

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 11 December 2022
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Advent: Jesus is coming
Passage: Isaiah 35:1-10
Title: Gladness and joy await

Outline:

1 The Lord is angry

But this means:

- 2 Reversal**
- 3 Rescue**
- 4 Restoration**
- 5 Renewal**
- 6 Redemption**

- Are you annoyed – even **angry** at the **injustices** in the world?
- That someone who murdered his **wife** so he could be with their children's **baby sitter** escaped justice for 40 years?
- Angry at a **mistrial** for an alleged rapist due to jury **interference**?
- Angry at a regime which continue to bomb their **neighbouring country** because they'd like to annex more of their **land**?
- Jon and Merran are friends of mine – they lost their son Jack on MH17 gunned down by two **Russians** and a **Ukrainian** – those perpetrators have been **convicted** in absentia but my friends will never them locked up. Does that evoke anger?
- Are you angry that children will **die** today from malnutrition whilst so many of us will discard **out of date food**
- That on average in Australia, one woman a week is killed by either their **former** or **present intimate partner**?
- At gun deaths in the USA?
- At the endless promotion of **gambling** which ruins families
- Or the proliferic availability of **porn** which denigrates sexual intimacy?
- Are you angry that Christians schools are prevented from employing Christian **people**?
- **Angry the sexual abuse of children by clergy and church workers?**
- And **scripture** is not permitted in school hours in Victoria?
- That **euthanasia** is now available in all states – and soon – all territories in **Australia**...
- And that many **tiny babies** continue to be **aborted** for **no good reason**
- Angry that God is **ignored** or **sidelined** in **public** and Christians **margenlised** or **ostrascised** in **society**?
/
- Do these realities **anger you?** //

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- They anger **God!**

1 THE LORD IS ANGRY

- Yes we are looking at Isaiah 35 today – but similar to last week when we had to see Isaiah **11** in the context of **Isaiah 10**, we will only appreciate and drink in the **glorious significance** of Isaiah **35** today, if we understand the context in Isaiah 34
- We're back 7 centuries before Jesus... and the world is in a mess – and God's own people are in a mess
- Listen to what the prophet says in Ch 34
- *Come near, you nations, and listen;
pay attention, you peoples!
Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
the world, and all that comes out of it!*
² **The LORD is angry** with all nations;
his wrath is on all their armies.
- And now I have to warn you – what follows in Ch 34 – well – we read and weep – it's devastating...
- From the second part of v2
- *He will totally destroy^[a] them,
he will give them over to slaughter.*
³ *Their slain will be thrown out,
their dead bodies will stink;
the mountains will be soaked with their blood.*
⁴ *All the stars in the sky will be dissolved
and the heavens rolled up like a scroll;
all the starry host will fall
like withered leaves from the vine,
like shriveled figs from the fig tree.*
- **It's just awful...**
- **But /// the Lord's anger leads to the Lord's righteous action**
- so where God is **not acknowledged** or **served** or **loved**...
- where he is **ignored** or **rebelled against**
- where he is **sidelined** and **rejected**...
- then God will **act**
- and his **action** at the end of all time... will be **just //**
- if you say to God – by one means or another – up **front** or by simply **ignoring him** – that you want **nothing** to do with **him**...
- ...he will say – OK – **you'll have nothing to do with me**...
- And there will be a **wholesale destruction** of this world – people will come to an **end** – this **earth** – even the **stars** will fall like withered leaves falling off a **vine ///**
- This world will be **no more... one day** – all that we see around **us** – will be **gone**...

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- So /// a **question** – how does all that I’ve explored so far, fit with the **title** of this **sermon**: ‘*Gladness and Joy*’?
- Because if you are in relationship with God; because you’ve turned to put your trust in Jesus, the **end of this world** will NOT be YOUR **end**!
- And God’s righteousness anger will mean everything that angers **you** – such as some of those things I listed at the beginning – will be **addressed... once and for all...!!! //**
- As God intervenes to end **injustice** and put all **wrongs, right**, there is **gladness and joy for us!**
- Let me show you – what this means.... if you’ll please have Isaiah 35 open...
- We see a magnificent

2 REVERSAL

- Ch 35:1 – here is what will emerge from the devastation of judgement...
- *The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
... they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.*
- It’s similar to the shoot from the stump of Jesse – it’s the same picture...
- God’s judgement you see, brings a **reversal** of **fortunes**...
- Yes, there will be **devastation** – but because of that, we will see all the more **clearly** – the **glory** and **splendour** of **God**
- Like when a devastating fire goes through a mountain area – but because the fire has cleared away so much in the way of trees and undergrowth – you can see the **glory** of the **mountains behind** all the more **wonderfully!**
- Or do you remember three years ago when our land was **brown and stressed and devastated...?**
- And yet now is – **green and lush and fertile... the situation** has been **reversed**
- **That** is what God will do through his **judgement**...
- And we will see and rejoice in the **revelation** of God’s **glory which we will now see and grasp with crystal clear clarity**...
- And through his judging work... he will

3 RESCUE

- Back to the passage – v3

*Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;*

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*with divine retribution
he will come to save you."*

- Perhaps with that awful list with which I started, YOU might have **feeble hands** and feel **weak** at the **knees**...
- You may be **fearful** at the **prospect of judgement**...
- But here is the promised... – *be strong – do not fear* – why? - because God will **come** – and **yes** with **vengeance** and **divine retribution**... **BUT //**
- **Through** it all – **he will come to SAVE you!**
- Friends this is **glorious news**...! //
- If you trust Jesus and what he did in his death and resurrection... than when that **great and terrible day of the Lord comes**... **that** will be the day of your **final rescue**...
- Like the helicopters lifting those in peril off the rooves of Eugowra houses... we will be **safe** through the **devastation**, through what Jesus has **already done //**
- Jesus **already** faced God's **judgement** for our **rebellion** in our place on the cross...
- So **judgement** will mean **rescue** for us...!
- But – wait – there's more ///

4.RESTORATION

- Have a look with me at v5
*Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.*
- Remember when Jesus was right here on planet earth, he opened the eyes of the blind and unstopped deaf ears? Remember the lame walking and the mute talking?
- That was a **deposit** – a **guarantee** – a **glimpse** of what was to come when he **returns**...
- There will be no need for the NDIS in eternity...
- Everyone now who knows disability or incapacity – will be perfectly restored in the new heavens and new earth...
- For everything that the total sum of sin and rebellion produced in the world because the fall... will be restored...
- But there's more

5.RENEWAL

- Have a look with me at v8
*And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;*

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*it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.*

- **We will be renewed in that holiness which comes from Jesus... in Jesus' holiness...**
- Our battle with **temptation** and **sin** will be **done...**
- We will **never** go there **again...**
- And you and I with **relief** – with a **clean heart** – a **pure heart** – will walk on the **highway of holiness...** where the **wicked** will be no **more...**
- What is your greatest **temptation** – the area in which you're most likely to **fail**??
- Can you **imagine** – that because you will have been totally **renewed...** you will walk now in the way of **holiness...** how **wonderful...** perfectly **renewed** in the image of **God!**!??
- **Pure, spotless,** without **blame** or **blemish...**!
- Are you liking the **sound** of **this...**?
- **Reversal, rescue, restoration, renewal...**
- And finally – the **judgement** of God on the world will **mean...**

6. REDEMPTION

- Look with me at the very last part of v9 – talking of this highway of holiness, Isaiah says
- *only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*
- Only the **redeemed** will be there... only those the Lord has **rescued...**
- And what an amazing **setting** that will be....
- A time of **singing...**
- Of great **joy** – indeed **everlasting joy...**
- **Gladness and joy** will **overtake** them.... ///
- Life doesn't seem like that now does it?
- It seems often – **hardship and loneliness** overtake us
- ... **misery and health issues** over take us
- **Family conflict and financial stress** overtake us...
- **Depression and anxiety** overtake us...
- But – note this **description...** //
- Not only will **gladness and joy overtake** us...

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- We read that **sorrow** and **sighing** will **flee away**...
- Can you **imagine**??
- What breaks **your** heart today?
- What causes you **sorrow**?
- What causes you to – let out a **heavy sigh**....
- **ALL that – all that – will go** on this day – because of God's **judgement** – in the moment of **Jesus'** return...
- **Overtaken** by **gladness and joy** – **sorrow and sighing will have no place** – and **will flee away**.... !!
- Oh brothers and sisters.... What a **time** this will **be**...!
- What a time when the Lord's **anger** will be **released**... his anger at **sin and rebellion**...
- But as he deals with those who don't want anything to do with him... it will mean for all who DO... a magnificent
- **Reversal**...
- A generous **rescue**...
- A marvellous **restoration**
- A complete **renewal**
- And total **redemption**... ///

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- Let me see if I can sum up and apply this for us...
 - We are in **Advent**
 - We recall that Jesus is **coming**...
 - In our first two weeks from Matt 24 and Isaiah 11 – we have seen that we must be **ready**...
 - ... and we must look **forward**...
 - Today we have seen that God's judgement – when through Jesus – evil is **defeated** – **crushed** – **killed** – done away **with** – will result for us... // **gladness and joy - overtaking us**... and **sorrow and sighing fleeing away!** //
 - But my **final** question...
 - Who is the **'us'**?
 - **WHO** is it for whom the Lord's righteous anger will mean **reversal, rescue, restoration, renewal and redemption**?
 - When he **comes** – will YOU see only the devastation he brings?? OR will you see the **glory** of the **Lord**?
 - Will you have reason to **fear** – to go **weak** at the knees? OR will he come to **save you**?
 - Will you be on that **highway of holiness** – renewed perfectly in God's likeness?
 - **Will** God's judgement mean **gladness and joy** for **you**?

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- Or only more **sorrow and sighing?** //
- How can you ever know?
- How can you be sure? /////
- Well – those of you who have been listening to me for a while... should be screaming at the screen by now...
- ...and telling me...
- Yes, Mark – we **can** know
- Yes, Mark – we **can** be sure...
- Because **undeserving** as we are... when we said ‘sorry’ for all we’ve mucked up, and decided to trust in Jesus’ staggering rescue in his death and resurrection, **at that moment**, we were **rescued** from sin and death and put right with God for all **eternity**...
- And we cannot wait for **joy and gladness** to **overtake** our **sorrow and sighing**...!!!! /
- But let me finish here
- ... if you’ve **never** said ‘sorry’
- **Never** put your **trust** in what **Jesus** did for you
- **Never known** the comfort and assurance of forgiveness nor the promise of eternal life...
- **Today’s the day**... ///
- Will **your** future be the **devestation** of the **judgement** and destruction of Isaiah **34**??
- Or will your future be the **reversal, rescue, restoration, renewal and redemption** of Isaiah **35**? ///
- Jesus is coming... **joy and gladness** await...
- **Sorrow and sighing** will **flee away!**