

Isaiah 65:8-16

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 June 2017

Preacher: Rev Trevor Hunt

[0 : 0 0] Now I want to draw your attention to the chapter that we read, Isaiah 65, and verses 8 to 16 in particular.

And we read there, Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is pound of the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servant's sake, That I may not destroy them all.

I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, And mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

The Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Acre a place for the herds to lie down in, For my people that have sought me.

But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, That prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

[1 : 0 9] Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter, Because when I called, ye did not answer, when I spake, ye did not hear, But did evil before mine ours.

And to choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servant shall eat, but ye shall be hungry.

Behold, my servant shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. Behold, my servant shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed. Behold, my servant shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, And shall howl for vexation of spirit.

And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen. For the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name, That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth.

And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth, Because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

[2 : 2 5] Now already in prayer we have referred to our difficult day. To all kinds of things that are happening all around us, even in our communities, Where God is forgotten and forsaken and ignored.

And we may question in our minds and in our hearts, What's to come, what's to happen. And especially of us as the Lord's people, Who seem to be faithful, And yet seem to be squeezed and pressed on every hand.

I want to look not so much about those who turn away from the Lord, Those who ignore him, But look more positively about God's people, And what is the outcome of their situation.

But we can't help noticing that in this chapter, What precedes verses 8 to 16 that we're going to look at in particular, Is the Lord declaring that he has always stood ready to respond to Israel.

But they've scorned his invitation. And we don't have to look very far to see that kind of thing happening in our community, And certainly throughout our country.

- [4 : 12] Once Scotland stood as the people of the book, the Bible. They were a covenanted people, Who owned the Lord and sought to walk with him by and by.
- But that's no longer true. Our schools have shut him out. Our nation has shut him out.
- And we don't find it amongst the general principles of the political parties any longer. They have rejected and scorned God and the gospel invitation.
- That's extended. Just the same as Israel did in Isaiah's day. Not only have they failed to respond, They have actually provoked God to wrath by shameful practices.
- And we see the same in our own community today. And the consequence of that is that we have brought ourselves as a nation and as a people under the judgment of God.
- [5 : 28] And I believe that that judgment has begun, Though not as bad as it might become if we continue as a people to reject the Lord And to ignore and scorn his invitation to come to him.
- If we continue to, as it were, spit upon Christ, Who has given himself as the Savior.
- But in the midst of that, God still holds out the promise of a future and of a hope of those who would become and be his servants.
- And that's what we see particularly in verses 8 to 10 of this chapter. Those who persist in their evil must be destroyed.
- And although in our present day they seem to prosper and to get away with it all and nothing seems to happen. And so because no thunderbolt comes out of the sky to come and destroy the wicked, They go on from bad to worse.
- [6 : 48] And they think that God isn't there. That God doesn't know. That God doesn't care. That God perhaps can't do anything about it.
- But God assures us through this passage that there is a consequence. And there is a come-up. That God happens. And that he will not tolerate these shameful practices and the scorning of his word and the gospel invitation.
- But he will act. But contrasted to the fate of those who continue in rebellion, there is also a word of hope given to those who walk with him and those who continue in his way.
- Now, he promises that his faithful servants, though sinful in themselves and maybe had ignored God in the past, will pass away and the blessing of the Lord will be theirs if they turn to him and if they come to him through faith in Jesus Christ.
- It's not the end of the story unless they continue in that way. God calls all to repentance and he will receive all who seek him and call upon his name and come to him through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [8 : 34] And so there is a hope here and there's a hope also for God's people themselves as they continue walking before him in faithful obedience under the gospel.
- The future of the faithful shines in brilliant splendour compared to the dark and dismal backdrop of those that have turned away from him and continue to do so.
- There is no hope for them. God has promised that.
- If you like to look at it as a promise, it's a threat. That if we continue in our sin, then judgment will fall and we cannot escape it, even though it may delay.
- But God has promised to give his faithful servants a future and a hope. And it's that that I want us to look at in particular as we look at these verses in this chapter.
- [9 : 56] I think there are three things that we need to look at. In verses 8 to 10, there's the promise deliverance. In verses 11 and 12, there are the consequences that are declared.
- And then in verses 13 to 16, there is a detailing of the contrasted destinies of the two people.

So in verse 8, God begins to assure the faithful remnant that those who love him will be delivered.

And he puts it in these terms of grapes growing in a cluster. The nation is this cluster of grapes.

And some of those grapes are mildew and rotten. And you would think to throw out the whole cluster of grapes.

[11 : 03] But somebody comes along and says, don't destroy it. Don't destroy it all. Because there is blessing in it or there is life in it. Because there are some good grapes.

And it's these good grapes who are God's people. And so what God is saying here is that because of the nation's wickedness, it deserves his wrath and indignation and it deserves judgment.

Yet that judgment will not fall upon God's people who are in the land. And we may be assured too that though our nation may face judgment, and there may be difficult days ahead for us all, yet God will not forget or forsake those of us who are his servants and his people.

And we will not be destroyed with them. God doesn't just come like a great threshing machine threshing everyone. He separates his people.

And we see that kind of picture where Jesus tells in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 13, for instance, where Jesus tells about the tares and the wheat.

[12 : 29] and he says to his people to the apostles in particular don't start pulling up the tares because you might pull up the wheat God will be with it God knows the hearts of everyone and he will just bring judgment on those who deserve that judgment but the faithful remnant will be spared they're the wheat or the good seed and although there's a culling the life of his people will be preserved so that though we as a nation are calling upon ourselves judgment yet God will also preserve and bless his people the original significance of blessing is in terms of giving power to increase so these grapes have a future life-giving properties in them and that is in red wine a symbol of life and of joy and we see then that there is this prospect of this blessing this increase in the red wine that's us and we may be a remnant and that's really what we are these days we are a remnant of the former glories of the church in Scotland but we are nevertheless a remnant and in us is the prospects the future prospects of life we are the red wine of these grapes and so we are part of this remnant in terms of Israel of course the remnant were those who came out of the captivity in Babylon but not everyone who came out of the captivity as a remnant is part of this the remnant are those who are truly

God's servants those who believe in his promises enough to obey and to trust him verse 9 promises to bless the spiritual descendants of the faithful life-giving remnant so our offspring our descendants are also included in this promise of blessing and it's important of course that we teach our children and our grandchildren and our nephews and nieces the gospel so that they might catch as it were the life that there is in the gospel it's our duty and responsibility to do that we are to have this life-giving property to those especially who are nearest and dearest to us so that verse 9 says in other words different words

I will bring forth offspring from Jacob and an heir of my mountains from Judah even my chosen one shall inherit it and my servants shall dwell there God will bring forth new life from his faithful people but we are also to act as witnesses to the wider context as well as to our relatives and loved ones now he speaks about his mountain that they will possess God's mountains and this is God's high places and it's a sign or a symbol of of the church of the gospel places the high places that are under God and there's a blessing promised to those who walk in these high places then we come to verse 10 which is another encouraging promise that says

Sharon shall be pasture land for flocks and the valley of Achor a resting place for herds for my people who seek me now in the fertile Mediterranean coastal plain of Sharon south of Mount Carmel is excellent land for agriculture and this represents the extent of the westward inheritance given by Moses of the land goes to the Mediterranean Sea in the east is the valley of Achor west of Jericho and represents the easterly extent of the holy land still does and that's the area that's referred to here this is the heritage of Israel of the remnant of the faithful remnant naturally it's a barren place but it has become a resting place for herds and the whole country is fruitful giving this picture of prosperity of blessing of God's presence with his people

God promises then to revive restore and improve the dwelling places of those who seek him and I believe that we will see we may not see it personally but the church God's people that come after us perhaps will see blessing yet and we shouldn't despair God hasn't forgotten us or forsaken us he will arise at some point now there's a consequence is declared in verses 11 12 verse 11 depicts those who rebelled against God and his ways it says but you who forsake the Lord who forget my holy mountain who set a table for fortune and who fill cups with mixed wine for destiny the King James doesn't quite make that clear but these two fortune and destiny are the names of gods that Israel worshipped in their attempts to know and manipulate the future and we see that these gods are still with us part of it's in the national lottery and other lotteries and in the superstitions that people have to seek to bring good luck good fortune to them and to bring them a good destiny as they would hope for and see and people still serve these gods they're false gods now they're not the gods that we are to serve there is only one god of course the Lord God Almighty and it is he whom we are to seek and to remain faithful to but all around us people have abandoned pure worship and that covenant obedience of our forefathers and even worse they've gone seeking the blessing of other gods pagan gods fortune and fate and food and drink were set before these idols in an effort to please them and to propitiate them so in verse 12 we see

[21 : 34] I destined you for the sword and all you will bow down to the slaughter because I called but you did not answer I spoke but you did not hear and you did evil in my sight and chose that in which I did not delight so God is saying you sought fortune you sought a destiny but your destiny is the sword it's judgment because you have bowed down to these gods I called you but you took no notice and you followed these false gods and so this punishment will come upon this people now the third part is verses 13 to 16 where we see a contrast of the destinies and we see a description there where the remnant are compared to the disobedient and the willfully those who willfully rejected the law verse 13 begins God's pronounced blessing on the faithful and curses on the guilty he says therefore thus says the Lord God behold my servants will eat but you'll be hungry behold my servants will drink but you will be thirsty behold my servants will rejoice but you will be put to shame so where the faithless and rebellious seek food and drink and joy they won't find you but God's people will they will have the provision of the law now this eating and drinking and rejoicing is not it's partly material and physical but particularly it is symbolic of blessing we're taking this from the old testament which is full of symbolism in this way that a good meal and having plenty of water and to be rejoicing are signs of blessing God's blessing so God is saying that he will bless his people but the non-Christian the scoffer and the mocker will not be blessed and I think we can see something of that even in our own day and age although it's rebelling against God and thinks it's doing well you can see how poor spiritual people are and how lacking in blessing they are despite all the money they have and all the physical things that they have in their rebelling against God they're not doing well and so they seek more more ways to be joyful more ways to have the pleasures of this world and the things of this world but they are hungry hungry for the bread of life thirsty for the water of life they don't have these blessings and so they wander in a search to satisfy their soul that innermost longing that they have which really should be placed in God but instead there's emptiness and

there's a lack and this will increase the further people turn away from God the hungrier in their souls and spirits they will get but we are satisfied with the Lord the Lord is still with us and fills our life and fills that that innermost longing that we have because it's a longing after him and he's there and we rejoice in him that's not to say we don't have times of difficulty and times when he seems far away and times of doubt and such but generally we know within whom we believe and we are confident in him and satisfied with him and then verse 14 says behold my servant will shout joyfully with a glad heart but you will cry out with a heavy heart and you will wail with a broken spirit the life of the non-Christian is a desperately miserable one it's a lonely one too and they have heavy hearts we see the increases of stress related ailments that people have we see them that loneliness is a desperate situation for communities whereas we as a church as the people of

God have each other we should look after each other and we should be there for one another and support one another and this is the blessing of the Lord the Lord though above all is the one whom we are companions to the one who in whom we trust and rest and the one who bids us come to him and take his yoke upon us and to cast our burdens upon him and in this he's faithful and then we see in verse 15 it says you will leave your name for a curse to my chosen ones that's those who are rebels and those who have rejected God you will leave your name for a curse to my chosen ones and the

Lord God will slay you but my servants will be called by another name it's not clear what that name is but it is certain that we as God's people have a common name we are Christ's people Christians and we have this common name among us and we are with other believers all together Christians and we have this name it's the name of Christ and so I believe that this is fulfilled in this and more than just simply being a name it's all that goes with that our salvation and redemption and such but it's common to us all as the

Lord's people if we belong to Christ and then the last verse here says that there's a new day coming because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth and he who swears in the earth will swear by the God of truth because the former troubles are forgotten and because they're hidden from my sight and if you go on reading again and recalling what we read just now there's a description of the blessings of the people of God and in that situation whatever it means of the lion eating straw and of the peace that there is and it's a general indication it seems to me of blessing and of peace and of the prosperity that comes in the

[30 : 33] Lord well let me just finish by asking you again this question are you the Lord's are you really his or are you just a good church girl have you perhaps been coming to church all your life brought up to it and you've continued to come this way but you've never engaged with Christ you speak about him perhaps you can use the language of the church but you don't know him in your heart and in a sense you're rebelling against him you're rejecting his gospel call but you must have heard many many times and you're just shutting him out of your mind and out of your heart and you're saying no to him again let me urge you don't go much longer like that turn to him know his blessing know his salvation trust him give him your heart and if you've done that then be encouraged these are difficult days and maybe who knows we may see worse yet to come but the Lord is with us and he will not forsake us he will arise and he will bless his people his church will grow and I believe it will fill the earth one day that we may not see but be encouraged to believe and to trust him and his servants to come let us share with others this wonderful good news this great hope and encourage and urge them to also come and enjoy these fruits by believing in the Lord

Jesus Christ and heeding the invitation to come to him and live let us pray my what what is how what what I how to three those