

Perfect Faithfulness to the Poor and Needy

Isaiah 25

Isaiah 25:1-12 (ESV) O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. [2] For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the foreigners' palace is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. [3] Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. [4] For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall, [5] like heat in a dry place. You subdue the noise of the foreigners; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down. [6] On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. [7] And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. [8] He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. [9] It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation." [10] For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trampled down in his place, as straw is trampled down in a dunghill. [11] And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim, but the Lord will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of his hands. [12] And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, to the dust.

Introduction

- A. What is it about God that folks find most offensive? What is it about God that you find most offensive? My best guess would be the following options (one for eternity; two for this life):
 - 1. That God is a God of wrath who issues judgments that are eternal (not all are saved).
 - 2. That God allows pain and suffering (distress and duress) in this life.
 - 3. That God has not been good enough to me.
- B. Isaiah 25 tells us that God is **Perfect Faithfulness to the Weak and Needy**. That is good news. The opposite is also true: God will lay low those who persist in their pride (bad news).
 - 1. In this sermon we'll look at our praise, our future, and our outcome. Isaiah is regularly pointing to this life and the life that comes after this life.

I. Our praise (from Isaiah 25:1-5).

- A. Remember where Isaiah was in chapter 24. Judgment is coming on the whole earth, a song of praise breaks out, and Isaiah says, "woe is me." He seems to sense the terrors of judgment.
- B. Now Isaiah breaks into praise and worship. I will exalt you, I will praise your name. Here is my question. Why?
 - 1. I get the terrors of impending judgment. I get that the world is devastated. I get woe is me. How can Isaiah praise God? We need to remember Isaiah 24:23.

Isaiah 24:23 (ESV) Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders.

Ex: Just like the apostle Paul turns to worship when his mind is enraptured by thoughts about God, so too does Isaiah.

- C. But there are three more reasons why Isaiah praises and exalts God.
 - 1. One, God has done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. Here Isaiah has in mind the glories of the gospel (see verse 9). Isaiah writes as if it finished.

2. Two, God has made the city a heap. Why does that call forth praise? God renders judgments on nations to lead others to Christ.

Ex: When man trusts in his own strength he produces things like the tower of Babel. It must be torn down for folks to turn to God. We tend to trust our strength.

3. God is a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm, and shade from the heat. Get this.

- God is perfect faithfulness to the poor and needy in the midst of poverty (spiritual), distress, storms and heat.
- God is not perfect faithfulness because He removes those things from our lives now. God is faithful because He is with us and He will sustain us.

Ex: If we live long enough we will suffer. A loved one will get sick, a loved one will die, money won't always abound, we praise God for salvation.

Habakkuk 3:16-19 (ESV) I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. [17] Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, [18] yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. [19] God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

D. Isaiah praises and exalts God because praise is the highest form of faith.

1. Our hearts are not right if we only praise and exalt God Sunday morning. True saints of God worship and exalt God no matter the circumstance.
2. Religious people will only worship God externally when it is convenient to do so.

II. Our future (from Isaiah 25:6-8).

A. The Lord will make a rich feast for all peoples (folks from every language and nation). This glorious feast features:

1. Rich food (not kosher - that has been done away with and fulfilled by Christ).
2. Fine wine (some of us can appreciate this more than others).

B. The Lord will swallow up death which is spread over every people and person.

1. Here we see one of the clearest references to the resurrection of the dead and to heaven that is in the OT.
2. It is so clear you think about the Revelation of John. Only Isaiah is prophesying some 700 years plus ahead of John.

C. Our future is that death is swallowed up forever. God will wipe away tears and reproach. Our battle against sin will be no more.

1. It is a feast I don't want to miss. Do you? This leads to a description of our outcome.

III. Our outcome (from Isaiah 25:9-12).

A. There are two outcomes. The first is salvation.

1. Behold, this is our God, and we have waited on Him. Therefore, let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.
2. Our circumstances are not final or ultimate. God and eternity are ultimate. So we fix our eyes on our salvation, that is our boast, confidence and faith. We rejoice!

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3. This is why the loud voice in heaven can say regarding the saints:

Revelation 12:10-11 (ESV) And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. [11] And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

4. What is the dearest thing in your life? The Lord is a jealous God and we cannot serve two masters.

B. The second outcome is the judgment of God. There are only two outcomes (in or after this life) and they are mercy or judgment.

1. In Christ, mercy! In pride (religious works that we think saves us), judgment.
2. Moab will be brought low. The statement Isaiah makes in verse 10 is crude and vulgar. Were I to say what is really being said here many of you would take offense.
3. Pride is far more offensive to God. Moab is nothing but is self-impressed.

Ex: More absurd than me thinking I can beat Tiger Woods in golf.

Close

A. The world preaches to us and tells us to live for the here and now. Collect everything, hoard everything, get all you can. This life is all that matters.

1. But God warns us not to love the world or anything in the world.

B. God says this life matters but the greatest problem we face is our sin and pride. Will we trust God in every circumstance to see us through or will we say, "No thanks, I got it."

1. God is perfect faithfulness to the poor and needy who trust in Him. They don't need happy circumstances to trust and praise Him. They rest in their salvation.
2. Do you?

Discussion Questions

1. Recount the wonderful things God has done in your life (include your conversion).
2. Why does God allow trials and hardships to happen to His people?
3. What do you expect heaven to be like?
4. Describe what it looks like to wait on God.
5. Why does God hate pride?