



Series: Advent: A Season of Worship

Date: December 4, 2022

Speaker: Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: Isaiah 11

Title: Seven More Promises

Intro

Merry Christmas! Value - We help people take their next step in following Jesus. Because your walk with God is meant to take place alongside of others, in community, specifically according to the Bible in a local church, we believe belonging to a church family matters. But man can it be hard to connect to a church. Spent 4 months on a sabbatical where we attended different churches, and everyone was great welcoming us, but it felt strange being a stranger. And if you are new or new-ish with us today I get it. You might feel that way here. So, here's how I hope we can help you figure out if

this is the church for you. we have put together a simple next step for you. It's called Starting Point and it is happening right after this service. It's a brief introduction to Mercy Church and a chance for you to meet some of our pastoral team and hear what we are about & ask any questions you have. 15-20 minutes.

Ok Last weekend we launched into our annual advent celebration. Advent is the Latin word for arrival and has long been the word the church uses to talk about the season leading up to the celebration of the birth of Christ. This year we are looking into the OT book of Isaiah. A book I told you last week is often referred to as the 5th gospel because it is so filled with prophecy about God's promised savior who would come one day to set the world free from darkness and sin and death.

Last Sunday we saw how the advent, or arrival, of Jesus was God's answer to the darkness in our world. In short, we said- "darkness doesn't win." And I gave you 6 promises about Jesus arriving & defeating darkness from Isaiah 9. Well, today we are going into chapter 11. And Isaiah is going to keep the promises about the advent of Jesus flowing. He's going to switch from a light & darkness idea to instead talk about Jesus coming as a king. But while he moves from light & darkness to kingdom language - he's still saying the arrival of Jesus is filled with Promises for God's people. And after spending the week



in study of chapter 11 my best title for this sermon is 7 more promises about Jesus. And I hope that the avalanche of promises about Jesus will impact how we respond to Christmas.

Said last week - Instead of going through the motions of Christmas because its familiar, let's follow Isaiah's lead and "sing a new song to the Lord all the earth." Let's ask God to increase our love of him and our belief that he is still working in us and among us and through us.

[1] Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

Isaiah is writing to God's people, Israel, who have a real problem. The evil and more powerful kingdom of Assyria, as Isaiah said would happen...came in and brought a furious attack against Israel. Remember from last week this is a nation God promised he would raise up to bring the wrath of his judgment for their sin. But he didn't let Assyria wipe them out. When God decided it was time, God stopped the Assyrians cold. **Sent one of his angels and the angel killed 185k Assyrians in one night. After that the Assyrians tucked tail and ran.**¹ Now here's the thing. In Chapters 9-10 Isaiah said all this would happen. In fact, God called Assyria HIS ax that was

¹ You can read about that in Isaiah 37.

used to chop down Israel. BUT God had made a promise to Israel...that someone would sit on the throne of David forever.

Isaiah 11 opens carrying the metaphor saying that even though all that is left of Israel is a burned stump...one day a shoot will emerge from the stump of Jesse...Jesse was king David's dad. Jesse was a nobody. Came from a nothing town, a little town, called Bethlehem. ALARM BELL! - bonus promise from Micah 5.2 - Messiah would come from Bethlehem! And a shoot is new growth. Why does that matter? Because God promised that one of David's descendants would save mankind & rule the world forever.

And who is this shoot from the stump of Jesse?
Sunday School Shocker Answer: It's Jesus! Grew up going to church and it got to the point where every answer was Jesus' right? Myrtle teaching Sunday School says, "What has black & white stripes, 4 legs, & lives in Africa?" You are like...well it sounds like a zebra, but we are in Sunday school so...JESUS? Well in this case, yes, the shoot is Jesus.

Promise: Jesus is the faithful king you can trust

Isaiah is saying even though God allowed Israel to suffer for their sin, he will never leave them. He will never break his



promises to them. And Matthew 1 opens saying Jesus is the long-promised heir to David's throne. Some of you need that today. Just because the Lord is letting you suffer the consequences of your sin doesn't mean he's left you. He loves you. He is always faithful to his promises and in Christ he promises that if you will return to him, you can experience the renewal in your soul that comes through his forgiveness.

Jesus fulfilled some 300 promises from God written by various authors in various centuries. The town he was born in, who gave birth to him, the miracles he performed, the nature of his death...With every step he took and every word he spoke he declared GOD IS FAITHFUL! If he's faithful to fulfill all these promises, faithful to raise Jesus from the dead, then he's faithful to forgive you and he's faithful to be present with you and faithful to strengthen you and faithful to deliver you and faithful to bring you into glory with him one day. But will you trust him? **And I mean trust in action.** I'm trusting him in grief right now over the loss of many people. So, I read 1 Thessalonians 4 and it says to grieve as those with hope. Which means my grief is DIFFERENT because I believe Jesus is faithful to his promise that I'll see my friend again. How I manage my money is DIFFERENT because I trust Jesus is the faithful savior. He was generous towards me, so I am generous towards his mission. THAT is Trust. I FORGIVE because I believe he is faithful to forgive me. The evidence of trust is in my actions. And listen, this shoot from the stump emerged

after hundreds of years of silence. The line of David was a forgotten royal line. But never forgotten by God. And I say that just in case you've become jaded enough by life, just tired enough of waiting on God, that maybe you are bitter towards God. Isaiah is here to shout to you HE IS STILL KING, AND HE IS FAITHFUL!

[2] The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The Spirit of the LORD resting on him – This was actually a familiar expression because throughout Israel's history God would place his Spirit onto some of its Kings. It was God empowering them for their task of leading Israel. BUT each time the leader would fall into sin and the Spirit of the Lord would leave. The Spirit of the Lord came on Saul but then was taken away, came onto David, then was taken away even though David pleaded for it not to be. Isaiah 61 says the coming mystery king will say "the spirit of the lord rests on me." And the gospel of Matthew says at Jesus' baptism the spirit descended like a dove.

16 When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on



him. **17** And a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.” Matthew 3:16–17

And the rest of verse 2 tells you how the Spirit will empower him [**BACK to VERSE 2**]:

He will have the wisdom of God. True wisdom which is greater than the world’s wisdom. Pay attention here. You know the Christmas nativity scene where three wise men, many even say those guys were kings...they come to meet Jesus? The scene is important because these 3 wise men bow down to this child. And the message is that the wisdom of the world is far inferior to the wisdom of God.

Jesus confounds the wisdom of his day and in doing so he reveals to us what true wisdom is. He did it in how he was born, in how he lived, in how he died, and in how he rose again. YOU CANNOT FIND TRUE LIFE living according to the normal wisdom of our day and age.

3 In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. -- Colossians 2:3 (CSB)

Promise: Jesus is the wise king you can follow

So, here’s the very real question: **What wisdom are you building your happiness and security on?** Is it the American dream? that if you get a good job, you will earn enough

money to have security in your life? Is it the dream of one day getting married? And if you just get married you will finally be complete? Is it having kids? High School Student is it just getting into the right college or making that team or finally being accepted by that group of friends? What wisdom has crept into your heart and said, “if you just get HERE, you’ll be, ok?”

JOB, FRIENDS, SPOUSES, KIDS...They will ALL LET YOU DOWN. The American Dream should be called the American disappointment. Friends will disappoint you. Kids are exhausting sinners. Spouses are sin against you for life. Jobs are filled with disappointment & monotony. There is only one source of true wisdom and it's nothing like you expected. JESUS was unemployed, homeless, single, his friends betrayed him, and he was executed in his early 30s. **AND NONE OF THAT WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT.** In fact, it was the most powerful, wise, successful act of love in history. But it makes no sense to the world. And he says if you follow him...there you will have true life. Will you follow him?

[3] His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, he will not execute justice by what he hears with his ears,

I’m going to add in verses 4 – 5 in just a moment but verse 3 is big. The true king...he’s not going to look at outward



appearances. It's building off verse 2. True wisdom, the real king...doesn't look at the outward appearance. Instead, he looks inside. He judges the heart. That's 1 Samuel 16.7. When Samuel was trying to figure out which one of Jesse's sons would be the future king of Israel God said to him

[7] But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

Promise: Jesus judges the heart and still loves you

Is that good news or bad news? It's both. The reason this follows verse 2 is that there is a spiritual idea, masked as wisdom, in our age that suggests I can do enough good things in my life to justify myself as a good person. And that same wisdom of our age says that if you've made a mess of your life you need to clean yourself up before you come to God. So, people stay away from church because they think it's a place where God judges messy people.

So, to the self-righteous person God says your resume doesn't matter only your heart does. And that's bad news. Because we so often hide our true selves behind our resumes. And to the person who has wrecked their life this is good news that God doesn't judge you by your past...but also bad news in that

your past actions came from a heart that was motivated by selfishness and pride.

So, the news is that we all, both the self-righteous sinner and the broken sinner, fall short of God's standards. That's why we need Christmas. Because Christmas says God sent someone who would not be a sinner. His actions were perfect, and his motives were pure. And so, he was judged perfect, and God says this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. And THE gift is that this perfect one exchanged place with you and me. **The Promise of Christmas: God's judgment was taken by Christ and Christ's acceptance was given to us.**

That's the gospel. You don't have to earn your acceptance by God. You can't. But you can receive the gift of acceptance by God offered to you through Jesus' payment for your sin. Do you see the gift here?

For the wages of sin is death but the GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6.23

Maybe today is the day you receive that gift! Christian.... Behold that gift this Christmas. Stare into it with AWE and WONDER. Isaiah keeps going

[4] but he will judge the poor righteously and execute justice for the oppressed of the land. He will strike the land with a scepter from his mouth, and he will kill the wicked



with a command from his lips. [5] Righteousness will be a belt around his hips; faithfulness will be a belt around his waist.

Promise: Jesus rescues the poor & vindicates the oppressed

In other words, Jesus is the king who gives voice to the voiceless and hope to the hopeless. He welcomes the poor and the needy. When the disciples try to keep the little children from coming to him Jesus says no no, let them come because it is people like this that the kingdom of heaven belongs to. Jesus goes INTO the house of disgrace to heal the man who couldn't walk. He goes toward the prostitute. He goes toward the blind beggar. He goes toward the man with leprosy. He goes toward the demon possessed boy. He goes toward Peter's mother-in-law. He goes toward the grieving father's child. He goes toward the tomb of Lazarus. All because Isaiah 53 says he will take our weaknesses and carry our diseases. Church, he came into a poor family, and he loves the poor & oppressed.

Plain and simple - I believe the Church - Christ's bride & his earthly representative - must love who he loves. James tells us true religion is looking after the widow and orphan. If King Jesus rescues the poor and vindicates the oppressed. Then it would seem the eyes of our hearts should be set on those groups in our community. Because we can't pray your kingdom come, your will be done on earth and then avoid

who he loves. We just can't. On top of that, we will be better for it. Blessed are the poor in spirit for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. I will share more with you about this next year but one of my deep convictions is that we must pray for and reach out to the hurting in our local communities. Not because it is the duty of the middle class but because it is the honor of the church. To love who Jesus loves.

I'm so thankful for our efforts this Christmas with QC PRC and with the Charlotte Dream Center. I'm glad we are donating but also that we are giving our time to go and serve with them. In fact, do you know that our Student Ministry - middle & high school - goes out one Saturday a month to serve with the Charlotte Dream Center? Some of us need to be led by our students and go join them and see what God is doing. And then get in on it. Let us be where Jesus was and love like he loved. And in so doing, discover the joy of our salvation afresh.

[6] The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf will be together, and a child will lead them.

[7] The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like cattle.

[8] An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his hand into a snake's den. [9] They will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain, for the land



will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is filled with water.

Now what do you do with this? We can see that the first verses were clearly talking about Jesus. Everything Isaiah says in verses 1 – 5 the New Testament picks up on and says look this is about Jesus. But clearly that is not the case with 6 – 9 at least.

This sounds like some bizarre Narnian version of Animal Planet. “Watch the wolf...with his long claws and sharp teeth... as he snuggles with a nearby herd of sheep.” Isaiah can’t be talking about now because That’s not the way our world looks today. When you put a lion and a fattened calf together...you have to keep replacing the fattened calf. So, what is happening here?

This is the deal with Isaiah’s Prophecies. They move in and out of talking about the first coming and second coming of Jesus. I heard John Piper explain Isaiah’s perspective here like this²: Imagine Isaiah is looking at a mountain range from really far away. If you look at the Blue Ridge Mountains from far away down I-40, the mountains appear to be one beside the other. But the closer you get, the more you realize some are up close

² John Piper – “The Shoot from Jesse, the Nations, and Israel” (desiring God.com, TGC conference 2015)

and others are still way far away. That’s kind of like Isaiah’s prophecy. Isaiah is looking at the two from way far away...but one is actually before the other. And we, in our time in history, stand in the valley between the two comings. Which means we have the great hope of salvation from Jesus’ first coming...but still waiting on the complete effects of his kingdom to come. **And verse 9 says one day the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord and there will be no more pain or hurt.**

Promise: His kingdom renews the earth, so we have hope in suffering

And this is massive for the Christian life. Because when you become a Christian, it doesn’t mean you won’t suffer. In fact, one of the clearest promises of scripture is that you WILL suffer. Sickness and natural disaster and evil are still present in our world. The promise here is that what God started in Jesus’ resurrection...where he reversed death...one day he will do with all of creation. And there will be no more pain, anger, sadness, hurt, or death. That hope is the hope of that second mountain...the second coming of the king.



[10] On that day the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will look to him for guidance, and his resting place will be glorious.

One day all the nations will look to him. That hope is what Christians behold not just at Christmas but all year long. Notice verse 10 it says in that day the “root” of Jesse? Verse 1 said the shoot of Jesse. How can one person be both a root and a shoot? Be both an ancestor and a descendant? Only God can do that. The one who created Jesse will become the one born into Jesse’s line. Only if God was born into Jesse’s line could this promise be fulfilled. And that’s exactly who we behold at Christmas. God is born. The Creator of Jesse becomes his descendant. Jesus – God with us. The Prince of Peace! And his peace, it will be restful...glorious rest. He’s talking about the hope of a new heaven and new earth.

Promise: his mission is to bring all peoples into his glorious kingdom.

This is what I hope you hear in the spirit of our Christmas missions offering. It’s that our God is a missionary God. And Christmas is a reminder that he has chosen his church to be the agent of proclaiming his gospel to the ends of the earth. It’s to fulfill his plan to bring all nations into that glorious resting place! So, the people groups in Nairobi, Kenya where we just planted, and the people groups in closed countries

where some of our missionaries are going to...will stand beside us and in complete mental, spiritual, and physical wholeness sing together Hallelujah, Worthy is the Lamb!

When I read this passage, I always think of TJ Anderson. First child we lost as a church family. Died of cancer at 8 years old. Instead of fighting cancer he’ll be playing with cobras because sickness will be gone, and fear & pain will be gone. It sounds like the ending of one of those cheesy hallmark movies I know. In fact, it sounds too good to be true. This is the hard thing for skeptics to believe. But the hope of heaven gives such peace and perseverance to Christians now.

And you are resting in something. Some future hope. I heard one theologian say the most remarkable thing about this story, the greatest story of love and hope ever told...is that it’s true. And when you finally realize it’s true, you will behold Christmas. Your heart and mind will race with wonder and awe, just as the 3 wise men did, as you stare into the glory of the nativity. Where not just a child has been born of a virgin. THE KING has arrived. The faithful & wise king you can trust. The JUDGE who sees down to the heart, and still loves you despite all he may see. The King who vindicates the poor and oppressed because he loves them, and his power will be used to lift up not to press down. The King who makes all things new and brings all peoples to himself.



He's the one true king. King Jesus. He's all holy, all powerful,
all GOOD, and he's directed his love towards you and I, his
people.

CLOSING INVITATION



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