

Prophets as Hope Givers
Dec 13, 2009
Isaiah 40:1-11 and Luke 1:26-38
Third Sunday in Advent
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Synopsis:

We live in anxious times. Everyone is running around trying to fix things. What's the Christian response? More anxiety?

Christmas is the celebration of God, who in Jesus Christ has fixed things. The response is not anxiety, but comfort and joy:

Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
Oh tidings of comfort and joy!

Today we are going to talk about how to be a comforted and joyful people in an anxious world.

I.

Fix It!

Isaiah 40:7 Surely the people are grass

1. Randy and the slab leak:

- covenant group on Thursday
- calls in a mess
- heater stopped, water everywhere
- waiting for the plumber

“I have a slab leak and ministry is a slog!”
What am I going to do?
How am I going to fix it?

2. Isn't this true for our world right now? Slab leak and a Slog

We are living in a world fraught with fear and anxiety

- Economy is still in the tank: Unemployment over 10%
E.g. My brother is out of work
- Health Care bill about to pass: uninsured! costs!
- Stimulus that didn't stimulate, pay for years, new 1.1T
- Islamic terror now in US Army (Hasan)
- 30K more troops in Afghanistan
- Copenhagen summit: perish in CO2, ice caps melt
- Tiger Woods has gone down
- PCUSA down, not 40K people but 172K this year

“Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh my!”

*What are we going to do?

*How are we going to fix it?

3. The Gospel is not about *us* fixing anything.

We are in trouble when we try

It is what God prophesies (Isaiah 40)

Has already done in person (Jesus 1st coming, Luke 1)

Will bring to completion (Jesus 2nd coming, Rev 21)

If this is true, what is our response?

II.

God Has Fixed It

Luke 1:33 Of his Kingdom, there will be no end

Texts Today:

Two messengers

Two messages

1. Messengers: History is important

-God is not general but specific

-We are specific people living at specific times

A. Isaiah and the messenger: READ Isaiah 39:5-8

-587 BC destroyed Jerusalem

-Exile = Babylon

*Context is Anxiety = Exile

*In the middle of a SLAB LEAK God shows up

B. Luke and Gabriel the messenger: READ Luke 1:16-17

-Mal 4 Elijah and the Day of Lord = John Baptist

-Voice crying in wilderness = John Baptist = Isaiah 40

-Exile = Rome (Luke 2:1)

(Before was Persia, Greece, Seleucids/Ptolemies)

*Context is continued Anxiety = Exile

*In the middle of a SLAB LEAK God shows up

2. Message: History is important

-God's message is specific to our lives

A. Isaiah and the message: Exodus themes

-Comfort 2x

-Return through desert (wilderness)

-We can't fix it (grass)

-God will show up (glory)
-God's word is sure (stands forever)

*Notice: Not fix yourself!
COMFORT

B. Luke and the message: OT themes

-READ 28 Greetings Favored One
Greek = Rejoice, Rejoiced One
-READ 30 Don't fear, you have found JOY
-Jesus is coming to rule
-Holy Spirit come upon/overshadow = Gen 1:2
New Creation (Spirit)
-God does impossible (Elizabeth)

*Notice: Not fix yourself!
JOY

*God shows up to COMFORT and declare JOY to a broken people

III.

Our Response

Luke 1:38 Let it be with me according to your word

Anxious and Fearful Times: Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh my!

How can we fix it? We can't

I don't want you to DO anything this Christmas season
I want you to BE something this Christmas season

READ Luke 1:37 Nothing is impossible with God
COMFORT AND JOY

Response?

READ Luke 1:38 Mary's response: "Let it be with me"
Let me pray for you using Mary's response:

Lord God of Jesus Christ:
Let your will be done in me this Christmas season.
Make me a comforted and joyful person.
Here am I, your servant,
let it be with me according to your word.
Amen