of historic Israel and Judah. The Assyrian enemy is en route to completely destroy these nations and take captive.

And luckily, if you're lucky enough, you'd survive it. God's people are in civil war between the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom.

Until God speaks. And when He speaks through prophecy, it's like looking into a telescope for His people.

To look at something further away. To see something outside of their circumstance that's coming. And today, our longing hearts will be peering through their telescope with them.

[5 : 55] To see what God was pointing out off in the distance. Praise and praise God that we have the privilege of being able to magnify the detail of that view and perspective.

Because we have the closed canon of Scripture. We have something that helps adjust that focus even greater than what they were able to see.

And we'll be peering and seeing a consummation in the future. The sermon title today is, A Telescope for Longing Hearts.

And what we're going to see in the passage today, and we're going to tie it together with a couple sections, is that a life longing for consummation lives today with anticipation.

A life longing for consummation lives today with anticipation. We're going to break this down into two different sections, and I want to pray before we do.

[7 : 06] Let's pray. Father, I pray for our hearts within this church body. Pray for those who are in ill health at home right now, joining on the live stream.

Pray that you are with them. You are comforting them. That you are helping to heal them and sustaining them. Father, we thank you for your word. As we open it, we turn to a life-giving message for us.

And Father, if there is anybody who is far from you, draw them near by the power of your word. And Lord, speak through my frail body, my frail health, to communicate truth today.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So the first section of two is titled, The Distant Person and Future Work of God.

And we see this in verse 1 through 9. And verse 1 talks about some botany, we'll call it.

[8 : 13] There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. Now, I do like to pretend that I'm a green thumb at home.

Pretend. Because I'm the one who usually mistakens the grass killer with the weed killer, and go around my grass spraying our grass with grass killer, and find that the front yard looks like a dalmatian with all spots of dead grass.

And so at times I think I'm doing justice and being a green thumb. And I think I did a doozy this year with what we did to our burning bush in our backyard.

Because I was so sick of maintaining it. And I cut this thing down to pretty significantly cut down.

I'm calling it a pruning. But I think it was a combination of aggression and frustration towards this burning bush.

[9 : 23] And so I cut it. Will it live? Will it not? I'm not really concerned. Because I was sick of it. But that's the question that Israel is asking right now.

In this time period. Will they live? Or are they going to die? It illustrates the troubling circumstances of Isaiah's day.

The nation of Israel has a history of unfathomable odds and might through the lineage of Jesse. Jesse being David's father, if you can remember in 1 Samuel series.

But all of their history, all of their victories, all of their winnings would be reduced to a stump.

That means the victory all the way back in Genesis 14 against wicked nations. Like when Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek in Genesis 14.

[10 : 35] Gone. Exodus 17 against the Amalekites. Where Moses' arms were raised. And they run the victory against the Amalekites. Gone.

Numbers 21 against the Canaanites. And the victory against the Canaanites and Amorites. Gone. Numbers 31 against the Midianites. Gone.

Joshua 6 against Jericho. Gone. Joshua 8. Once they got some things in order with stolen loot. They defeated Ai.

Joshua 10. The victory against the Amorite king. 1 Samuel against the Ammonites. The Philistines. The Amalekites. And then 2 Samuel against the Amorites.

All of that is reduced to a stump. Nothing to show for it.

[11 : 34] However, as the botanical metaphor, we'll call it, indicates, appearance does not dictate life.

Life runs deeper than what meets the eye. It says, a branch from his roots shall bear fruit in this verse.

You see, the promise of God that sustained God's people then remains amid the pruning process of their current day.

That process and that promise is still remaining. And a remnant it is. But a remnant it is. And that's good news.

Isaiah continues to reveal this shoot. This is language from Jeremiah and Zechariah as a righteous and faithful ruler to come. There is somebody coming.

[12 : 36] In verse 2 it says, And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This shoot. This thing that springs forth from the root system. And guess what?

The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding. The Spirit of counsel and might. The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what meets the eye or decide disputes by what he hears. God's Spirit would rest upon this ruler.

He would be set apart. God's Spirit would actually indicate to this audience.

Back to Genesis of the Spirit hovering over the waters. And God's initiative would spring forth creation.

[13 : 34] Which where Adam was born. Where Adam came from and was created from. And the same Spirit here is responsible for recreation.

They would see some connections here with recreation. And so should we. And this ruler would be a part of that. He would produce fruit in three pairs of the scripture.

Wisdom and understanding. Advice and determination. Knowledge and fear of the Lord. And his delight is the fear of the Lord. He judges righteously. Judgment is good.

Because judgment produces justice for people. He righteously judges. He doesn't judge by works.

But he judges by the heart. Not by what's seen. But what's not seen. And in verse 4. It says. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor.

[14 : 37] And decide with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth. And with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Those he rules over will receive justice and equity. Reaching to the poor and the meek of the earth. And with a breath. Think of that language.

With his breath. He will destroy the wicked. It hasn't worked well for Kenneth Copeland. But it works good for God.

You see this ruler's royal attire. Everything about this person is clothed in righteousness and faithfulness.

As his royal attire. He is the embodiment of the king that Isaiah 1.17 indicated back a couple pages to the left.

[15 : 39] One who would rescue the oppressed. Defend the orphan. And plead for the widow. Beautiful view through the telescope.

But wait. There's more. As they peer through that telescope. They see a person. But something else is in view.

Look in verse 8. It seems to be a different environment going on. What an image that Isaiah uses here.

To illustrate this environment. He goes from metaphor. To which I would argue allegory. Which describes predator and prey uniting in the same shared space.

Look in verse 6 through 8. The wolf and the lamb united. The leopard and the baby goat united. The lion and a fattened calf united so much that a child could lead them and not be attacked.

[16 : 51] Not only that. He goes to a cow and a bear. And even the offspring of that cow indicate generational peace. This is lasting peace.

It's the lion and the ox. And the interesting image of this baby and a cobra. And even this baby can play in the den of an adder.

That's a venomous snake. Now, I have enough kids that I would never allow them to play with a snake's den.

A gardener snake. Definitely not a poisonous one. But there will be so much peace. That they are supposed to be seeing a head.

That has everything to do with the rule of this man. Now, I wouldn't imagine that Isaiah is very concerned for the animal kingdom.

[17 : 57] I'm not saying that he might have not had a dog or whatever, or a cat. But I don't think he's talking about a concern for the unity of the animal kingdom.

And that this book is addressing national crisis between nations. And we rest assured that this future ruler will usher in peace among nations.

And these animals are simply just allegory to represent the unity and peace between nations. Just glancing around, it supports that notion for that national turmoil.

This verse that we have read today lays right between war and peace. Look at the war chunk. Look in chapter 10, starting in verse 28 through 34.

This is all war between nations. And then after this chapter, look, I'm just referencing here. I want you to see something.

[19 : 03] There's peace in nations. In chapter 11, 12 through 16. So obviously, I don't think he's concerned about the animal kingdom.

I think he's concerned with his people looking through the telescope of time to see a righteous and faithful ruler who will rule well and will create lasting peace between nations.

We peer through the telescope and we see that peace. And in verse 9, it says, They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Hmm. This brings to mind the depth and the expanse of the ocean.

I mean, it's crazy to think if you think about all the 13 billion light years that we can see through a telescope. Well, guess how much of the ocean has not been discovered by humans yet.

[20 : 21] 95% of the ocean has not been discovered or explored by humans. It's been traced, yeah.

But a human has never explored it. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord and the waters as the waters cover the sea.

In other words, in this future kingdom and the ruler's kingdom, the knowledge of the Lord will be deep and as vast as the sea.

This is a compelling vision of a peaceful kingdom with a righteous and faithful ruler. In Isaiah's day, the people longed for that kingdom to come.

As they're looking around, they're watching the news, they're reading the newspaper, they're longing for that kingdom to come.

[21 : 31] They longed for redemption to be complete, for redemption to be consummated. But ultimately, their view was a little bit blurred through that telescope.

But according to progressive revelation, as the pages of Scripture continued to be written and turned, even in our day today, what God was actually unfolding would be greater than anything that this nation could have ever experienced.

This nation did have remnants of pure. They rebuilt the temple only for it to be destroyed again. And there were times of rising victory, of recovering the scroll, but ultimately leading to Babylonian exile.

And time and time again, it seemed like the time has come, but they realized it hasn't yet. And we're still in this time and period today of God unfolding the gospel to us, as we see in Isaiah.

And Christmas certainly adjusted the telescopic lens, didn't it, of what God was doing. In that, we have a second section of the near person and work of God.

[23 : 00] Maybe you've asked yourself, maybe over the last couple of weeks in this Advent series, you know, what do any of these passages have to do with Christmas and the Advent of Jesus Christ?

That doesn't talk about the baby in the manger. Shouldn't we be in Luke? What am I doing? But just because Jesus Christ isn't explicitly mentioned doesn't mean Jesus Christ isn't there.

It is important for us to realize that. Because Jesus Christ is central to all Scripture. All Scripture points to Jesus.

You see? And for Isaiah's day, there was evidence that the root of Jesse was still intact, even though they looked like a stump.

And mainly, in the rebuilding of the temple, obviously, we saw that there was still hope when they were rebuilding the temple.

[24 : 06] And so it is important to emphasize that the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the more perfect fulfillment of that remnant hope that Isaiah's day truly longed for.

That the incarnation of Christ, the messianic era of Jesus coming to this earth, was the perfect unfolding time that Isaiah's people longed for.

That they're adjusting that telescope, trying to see, and they're almost there, but Luke hasn't written his gospel yet. Jesus hadn't come yet.

And that's our advantage. You see in verse 10, in that day, the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples.

Of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. In that day. What day?

[25 : 04] I don't know. Isaiah doesn't tell us what day it is. Some unspecified time in the future. You won't know the time, but you'll know the conditions.

Some unspecified time in the future, God will give a signal for the peoples. And all you Batman fans, you thought the bat signal was an effective signal to bring peace and justice against Two-Face and the Joker?

No. Got another thing coming. In this day. This will serve as a signal for the peoples. You see, Christians can embrace Isaiah 11 and its beautiful imagery of justice and peace being fully revealed in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

In his life, this passage is seen. Justice was perfectly facilitated in the life of Jesus Christ. bringing justice that God's leaders habitually failed to do.

And what was the fruit of that? Peace among nations. In his death, justice was perfectly served through his sacrifice where he stepped into judgment for us in our place as a substitute.

[26 : 32] What was the fruit of that activity? Peace. Peace between a holy God and a sinful man. In his resurrection, justice was perfectly proven by triumphing over death for all to see.

What was the fruit? Reigning peace. And in our day, like Isaiah, we long for this ruler to come again.

We long for redemption to be complete. We see the nearness of a person in the telescope.

Great view. The image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation. Right? We see that in view, but still, the future work of God is ahead.

And we live longing for redemption to be complete. The man is fully focused, but the environment is still distant in the future. that we have to ask, what do we do now?

[27 : 54] What do we do in our day today? today? We look around, and it's pretty discouraging, the state of our country, the state of our families, the state of our neighborhoods.

What do we do now? Well, the longing of Isaiah's day still echoes within our hearts today. This is the carol saying, so come, true branch of Jesse, free your children from this tyranny.

From depths of hell your people save to rise victorious from the grave. Rejoice, rejoice. Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

We are still longing waiting. We are still waiting. We are called to fix our eyes from Isaiah to Jesus Christ in a time He establishes His peace and reign of which Isaiah 11 speaks of being fulfilled in His new creation.

That's where we're fixing our eyes. Where we're trying to look into our telescope and see the completion, the consummation of that plan unfolding.

[29 : 30] Because Scripture really indicates what that's going to look like in the book of Revelation, which is a book of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

There's victorious hope in the future according to John's prophecy here. Revelation 5, 2 says, and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seal?

And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

And one of the elders said to me, weep no more. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

We might not be able to see it perfectly in our day, but we know through the revelation of God's word who to hope in.

[31 : 01] And that is Jesus Christ, the ruler of which is spoken about here in Isaiah. Now, meanwhile, in the present, we can still say, well, high five, Brent, you nailed that one.

We're just going to look in our telescope all of our lives. Sounds great. Well, no. John 15, 14, Jesus says to his disciples, abide in me and I in you.

And using a little bit more botanist language, says, as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

What do you do here and now regardless of the condition of the world outside? If you're a Christian, you bear fruit. You bear fruit of the promise of God.

the story of God's people then is as common for us today. What do we do now? What do we do, Brent?

[32 : 16] Life's a mess. Everyone's dying. Everyone's sick. I don't know if my kids are going to grow up in some communist country.

What do we do? We follow Christ. We bear fruit. How? Not drudgingly, but with anticipation.

Anticipation. Church, let's not fool ourselves. If our works are dead, our faith is dead. If we want to rhyme it, no fruit, no root.

We must repent, we must surrender, and we must follow church. Until the longing of our hearts is fulfilled in the new creation, we long for consummation living today with anticipation.

So where are you today? Maybe you have been longing for so long that it's caused you to grow pretty tired in your walk, or maybe in life in general.

[33 : 41] Maybe you're lacking any interest in spiritual things. You kissed the Bible reading plan with the church long goodbye in February.

You're still back in some chapter in Numbers. Right? Maybe you're lost complete interest in being with the church.

Church attendance has become optional. As if God said, if you're feeling up to it, assemble. We'll let you decide. Maybe your voice that once filled the room has just become a butt that fills a seat.

Have you lost concern for the needs of others? Has your longing caused you to grow tired? Well, this passage has certainly challenged me in my time of reflecting on it.

It only takes a few questions of my own life to really challenge and prod at my conscience. Am I living with anticipation or am I simply living in apathy?

[34 : 58] That woe is me, right? Church, I cannot say this more direct. The Christian life is tough. It's hard.

And if you signed up to be a Christian, the contract says to pick up your cross and follow Him. It's not an option.

It doesn't matter what you think is best. We're commanded. We're commanded to share the gospel. We're commanded to gather together. A life longing for consummation lives today with anticipation.

How do you know you're on track with that? A life bearing fruit in the matter. The more we withdraw, the more desperate our longings will become.

And it will become evident in the lack of fruit being produced in your life and maybe even in your family's life. And church, we can fall into this death trap, but we not only rob the world from witnessing the gospel, we rob God of the glory that he deserves when we fall into that death trap.

[36 : 19] So this Christmas, I pray that the longing of our hearts turn our eyes and fix our eyes through the telescope of God's promise, where we not only see clearly Jesus incarnate, but also the environments that he will renew perfectly someday.

That's enough to keep me excited in all things that this life has to offer. Will it continue to excite you?

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