

## **Good News of Happiness** Isaiah 52

### **Introduction**

- A. I begin with a simple question. Are you happy? It is a simple and direct question. The answer should be yes or no (perhaps some are undecided). Are you happy?
  - 1. This simple question is not easy to answer. This is because we aren't quite sure where to draw the line on the continuum. Am I happy enough? Could I be more happy?
  - 2. For some of us we're tempted to say that we would be happier ... if only.
    - The Eagles win a Super Bowl (the Phillies did win a WS)
    - I got my way every time
    - My bank account grew massively larger (lottery winners get a one year bump)
    - Everyone treated me with respect
    - You get the idea. What would make you happier?
- B. When we start thinking about happiness (and most of us don't) it begins to dawn on us that we're not quite sure what we're talking about. What is happiness?
  - 1. Happiness (def) is "a state of well-being characterized by emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy." Also, good fortune and prosperity.
  - 2. Happiness in us is observable to others. In fact, those closest to us are in the best position to answer the question, "are you happy?"

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands ... stomp your feet ... say amen, if you're happy and you know it then your life will surely show it.

- C. Where do we get happiness? Where do we get contentment and intense joy? Just about every person we know wants to be happier.
  - 1. Isaiah 52 is a great place to get happy. Isaiah 52 proclaims **Good News of Happiness**. For the Christian happiness is found in our glorious salvation.
  - 2. Now, Isaiah 52 is an awkward chapter. It would serve us better if it began at Isaiah 51:17 and ended at Isaiah 52:12. Isaiah 52:13 begins a five-stanza poem that belongs together.
- D. We'll take Isaiah 52 as it is because most of us read the Bible chapter by chapter. We will examine the types of words Isaiah uses to bring happiness.

### **I. In Isaiah 52:1-6 there is a comforting word.**

- A. Awake, awake, put on strength, put on beautiful garments, shake yourself from the dust, loose the bonds from your neck ... to a people on their way to exile in about 100 years.
- B. How do you do all of that when the circumstances of life look very bleak? You're only able to do this list if you have God's perspective on the situation.
  - 1. God is able to speak a present word of comfort to His captive daughter Zion.
- C. Here is what you need to know as someone belonging to God.

1. God is for us and not against us (God is continuing to speak; He has not thrown His hands in the air and walked away in disgust despite their sins).
  2. We are loved and valued by God (your enemies shall no longer come near you).
  3. God will move in your behalf (Isaiah 26:12 - You have indeed done for us all of our works).
- D. The question becomes this. Who's perspective do you have? When we have God's perspective we wait on the Lord (expectation, obedience, His will).
1. When it comes to waiting on the Lord one incredible example is Anna.  
  
Ex: 84 year old widow, did not depart from the temple, fasting and praying night and day, waiting for the salvation of the Lord. Anna put on strength.
  2. Expectation leads to holiness because our eyes are fixed on the Lord and His promises. The expectant person is a happy person.
- E. In that day God says His people will know Him. Here am I. Knowing God is eternal life. Eternal life is joy forever in the presence of God.
1. When will this happen? Keep reading.

## II. In Isaiah 52:7-10 there is a joyful word.

- A. The word picture painted is of a long-distance runner coming to bring good news. What is the good news?
1. Peace
  2. Good news of happiness
  3. Salvation
  4. Your God reigns (dispel the gloom and the doubts)!
- B. The response to this extraordinary news is an outbreak of joyful singing. For the Christian happiness is found in our glorious salvation. Nothing matters more.
1. The Lord has comforted His people. The ends of the earth will see His salvation!
  2. The Bible is the only religious book that has a prophecy proven and fulfilled.
- C. You can hardly help but see the Christmas story here.
1. In Mary's remarkable song (mother of Jesus) she mentions this:  
  
Luke 1:51 (ESV) He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
  2. In Zechariah's song he says this:  
  
Luke 1:68-69 (ESV) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people 69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.
  3. And Simeon, a devout man, who waited on the Lord, prophesied this:  
  
Luke 2:29-32 (ESV) Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes

have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

D. In Isaiah's view how will God bring all of this about? Keep reading.

### III. In Isaiah 52:11-12 there is future word.

A. Salvation to Isaiah's listeners is promised but it is not yet present. Prophets speak in a way that flattens time. Today and tomorrow blend together as accomplished fact.

1. When you are in exile depart, depart, go out from there.

Ex: When you left Egypt you took out gold and riches (became an idol). Now you will take nothing with you except the vessels of the Lord (the account is in Ezra 1).

2. You shall not go out in haste. But the Lord will go before you and behind you. God will be with you when you come out. That is a comfort.

B. In our time the way we live regarding the future is critical to our happiness.

1. Purify yourselves ... don't love the world.

2. The second coming of Christ lingers and waits. We are not leaving in haste. But, sometime Jesus Christ will return and He desires to find faith.

Ex: When I spent 10 weeks apart from Beth last summer I longed to see her again. Our love for Jesus is seen in our desire to be with Him.

C. The exile in Babylon is to us a picture of our salvation. We are delivered from the holy wrath of God into a glorious salvation forever.

### IV. In Isaiah 52:13-15 there is THE WORD.

A. We will read this section again next week because it belongs with chapter 53.

1. Here we meet the servant once again (the 4<sup>th</sup> servant song).

B. Behold (look and see), He will act wisely. This servant will be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. The servant is Jesus Christ.

1. He comes to us as child. Jesus Christ is both God and human.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

John 1:14 (ESV) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. How was this good news of happiness received? Jesus Christ was rejected.

C. His rejection took Him to the cross where, as Isaiah writes, "His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance."

1. The suffering servant will be crushed by God. Christ is crushed by God to bring us good news of happiness - our salvation.
2. This salvation is received by faith through grace. It comes to those who see their sinfulness and their need for a Savior.

### **Close**

- A. For the Christian happiness is found in our glorious salvation.
  1. In every circumstance God promises to be at work in us and we cannot be separated from His love come what may. We are happy conquerors.

The happiest people the world has ever known have always been those who have had the glorious view of salvation, and who have seen that they are 'in him' - that is the glorious New testament phrase, 'in Christ' - and that they are lost in him. And so they live as more than conquerors in this world and are immune to most of the things that are finally responsible for all our unhappiness and our miseries. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in *Saved in Eternity*, p 96

### **Application Questions**

Title: Good News of Happiness

Text: Is 52

Are you happy? Why or why not?

Describe what things would make you happier. What does this say about you?

Why is salvation our ultimate source of happiness?

What do we do to purify ourselves?

When you think about the death of Jesus on the cross what things come into your mind?