

The Restoration and Renewal of All Things

December 8, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled The Restoration and Renewal of All Things. Thank you to Geoff, Ed, Amy and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Isaiah 2, 1 to 5. Happy birthday this week to Chris and Kranti.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Good morning. I don't see any birthdays today but Rebecca and Chris have an anniversary so this week so you may want to say something to them give them a call or send them a note. The Community Care Christmas hamper yep there we go are out in the lobby if you want to look at the list and sign up then you can go ahead and help us put together some baskets for Christmas for families that need them. The deadline is December 6th to bring that that stuff in.

Okay midweek Bible study this week Ecclesiastes chapter 3 730 in the library. Sunday morning next week Leviticus at 930. December the 8th yes we have a potluck lunch coming up and if you find Janet she can give you some of the details.

Okay a few things that I'll be mentioning in a minute first of all Richard Kruse who ran the Bible School the International Correspondence Bible School passed away in November also this week David Dunn who some of you may know quite well he ministered to several churches here and he has been here in Beamsville we've supported him for some years passed away quite suddenly.

Harold is safely arrived at Oakville Hospital and he will be able to see people in the near future but he is he is still working to build his strength up at this point. Let me let me read a passage and then I will come back to the to the prayer.

Today Don is going to speak to us about restoration and it made me think about when I when I read those passages it made me think about the glory of God and how exciting it is to be a part of his family. In 1st Chronicles 16 it reads glory is his holy name let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice and then David breaks into song because this is when the Ark came back to the people and they felt like God was back with them and that's what we're here for today because God is in this place with us. He says sing to the Lord all the earth tell of his salvation from day to day declare his glory among the nations his marvelous works among all the peoples for great as the Lord and greatly to be praised. Let's go to him in prayer.

Father it is so joyous an occasion to meet with our brothers and sisters to celebrate your love for us. We'll break bread to celebrate your love incarnate here on earth your son sent to us to bring us back to you because you are a God of reconciliation and restoration. Help us Father to live our lives knowing the great gift that we have been given to be back with you. Father we have several things we want to talk about today with you. We want to pray for for Richard's family at his loss. We want to pray for the Konkle family who are still mourning the loss of their of their father. We want to pray for the Dunns and the congregation in Ireland that has lost a great orator, a great student of your Bible and someone who loved deeply from the heart. We pray that that they will raise up among those those men people to take on his mantle not that they can replace David but rather father that they can in their own way celebrate your glory.

Father these things we can commit to your hands because you've told us that you want you want us to have productive and helpful and lives that commit and most of all father you want us to have hope and joy. We thank you for this time we have together. We pray that it will be a pleasing fragrance to you. We pray in the name of the Son who we will celebrate as we break bread. Amen.

Communion

I'd like you to challenge you to use your imagination. First verses of the Bible, it talks about creation. And part of that creation story was Adam and Eve, and they were in a garden and it was a perfect place to live, and it was a perfect circumstance. To imagine living in an environment where there's no hatred, where there's no jealousy, where there's no sin, where there's no lust, just to be with God. And they dwelled in that environment, but God created humans to make choices. Humans have the choice to believe God or to not believe in God. Well, Adam was tempted, and he thought that that was a pretty good thing. So sin came into the world through one man, Adam.

In Romans chapter 5 and verse 18, it says, "Consequently, just as a result of one trespass was condemnation for all humans, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life to all humans." This follows in a section in Romans where it talks about Adam, but it talks about Jesus as being the sacrifice for sin. So as a result of the trespass of one condemnation for all people, as a result of the one act of righteousness was a justification. So some of these songs that we've been singing today push into these themes. So I am really grateful to God that Jesus lived, because when I read the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, it connects me with what God is like. When I read about Jesus, I'm reading about God.

Now, Jesus talked about this dilemma in the Sermon on the Mount. There's a little section in the Sermon on the Mount. It's called the narrow and wide gates. "Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate, and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Your imagination, a wide road, a wide gate. All of humanity has been on that wide road. Look at the footprints. Look at the people who are ahead of you that you followed. Listen to the chatter. Listen to the things that are important to these folks. Certainly not the things of God.

However, all of a sudden you see off to the edge of this wide road, you see this little trail leading off in a different direction. And where that wide road is and where that little trail is, between those two spaces there's a cross. And Jesus is hanging on that cross, calling us to a different way of thinking, a different way of living, a different way of existing. Now, the wide road says a lot of people are going to be on that road. Where does it lead? Destruction. The narrow road leads to life.

Today, as we remember in communion, we're on that road, that narrow road that leads to life. Not just this life, but life after this life. Well, you get on the narrow road, there's still sin. We all struggle with that. I was baptized when I was 10 years old and some of you would think, oh, no, 10 year old would know anything about what they were doing. And that may be true, but I understood more than you can imagine. If I can just find this passage.

One thing I discovered, 16 years old, and I discovered a little passage of scripture, it said, it's about the tongue. With the tongue, we praise the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth comes praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. When I discovered that verse, that was an epiphany for me, because my language did not follow that particular pattern. I played ice hockey. I can tell you there's a lot of stuff that goes on in ice hockey dressing rooms before and after games. And lots of things that go on while you're playing hockey that are not particularly found in grace and mercy and love and joy. So I determined after I found those verses that I was not going to talk like that.

So a few years ago on the golf course, a person asked me, so where do you work? I worked at Great Lake Christian High School. This guy comes right up to me, he's about that far from my face. He's smoking a cigar, he blows smoke in my mouth, in my face, and he says, "Oh, I want you to understand a few things. When we play golf, we cuss and tell filthy stories." Why is he saying that to me? He's saying it to me because he expects me not to be like that and not really care for that sort of language. And he's true, but he makes his choices. I make my choice. I'm going to be an example to him no matter what he does. So, anger. Have you been angry ever? Angry after you became a Christian? Anger's a tricky thing. It shows up especially when there's pain.

So back to hockey. 36 years old, I'm playing in a no-body-contact church league. I'm standing in front of the net, there's no body checking. I'm not wearing shoulder pads. I'm standing in front of the net, minding my own business. The puck is not even close to me. And this guy comes up behind me and he takes a stick and he hits me right across just below the shoulder blades and drives me into the ice. First of all, he's unjustified for what he's doing. It's an act of aggression. There's pain on my part. So what do I do? I get up, he's got his back to me, I shorten up my stick, I hit him as hard as I could across the fleshy part of his legs where there's no protection. And he screams. When I looked at his face, his arteries in his head were extended out. His eyeballs were with rage. So I think, ah, it's my turn. I better just skate off the ice and avoid this person.

So as I'm skating off the ice, the puck's leaving our end and our defenseman gets the puck and shoots it into my corner and my hockey brain says, "I need to go get that puck." I went and got that puck and I turned sideways and guess who's coming. So I learned as a hockey player the best thing to do when somebody's going to hit you is to lean against the boards because when then they hit you, it's like they're hitting the boards. So I did and just before he got there, I put my elbow in his face and snapped his head back.

What I'm saying here is even when we become Christians and even when we turn away from sin, it shows up. It shows up. I'm thankful to God for Jesus Christ because if we all admit it, we're pathetic sinners and we need his grace and I am thankful to him for this grace. So I've made decisions in my life to behave and do certain things but sometimes Satan shows up. We're in process. All of us are in process. We're in the process of changing into the image of God. Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we are grateful to you for your grace and mercy. We seek to do your will. Sometimes we just don't live up and for the grace that covers that, we are so grateful. We're grateful for the encouragement that we can receive in this life from each other and from our walks with you, from our study and from our prayer life, from the things that we do to help others and to be an example. We're thankful Father for your powerful example in sending Jesus. That we might read his words. You might imagine his emotions and his perspectives and try to emulate those things in our lives. But as we commune, we remember the blood and the body that was broken and we give you thanks and praise for that. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 2:1-5

The reading this morning is from Isaiah chapter 2 verses 1 through 5. This is what Isaiah, son of Amos, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains. It will be established above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations. He will settle disputes for many people. They will beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Sermon

The Restoration and Renewal of All Things

Good morning everyone. Thank you for being here with us today. Today I want to be particularly in the book of Isaiah, noticing the restoration and the renewal of all things. And then next Sunday we will start our Christmas Advent sermons. On the first we'll look at hope, on the eighth we'll look at love, on the fifteenth we'll look at joy, and then on the twenty-second we will look at peace.

The book of Isaiah is a wonderful book. It talks about things that were going to happen in the distant future, things that haven't even come to groups fruition even now, and yet at the same time some have. For example, in Isaiah chapter one, he says that the restoration and the... This is amazing. That the restoration and the re-creation will be

coming, that everything will be restored. And that is repeated in Acts chapter three and verse twenty-one. And then in Isaiah fifty-seven, "I will restore comfort to all my people."

And then he says in Hosea chapter six, "We will restore justice in the presence of the Lord." Joel chapter three, "I will restore the fortunes of Israel." And over and over and over again, it is the promise of God. And one of the great scriptures, I think, in all the Bible, is found in Isaiah chapter one, where he says this, "Come now. Let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." The dominant theme of Isaiah is God bringing the impossible to the possible. That all of the earth is a family. Even many people don't know it in God. God's family is huge, and there's always room for more.

He encourages us to share the invitation that many of us have received. Many of us have been baptized in pools and water and every place else in the river. My mother was baptized in an old shed at one time. It was just the way it was. And yet the beautiful, wonderful experience was always there. So the dominant theme, all the way through Isaiah, is this dwelling place of God.

And that all the way through the scripture, he says this, "Come. Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples." And then these beautiful words. "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." And then these beautiful words that we still need today. "Nation will not take up sword against nations, nor will they train for war anymore, because there will be no more war." That's a promise of God, written many, many years ago. And for many, we continue to wait for that beautiful, beautiful promise of God.

And so all the way through the scriptures in Isaiah, we talk about this renewal of all things, where a whole creation. Paul talks about this when he says that all of creation has been groaning as in the veins of childbirth, right up to this present time. That even though day after day it seems to be alike, no, no, no. There's this promise of God that one day all things will come together as one.

Many of you remember Martin Luther King Jr. who stood in front of thousands and thousands of peoples, declaring that all people of all nations, of all color of skins, come together as one. John 3, 16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son." And then in Matthew 28, "To go into all the world as disciples and share the word of God."

And there's this beautiful scripture in chapter 19. In my mind, you just have to visualize it. I thought about this over and over again. Enemies who become brothers and sisters. It says this, verse 23. "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt, Egyptians to Assyria, and they will be a blessing. And they will be blessed by my people, my handiwork, and Israel, my inheritance."

It's talked about later in Revelation in chapter 22. The peace and the healing of all nations that will happen. "Come," he says, "all of you who are thirsty. Come and drink the water of the spirit of life. Anyone who is thirsty, let them come and drink of me. Those who are thirsty, come to all who want to come to the Lord." And this is in Isaiah. This is hundreds, hundreds, and hundreds of years before Jesus comes into this world. Of course, Jesus was present with God and the Holy Spirit always. So when Isaiah is writing these words, they're just not just words. They're beautiful words that even now we can understand these things. And it gives us little bits of, "Oh, this is going to be happening. This is going to be a renewal of all things. Heaven and earth coming together as one." But for some, it's been difficult.

He says this, "Strong peoples will honor you, O Lord. Nations will revere you. You have been a refuge for the poor. You have been a refuge for the needy in distress. You have been a shelter from the storm. You have been a shade from the heat. For the breath of ruthless is formed driving against the wall. On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all people. A banquet of aged wine, the best of meats, and the finest of wines. On this mountain, He will destroy the shroud that unfolds the peoples. He will swallow up death forever, that there will

be no longer any death." This is hundreds of years before Jesus is born into the world, and here it is in front of us. Jesus calls it unique. In Matthew 19, He calls it the renewal of all things. Peter calls it the restoration of all things. Paul calls it the redemption and liberation of all creation. And then later, Paul calls it, one more time, it is the reconciliation of all things. There is joy. No matter how difficult life can be, the promise of God will always be fulfilled.

With our faith, there is this redeeming nature. That's not my word. That was Isaiah's word. "The desert and the parched land will be glad. The wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst open and bloom. Strengthen feeble hands, steady knees that won't give way. Then will the eyes of the blind be open and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy." The beauty of what God promises us in life. And so when we move on next Sunday, looking at Advent, how beautiful these words will be. Because it's comfort. Comfort for everyone. Comfort for all people. Not my words. Here's the words of God.

Comfort. Comfort my people. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Proclaim to her that her hard work has been completed. That her sin has been paid for. That she has received from the Lord's hand double all of her sins. A voice, one calling in the wilderness. Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up. Every mountain hill will be made low. The rough ground shall become level and the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed. And all people will see it together. God never backs down on his promise. It's something that all of us can be looking forward to. A voice calling in the wilderness was John the Baptist. But John the Baptist didn't want anyone, anyone thinking that he was the Messiah. No, no. He always pointed to Jesus. And in all that, he talked about renewal, revival, restoration, that things will take place. And that you and I will be part of it. Every eye shall see every eye.

So he's called the servant of the Lord. This is way before the birth of Jesus. But listen to what he says. Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not cry out or raise a voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. He will not falter or be discouraged till establishing justice on the earth. In this teaching we will put our hope, a new heaven and a new earth. Then he says this. See the former things have already taken place and new things I declare to you. They will spring into your life. How amazing that we can look at Old Testament scripture that gives us the beautiful understanding of where we will be in God's own arms. But now what does the Lord say? He who created you, he who formed you, do not fear. Listen. I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. I will be with you always.

Promises of God are incredible. And looking back in Isaiah so many years previously, he reminds us of this. I love this scripture. Do not forget the former things. Don't dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing for you. I am making the wilderness and the streams overflowing. Even I will blot out your sin and I will remember your sins no more. No more sins. God, please forgive me of my sins. Your sins are forgiven. Well, God, your sins are forgiven. How difficult it is for us to really believe that if we ask, God forgives. And not only so that when you find someone who isn't turmoil, you can share your experience with them. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you. And so before Jesus is even born, this restoration of Israel comes. He says, is it too small thing to be a follower of Jesus?

No, it is not too small a thing because he calls us to be with him. And so surely, and this is before Jesus was even coming into the world, surely he took up our pain and he bore our suffering. We considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him. Yes, we all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned our own way. But the Lord laid on him, Jesus, the iniquity of us all. But no worries. After he suffered on the cross, he will see the light of day and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many and will bear their iniquities. He's poured out his life unto death. For he bore the sin of many and he made intercession for the transgressors. God made him who had no sin to be sin so that in him we might have the forgiveness of all. The Son of Man did not come into the world to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

So these wonderful words, I picture in my mind Isaiah with a scroll, just writing it out, writing it out, writing it out. Well, what does he know? Who's helping him say these words? Well, we know, don't we? The Lord is always with us. He initiates so many things. And then he says this, which would be overwhelming. God says, see, I will create a new heaven and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they even come to mind. So be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create. See, Paul says it's God's intent to bring all things together, things in heaven and things on earth, the amalgamation, the coming together, the wedding all together as one. So the Bible says the renewal of all things, the restoration of all things, the reconciliation of all things, that all things will come to us.

And then finally in chapter 66, another beautiful passage of scripture. As the new heavens and the new world that I will make, it will endure before me. So will your name and descendants endure forever. The promise of God and our future. May God bless us with all these words. Amen.

Closing

Following Isaiah, John says this, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." So surely we live in the days in which God has answered the call that Don talked to us about with the gift of His Son. Let's go to Him in prayer as we look forward to even greater things, but as we live this life as His children.

Father, we thank You so much for the joy and hope that You give us as we read Isaiah's words, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, full of Your grace and Your truth. The One who came from You, full with Your glory, the gift of love from Your very heart to bring us back to You. And Father, we recognize that we, as the Church, are the beginning of this restoration and the call and the appeal to all nations. Help us to be a blessing, Father. Help us to reflect the light of our elders as they reflect the light of Your Son. Bless us, Father, in this week that we may call others to find that narrow path. In Christ we pray. Amen.

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