



Part 4: Hope for Everlasting Joy

Isaiah 35

Jesus' first coming was the appearing of the face of God for one lifetime. The culmination of history is the face of God unveiled for good and forever—when all is made new in his beautiful kingdom and everlasting joy will be poured into our hearts.

Introduction

“My soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” Psalm 63:1

A Blossoming Desert and a Highway Home: Isaiah 35

“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
It shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.” Isaiah 35:1-2

Altogether we might say God is a sight to take our breath away—he has a beauty and luminous splendor like we have never seen. And Isaiah's imagery suggests that the unveiled beauty of God, perhaps even his face, is the source of this abundance blossoming and joy.

“Strengthen the weak hands,

and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who have an anxious heart,
'Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.'" Isaiah 35:3-4

Where the creation was dry, barren, and fruitless, the people are weak and feeble. Or it could be that they are so anxious they have lost their strength and courage. Vengeance and recompense in this hopeful passage communicate that God will right every wrong-- He will put an end to all evil.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes." Isaiah 35:5-7

We see here that all of the imagery applied to the desert applies also to us.

"And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:8-10

The highway leads to Zion – to Jerusalem—to where God's people make their home with him. It feels too good to be true. How do we know Isaiah didn't just have a beautiful dream?

Isaiah sees Jesus

"...They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God." Isaiah 35:2b

- *John 1:14: “we have seen his glory”*
- *2 Corinthians 4:6: “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

“He will come and save you.”

“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”

“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” Luke 7:22-23

John 7:38: “streams of living water will flow from within him.”

“Everything sad will come untrue.” – J.R. Tolkien

“The unclean shall not pass over it . . . it shall belong to those who walk on the way . . . the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord.” Isaiah 35:8, 9-10

“And Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, saying, ‘You are clean.’ He redeemed us.” Galatians 3:14

We learn through the teaching of Jesus that what Isaiah sees is nothing less than Jesus’ return when God’s kingdom coming back to earth and healing the entire creation and healing us along with it!

Good News of Great Joy

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!” Luke 2:10

The good news of Isaiah and of Christmas is not that we will go to heaven when we die. It’s that God is bringing heaven to earth. Jesus’ first coming is our downpayment on that promise.

Jesus first coming was the appearing the face of God for one lifetime. The culmination of history is the face of God unveiled for good and forever—when all is made new and whole and everlasting joy will be poured into our hearts.

“They will see his face.” Revelation 22:14

Growing:

“And a highway will be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness.” Isaiah 35:8

Jesus: "I am the way" John 14:6
"Follow me," Matthew 8:22

Love Jesus. Follow his way. . . Home to Everlasting Joy.
May God's promise of everlasting joy give you hope.

Benediction:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy peace as you trust in him, that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you feel and what do you do when you sense the fading of joy?
2. How easily do associate God with everlasting joy? Why do you believe this is?
3. What longing does the hope of everlasting joy awaken in you?
4. What part of this promise feels too good to be true?
5. What part of Jesus' demonstration of Isaiah's good news moves you the most?
Why do you believe this is?
6. When did you first say 'yes' to Jesus' invitation to follow him home to everlasting joy?
What has been you experience of following him since then?
7. If you have not said 'yes' to this invitation, what questions or hesitations do you have?