

Message – Something's Coming – July 2020 - Isaiah

Something's comin' I don't know what it is
 But it is gonna be great
 I got a feeling there's a miracle due gonna come true, comin' to me
 Could it be, yes it could
 Something's comin', something good
 If I can wait

Do you believe that? Do you believe something's coming? Something good? Something new? Can you believe that? Can you trust that?

It's pretty difficult right now – for many of us – isn't it? To believe something good – something new is about to happen? That something new can come out of all of - this? Cause things kind of seem like they are a mess right now.

So far 2020 has not been kind to us – we are all feeling the effects of the pandemic and the quarantine everything from death to loss of jobs, loss of marriages – and more recently of the gross hatred that is destroying our communities – the horrific racism that continues to permeate our culture – it's been a rough 6 months

Can we find – can we trust that something new – something better – something good can come out of all of this?

We have all of that going on around us and many of us are fighting our own individual battles – illness – family issues – just personal distress

The Christie home has been in a bit of a mess this year – tough circumstances with family relationships – roof had to be replaced – toilet leaked in the bathroom – mold – that had to be replaced – we took a little family trip – and I do totally understand that we are blessed to take a vacation but let me tell you about our first night:

Wrong airport

Tornado warnings

Rental car

Nothing open – hadn't eaten

Closed hotel

That's how it started

And then we came home to a major problem in our home

Bedbugs

And there have just been a lot of changes in my life over the last year or so – important people have moved onto other things – circumstances have changed with my kids, my parents, my work – not all bad – just different – and as I approach my 50th bday – I often wonder who am I – where do I belong – what's next

Didn't I just say I'm turning 50? I thought these were the thoughts of a 20-year-old

What is going on?

And I am not alone – all of us are feeling confused, frustrated, defeated, weary at some level...

But over the past several weeks I've had multiple people say to me – maybe God has something new – maybe God is about to do something new – God has got something new – something's coming

Can I believe that? Can I trust that? Can you?

With all of it – in the world – in our communities – in our own individual lives – can we believe and trust that – God is doing something new – wow – I hope we can

God himself says it – in Isaiah 43 – it's like he is speaking to me – to us – for this time and for this place – he says in verse 18

18 "But forget all that—

it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.

19 For I am about to do something new.

See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?

Let me read it again – let those words sink in:

18 "But forget all that—

it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.

19 For I am about to do something new.

See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?

Something's coming...

Those are words of expectation – words of anticipation - words of hope

And that is exactly why we are in this series – Didn't See that Coming – looking at the book of Isaiah – to find words of hope in the midst unprecedented circumstances – to see blessing in the midst of hardship and pain – to see God working in the midst of frustration, confusion and fear

The Israelites had pretty much hit rock bottom as Isaiah is speaking to them and his words for them, I believe are perfect words for us during what might be deemed as our "rock bottom" – in so many ways

This is part of our BYOB series – bring your own bible – so I hope you have yours in front of you as we get ready to dig in – and in this series we always look at 3 worlds
The world behind the text – what was going on at the time the book of Isaiah was written

The world of the text – what does the text itself tell us

The world in front of the text – how does all of this apply to us right here and right now

Before we dig into the text itself – let's look at what was happening at the time it was written – the world behind the text

And to do that – I am basically just going to restate what Tim told us last week about the world behind the text – because honestly there is no one I trust more when it comes to knowledge of the Bible than Tim Ayers – he is our own breathing biblical commentary (Tim and Barry both did a great job – listen to their messages)

The Babylonians conquered the nation of Judah in 586 B.C., and after destroying the entire city of Jerusalem, they gathered up a good number of the conquered Israelites and hauled them back to Babylon. Now the Babylonians didn't take just any Jew – they chose about 10,000 of the prominent, wealthy, talented, elite Jewish people. They didn't allow the Israelites to bring their sacred religious scrolls with them, but they did allow them to settle in the same area and to gather together and talk and remember and sing and keep as much of their culture and religion alive as possible. But they still deeply and desperately longed for home. To most Jews, having to live in Babylon was awful... it was a tragic circumstance that seemed would never end.

"A tragic circumstance that seemed would never end..."

Seems like those are words that could be used to describe kind of where we are today...pandemic

The Israelites had for years had a hard time trusting God and this period of exile is no different

So that's a little world behind the text – and I believe as we understand that world we clearly understand that the words that come from the passage of Isaiah we are looking at today – were words for the Israelites for such a time that they were in and are words for us for such a time as we are in...

Now I'm not trying to say most of us have it as bad as the Israelites in exile – but it has been a bleak time and for some of you maybe you are sitting there saying – actually I feel a lot like they probably did

Rock bottom

You may find yourself right now having a hard time finding hope – having a hard time trusting God – but something's coming

The first week of this series Barry – started by saying **God is still working**

Isaiah 40:5:

Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

and all people will see it together.

The LORD has spoken!"

And then last week Tim continued that theme and added the idea to remember what God has done for you in the past

Isaiah 46:9

Remember the things I have done in the past.

For I alone am God!

I am God, and there is none like me.

And we're going to add to those ideas this week as we continue to look at the book of Isaiah. When you are faced with those moments that you didn't see coming – you Remember God is still working

Remember what he's done for you in the past

And you prepare for what's to come – something's coming – something new/good

Let's see what God has to say about that in Isaiah chapter 43 – starting in verse 14 – this is the prophet Isaiah speaking on behalf of God

Isaiah 43:14

The title of this section is:

The Lord's Promise of Victory

It already sounds hopeful – something's coming

Verse 14

¹⁴ This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

“For your sakes I will send an army against Babylon,
forcing the Babylonians^[a] to flee in those ships they are so proud of.

¹⁵ I am the LORD, your Holy One,
Israel's Creator and King.

¹⁶ I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters,
making a dry path through the sea.

¹⁷ I called forth the mighty army of Egypt
with all its chariots and horses.

I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned,
their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.

Stop there for a moment. Just so you know – people – I'm going to deliver you – I'll send an army to fight against Babylon

And you know why – because I'm God and I can

Verse 15

¹⁵ I am the LORD, your Holy One,
Israel's Creator and King.

“your Holy One” stresses the uniqueness of the LORD as the covenant God. And “creator of Israel” recalls Sinai where they made a covenant with God and underscores the fact that they owe their existence to Him. The creator. The expression “your King” makes the point that they/we owe absolute allegiance to God. Our king.

I'm your king – I can do what needs to be done – how do you know – because I've done it before – remember Egypt?

¹⁶ I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters,
making a dry path through the sea.

¹⁷ I called forth the mighty army of Egypt
with all its chariots and horses.

I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned,
their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.

The LORD crushed the Egyptian army out of existence because they were chasing His people to enslave or destroy them. Now Israel should be reminded of that great deliverance that made them a nation in the first place. God is fully able to deliver His people from world powers.

I brought you out of slavery once already – did you forget?

Remember what I did in the past

Verse 18

¹⁸ “But forget all that—
it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.

¹⁹ For I am about to do something new.

See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?

I will make a pathway through the wilderness.

I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

²⁰ The wild animals in the fields will thank me,
the jackals and owls, too,
for giving them water in the desert.

Yes, I will make rivers in the dry wasteland
so my chosen people can be refreshed.

²¹ I have made Israel for myself,
and they will someday honor me before the whole world.

Wait a minute – forget all that? What? You just reminded us of all sorts of ways you have delivered us and taken care of us and now forget it? This shows us that there is a sense in which we *must remember* the past, in terms of God’s great work on our behalf. There is also a sense in which we *forget* the past, with all its discouragement and defeat, and move on to what God has for us in the future. God is going to do something new and wonderful. Live for the future! Because verse 19

I am about to do something new

Something's coming...

Staying stuck in the past can keep us from the **new thing** God wants to do. And this could mean something completely new or a transformation of something that exists. If Israel stayed stuck in the discouragement of Babylon, they would never look for the **new thing** of release from exile. Is it possible we could work against the new thing God wants to do? Because we are so lost in or discouraged by our current or past circumstances or situations? Do we have eyes to see it?

Do you not see it?

“Will you stay in step with My Spirit? When He leads into something new, will I not see it – will I not know it? Will I miss it?”

And you don't want to miss this – guess what I will do – verse 20

I will make a pathway through the wilderness.

I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

the LORD is going to bring a marvelous new deliverance through the desert. The “new thing” will be a road through the wilderness (compare the road through the sea in the previous verses).

This passage has in view Israel's prophesied deliverance from Babylon, but also more than that. It also has in mind the ultimate deliverance, brought by the Messiah. Can you imagine if they missed all of that because they were stuck in the past? Remember what God has done but also look forward to what he will do

Something's coming...

Verse 22

²² “But, dear family of Jacob, you refuse to ask for my help.

You have grown tired of me, O Israel!

²³ You have not brought me sheep or goats for burnt offerings.

You have not honored me with sacrifices,
though I have not burdened and wearied you
with requests for grain offerings and frankincense.

²⁴ You have not brought me fragrant calamus
or pleased me with the fat from sacrifices.

Instead, you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your faults.

God is saying: Why are you ignoring me? In these awful times why are you not turning to me – reaching out to me? We act like following and serving the lord is a burden – it's hard and tiring – and we just need a break – if that's how you feel – then maybe you are not truly in step with him

This is what it feels like

²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

we should never tire of that. That is a gift – hope – refuge

and yet often we don't connect – abide – lean into our relationship with God – we don't obey – we tire of it

and don't you think He gets tired of us?

Verse 24

Instead, you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your faults.

We as individuals – as the church – as a culture – we keep repeating the same sins over and over – we are wearing God out with the same exhausting sinful behavior – we are no different than the Israelites in that way

Look around – the same issues and broken places keep resurfacing or never going away – because we just keep repeating bad behavior

We will never be able to move into something new with God unless we are in step with Him – we are seeking Him and allowing the spirit to transform us and change us

Verse 25

²⁵ "I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake
and will never think of them again.

²⁶ Let us review the situation together,
and you can present your case to prove your innocence.

²⁷ From the very beginning, your first ancestor sinned against me;

all your leaders broke my laws.

²⁸ That is why I have disgraced your priests;
I have decreed complete destruction^[b] for Jacob
and shame for Israel.

What does God do with hard hearted people – such as the Israelites and frankly us? He will forgive them and forget their sins. Why? Because he loves his people and longs for their humble return. That's the story of humanity. And we can try to present our case – but we have nothing to stand on – Adam and Eve sinned and we are all sinners – we have no case – we are wrong, sinful and yet God remains faithful to His promises even when His people prove unfaithful, or weary Him. Like the prodigal son – he goes off and does what he wants and trusts the wrong things and people – and had he stayed there his life might have been cursed but he returns home to the father – and the father forgives and forgets – and God's ultimate act of forgetting was Jesus on the cross

So, 43 ends a little bleak and down with a warning but the first verses of 44 move us back to hope.

Something's coming...

44 “But now, listen to me, Jacob my servant,
Israel my chosen one.

² The LORD who made you and helps you says:
Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant,
O dear Israel,^[c] my chosen one.

³ For I will pour out water to quench your thirst
and to irrigate your parched fields.
And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants,
and my blessing on your children.

⁴ They will thrive like watered grass,
like willows on a riverbank.

⁵ Some will proudly claim, ‘I belong to the LORD.’
Others will say, ‘I am a descendant of Jacob.’
Some will write the LORD's name on their hands
and will take the name of Israel as their own.”

God's promise of hope and restoration – you can still know his goodness – just turn back to him

And when we do – he doesn't promise to sprinkle or dab or drip or even give but

to pour out

He promises if Israel returns to him – trusts in him – honors and obeys him – abides in him

He will pour out:

Water to quench your thirst

He will pour out:

His Spirit on our descendants

He will pour out:

His blessing on our children

And when he pours all of this out, he says in verse 4

They will thrive!

When we return to Him – he will pour out and

I will thrive!

You will thrive!

We will thrive!

And we will proudly exclaim

I belong to God.

Could it be, yes it could

Something's comin', something good

Can you believe through all the pain and hardship and the unknown and the uncertainty that something is coming – he is preparing us for something new - he is preparing us for something better

"When nothing is sure, everything is possible."

— Margaret Drabble

In this moment – everything is possible church

All of this upheaval is drawing our attention, waking us up - it's not new info - some of the issues he wants to right he's wanted to right for years - since the fall of humankind He is using new ways to get our attention. - to bring our attention to what needs to be righted
 He's pleading with us right now - begging us right now
 Not in anger - in desperation
 How long will it take till we get it right?
 I don't want to see more demise more victims more hatred - I want to do something new

Like in Isaiah – he knows we're in a rough place right now – things are hard and unknown – he wants us to remember what he has done and anticipate what he is going to do
 He wants us to move people toward him – to bring his kingdom on earth - not kingdom of power but of humility and forgiveness and mercy and love
 A kingdom that puts others first – that is so contrary to our world
 The world turned upside down – a kingdom where everyone else is more important than you
 A world where if you're able to wear mask into wal mart for 15 minutes you do – because it makes the woman you passed on the way in that you didn't realize is immune compromised because of cancer or some other condition – it makes her feel better – a kingdom where she comes before you
 A kingdom where people with power give up some of that power so there can be equality for all – because we choose the path of self giving love
 A kingdom that wants to right wrongs – heal broken places – a kingdom full of the movement of the holy spirit

Something's coming...

"I believe that, at this present moment, God's people ought to cry to him day and night that there may be a fresh baptism into the Holy Ghost. There are many things that are desirable for the Church of Christ, but one thing is absolutely needful; and this is the one thing, the power of the Holy Ghost in the midst of his people." (Spurgeon)

We need the power of the Holy Spirit so we can be in step with God – lean into Him and do something new

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

Living the way Jesus has called us to live may not always be popular but it is powerful

Church sign (show sign)

Are these signs just info or maybe a warning - I want it to be a sign of hope to our community – to the world
 Important - revered - are we worthy of that

If God has something new - then we must be on board - we have to be open palmed –
we have to listen to the spirit – we have to obey
If he has something new for the world - we need to lead the way - forge the path - be his
hands and feet
We stand on his promises

Did you see Hamilton?

“History has its eyes on you.” – Hamilton, the musical

I don't want people looking back and saying why didn't they do anything why didn't they
make it better – why didn't they get it – like we look at the Israelites

¹⁹ For I am about to do something new.

See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?

If he is going to do something new - we better be ready to be something new – I can
see it – it's on the horizon – I don't want to miss it – do you?

Something's coming...

God wants to do something new and he wants us to be a part of it
Won't you join him? Then we can ALL thrive.

Pray