

For Zion's Sake; For Your Sake – Isaiah 62

Introduction – At the end of Chapter 61, God promised, “*For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*” The Messiah-Redeemer promises to bring salvation to the nations – the transformation of the entire world. Now in this Chapter He describes His passionate love for Zion, the New Jerusalem which is the people of God from all nations. That passion is what brought forth the union of Christ and the church and what established the opportunity for each of us to have a deep, personal, ongoing and satisfying relationship with our God. It is for Zion's sake, it is for your sake, that God has done this.

Union for Zion's Sake (vv1-5) – Why does God want to save the world (John 3:16)? For the same reason that a man wants to marry that woman: He loves her. Out of that love, God cannot rest or stay silent until she has been saved (v1). The glory and righteousness that the church displays is given to us by the Lord, like a new name given to a bride (v2). We are the glory of Christ as a wife is the glory of her husband (v3). Once her name was “Forsaken” and “Desolate”; now it is “My Delight is Over You” and “Mutually Indwelling” (v4). A beautiful marriage is but a dim reflection of this greater truth (v5, Eph 5:31-32).

This language is full of jealous passion which God has for His people, language Paul will use to admonish us to faithfulness to God and to no other Gospel other than Jesus Christ (2 Cor 11:2-4). But here in Isaiah there is also this determined optimism that God will do this, that nothing will stop Him, that He is always there for us, pursuing us, protecting us, united with us and dwelling with us. And this is the language of Jesus as well (John 17:20-29, Matt 28:20b, Heb 13:5).

Intercession for Zion's Sake (vv6-9) – He is always there, always listening, never abandoning - - but it often doesn't appear to be true. God's timing, the means by which He brings forth His promises, His wild ways of grace, discipline and testing, often seem to disguise His passion for us and our good. And so, He promises to set watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem who are never to hold their peace until God makes good on His promises (vv6-7). These are the intercessors before the throne, of whom Jesus is the Chief (Heb 7:25, Rom 8:34) along with the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27). The LORD swears by His right hand and by the arm of His strength that He will answer these prayers to bring forth His promises (vv8-9).

The language here is also full of passionate, personal, relational conversation with God. We are not told directly *why* God works this way regarding prayer. But Jesus makes it very clear *that* God works this way as He gives His catechism on persistence and assurance in prayer (Luke 11:5-13). Jesus expects that oftentimes it will feel as though God is slow to answer. We are to learn what it means to “*strive*” and “*labor fervently*” and “*wrestle*” in prayer (Rom 15:30, Col 4:12, Eph 6:12, 18). This drives us to a deeper dependence upon God, not a lessening of our faith, when we do so with and by the Word and all of its promises (Rom 8:31). God our Father is eternally more generous than any earthly father could ever be.

Action for Zion's Sake (vv10-12) – Given the certainty of the promises, we are not to sit passively and wait. Rather, we are to act on our faith in God and His promises. Because God loves the world we are to see our ambassadorship to go out and prepare the way, build up, remove the barriers, and lift up the banner of Christ all over the world (v10), declaring what God has told us to declare: “*Surely your salvation is coming*” (v11). We don't do these mission-activities because we don't know if the nations will be saved but because God is going to call them “*The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD, Sought Out, and A City Not Forsaken*” as He brings them in with us to become members in the New Jerusalem. Out of His love for you, God sought you out and has indwelt you. You are a redeemed member, a holy, selected, set-apart person for Him and He will give you everything in Christ (Rom 8:32). And one of the things He is giving the church is the nations of the world and we in turn will offer them all up to the King of kings. Yes, it is according to His timing, His narrative, His ways. And yes, there are often times when it appears that we must ask and ask and ask, and work and work and work. But, for Zion's sake, for your sake, Jesus wins. The New Jerusalem and her Gospel is made the praise of the whole earth. And our relationship with God through Jesus Christ will exceed any personal, passionate, intimate relationship we could ever experience anywhere else.

Take Away: Believe the promises of God. Plead the promises of God. Act on the promises of God.