

Text: Isaiah 64:5-9

Theme: Come, Lord Jesus, Come

December 3, 2017

How many of you have ever dreamed intently about something you wanted to occur or wished and wished a certain event would unfold? How many of you have ever prayed repeatedly that God would do something in your life or the life of someone near and dear? As Isaiah pens the words of our text, he pens an intense prayer, a prayer that Christ would come. For us, on the other side of the manger, our prayer is that Christ would return. Our prayer, in its simplest form is, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come."

I. Like Isaiah, we want Christ to come. A. But why do we want Christ to come? 1. We want Him to come because we have sinned. How many of you have ever failed to live up to someone else's expectations? We've all been there many times. Even more disheartening, we have failed to live up to God's expectations. We haven't veered off the path a little. We've stepped off the path and attempted to blaze our own trail. We've done what we knew was wrong and we've done it more than once. We needed Christ to come in the manger so that He could go to the cross to pay for our sins. We want and need Christ to return so that we can enter the joys of heaven.

2. We want Christ to come because all our efforts are useless. Notice what Isaiah writes, "All our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment." We don't need much help to image Isaiah's imagery, do we? But what's his point? All our good deeds, all our efforts to find a shortcut to heaven, each one of them have ended in failure. We thought and many still think today that we can earn our way, that heaven is possible because we are good people, because we live a good life, but all those notions are like that polluted garment - useless, good only to toss in the garbage. We needed Christ to arrive and we need Him to return because all our attempts are useless.

3. We need Christ to come because we are failures. How does it feel to be a failure? How do you feel when you offer your best effort only to discover that you failed? We don't like to fail. We go to great lengths to keep ourselves from failing, but before God, we are failures. We are among those who Isaiah describes by saying, "There is no one who calls on Your name, who rouses himself to take hold of You." It's not a pretty sight, but it's reality, a reality that reminds us ever so clearly that we needed Christ at Christmas, at the cross, at the open tomb, and we still need Him to return and call this miserable world to an end so that we can enjoy heaven.

B. But what do we do while we wait for Christ to come? 1. We continue to give thanks. I know Thanksgiving Day has come and gone, but that doesn't change anything. In our Epistle, Paul mentions giving thanks for the grace of God. But where is that grace most evident? Where do we see it demonstrated most clearly? A little Baby in a manger - there we see grace in action and a reason to give thanks. Step ahead about 33 years and we find another very different event, a grace-filled event as Christ takes the cross and provides a solution to our greatest need. And then we take one more short step as we look inside the empty tomb and, once again give thanks.

2. While we wait, we continue to trust. In our Introit, we find the words, “My God, in You I trust.” What would happen five minutes from now if each one of us suddenly stopped breathing at this moment? What happens when we stop trusting God, when we trust ourselves, or something else? We may not stop breathing, but the breath that supplies our eternal life would end and spiritual death would become the outcome. If we stop trusting because life doesn’t make sense, because God doesn’t come through for us as we expected, if we stop trusting for any reason, we lose everything. While we wait, trust is what we do. It can be no other way.

3. While we wait, we continue believing God will sustain. In verse eight of our Epistle, it says, “who will sustain you to the end.” What does “sustain” mean? Does it mean to get by, to stumble through, or to wander about? When God offers to sustain us, His plan is to protect, guide, encourage, forgive, set us back on our feet, pick us up when we fall down, give us strength when we have no strength, carry us when we can’t take another step, and do whatever it takes so we arrive in heaven. While we wait for His return, we must believe, we must base our lives on the conviction that God will sustain. He will get us to heaven when we put our faith in Him alone.

4. We continue to allow God to mold and remold us. In verse eight of our text, Isaiah provides that beautiful imagery of the Potter and the clay. When a potter sits at the pottery wheel and drops a hunk of clay onto the wheel, he can create anything he can conceive in his mind. God, as Potter, not only created us, but He continues to mold and remold us, to take off the rough edges here, to reshape us over there so that we can accomplish His plan. We can fight it, object, or insist we have a better idea, but the Potter knows best. As the clay, our place is to allow the Potter to do His work and as He does His best work, we continue to wait eagerly for His return.

5. While we wait, we continue to expect His return. If Christ returned tonight, how many people in Medford would be unprepared? How many of us would be caught off guard? Because Christ hasn’t told us, we need to expect His return at any moment. We need to be those who end our day praying intently, “Maybe tonight, Lord, maybe tonight.” And in the morning as a new day arrives, we pray, “Maybe today, Lord. Maybe today.” When we’re anticipating His return, we continue accumulating a wealth of faith that says, “Come, Lord Jesus. Bring this world to an end for what is coming is so much better than what surrounds me!”

6. While we wait, we continue on His mission. As we continue, we’re reminded from our Epistle that we are not lacking any spiritual gifts. What does that statement imply? If God wants it done, you can do it. Throughout the Scriptures, we find men and women on a mission, those to whom God says, “Go,” even though their situations looked impossible. Consider Moses, Noah, Joshua, Jonah, the disciples, and you and I today. To each, God said or continues to say, “Go for I will be with you.” Until our time arrives to depart or Christ returns, we’re on a mission, a mission that’s prefaced with that simple statement, “Now go for I will be with you.”

7. We may have our dreams, our intense wishes, but beyond all those things, we find our prayer, not only at Christmas time, but every day of the year, “Come, Lord Jesus, Come.” Amen.