

WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE



December 15th, 2024

Sermon Recap:

The Longing of God's People

Christmas is a time of celebration that Christ has come and anticipation and longing that he will come again.

I. In the Garden

- Gen. 3:18-19--"I saw that I was naked and I needed to be covered." From a theological standpoint he is saying, "I saw that I had sinned and I needed atonement."
 - In that instance, mankind was thrust into a position of longing for a Savior.
- Gen. 3:20-24-- God is separated from them; no longer able to be in their presence.
 - Imagine the longing that Adam would have felt looking back at the Garden where he once dwelled with God.
- Gen. 12:2-7-- A promise is made of a land for God's people; a people who would outnumber the stars.
 - Having no children at the time, Abraham believed by faith, and longed for his heir/seed.

II. In the Desert

- Exodus 2:23-25--As the promise is coming to fulfillment and the number of God's people increases, so does the longing and they cry out to God for redemption.
- God delivers them and brings his people to the Jordan River, on the other side is the Promised Land, but they disobey and refuse to take it.
- After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, they come back to the Promised Land with excitement, hope, and longing.
 - Moses writes a prophetic song where he celebrates and praises the Lord's faithfulness. But he also foretells their destruction, Deut. 32:20-24...they would be exiled for their disobedience.

III. In Exile

Israel has grown into a mighty nation; wealthy, powerful, a force of power. It was good. It wasn't holy or righteous, but it was good. Through the temple, God dwelled in their presence.

- The Assyrians and Babylonians take Israel captive, and they are exiled from their home and from the presence of God for 70 years.
 - As they sat in exile, God's not finished; he still gives them hope through his word, Isaiah 7:14, "the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
 - Isaiah 11:1-- Their Savior would come from the line of David, but in exile this line was just a stump. From that stump would shoot up their Redeemer.
 - Isaiah 22:21-22--Israel trusted themselves and other more than God. But God would send a lowly servant who possesses the keys to the house of David.
 - Haggai 2:3- Having returned from exile and rebuilt their temple, Israel wept. What they have paled in comparison to what they once had. It lacked the glory and presence of God.
 - The birth of Christ (Christmas) proclaims to God's people, "I heard you and I'm here."

Throughout their history, God's people found themselves in a position of longing for God. Why? Because when they had ready access to Him, they took it granted and chose other gods, resulting in the exile where they longed for the way things used to be. You have ready access to God now. Do you long for Him or do you take it for granted?

Discussion Questions:

- What did it mean that God saw what he has made and “it was good?”
- What position did God’s people find themselves in after the Fall?
- What would Adam have longed for? What would Abraham have longed for? What would Israel have longed for in Egypt? What would they have longed for in exile?
- Where would the solution for their longing have been found?
- How does the birth of Christ answer their cries?
- How does “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!” teach us to approach the Christmas season?

Application:

- Do you dread the Christmas season? Why?
- What is the appropriate response of the believer in this season?
- Do you long for God now? For His word? For His people?
- If the church were to close, how would your life change?
- What does the birth of Christ proclaim to God’s people?

