

Responding to God in Faithful Living

Christmas Series – 2012

Text: Isaiah 9:1-7 (selected)

Message #5 (of 5)

TRUSTING THE ULTIMATE GOVERNOR

Introduction

1. We have worked our way through the names of Jesus mentioned by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 9. Following Warren Wiersbe's outline, we have been looking at this from the perspective that the names that Jesus bears are the blessings that He shares with those who belong to Him. As the **Wonderful Counselor**, He takes care of the **dullness** and **directionless-ness** of life with the wonder of who He is and the wisdom of what He shares! As the **Mighty God**, He is the answer to all the **demands** of life. Nothing is too big for Him! As the **Everlasting Father** He takes care of the **dimensions** of life, moving us from the temporal to the eternal so that we can live even now for eternity. And as the **Prince of Peace**, He quiets all the **disturbances** of life, making the way for me to rest in His righteousness! Who He is, is what He does!
2. But these blessings are only realized for those who are under His authority, who are subject to His rule and reign over their lives. The promise Isaiah shares about this government is that it will be a government of peace and righteousness and justice and it will never end, lasting from **"this time forth and forevermore."** We need to be sure that we are on the right side of His government. So, let's take a more careful gaze into the heart of this Governor and His government.
3. In a sentence, here is where I plan to go this morning: **Jesus is the righteous ruler over all, whether we acknowledge it now or not – but one day we all will.** Let's begin with...
 - I. **HIS CURRENT RULE (Matthew 6:10-13)** **"Your kingdom come..."** When you see the word, "kingdom", think less about a fortress and a throne and more about rule or reign. To pray for Christ's Kingdom to come is to pray for His ultimate rule over all the earth, but also it is to pray that His rule will be established in the hearts and minds and lives of people right now – including us. So, when we pray, "May Your Kingdom come" what are we asking from the Lord?
 - A. Our prayer is one of **submission** for the present as well as for the future

1. To submit to His rule is to submit to His will. For His Kingdom to come to me, I must acknowledge His rule in my life now. And His rule in my life is my recognition of His will and my obedience to it.
 2. God's will is being done now in heaven by holy angels and by believers who have died and now occupy the Father's House. His will is done immediately and perfectly. There is never any failure or even any hesitation in heaven toward the will of God. The same cannot be said for us here on earth.
 3. To pray that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven is to pray that we will submit to His will as it is recorded in His Word. For the most part, His will is not a mystery. It involves living in righteousness and obedience. When we do, we are submitting to His rule and when we don't we are rebelling against His rule. Too often we pray, "Your Kingdom come" but we live, "I'll do it my way."
 4. The time will come when all will do His will whether we want to or not. Currently believers have a choice in the matter. When we do the will of God everything in the universe works for us. When we resist His will, everything in the universe works against us. The government is on His shoulders. We need to submit to Him!
- B. Our prayer is one of **provision** for the present as well as for the future (that includes)
1. Provision for our present needs – Daily bread is what we need in order to live each day. As the benevolent Ruler, the Lord supplies our needs. There may be times of hunger and thirst, of lack or difficulty, but through it all, He supplies our needs. He calls upon us as His subjects to "make our requests known" not so that He will know what they are (He knows already) but so that we will acknowledge that they are available through Him. To ask is to acknowledge Him as the one in whom we trust! In many ways He supplies whether we acknowledge Him or not, but if we fail to acknowledge Him we are not looking to Him and that is not good.
 2. Provision for our past sins – We need to be right with God more than we need air to breathe or food to eat. Food and air relate to our earthly life, but forgiveness of sins has eternal ramifications. And only God can forgive us. When we pray, "forgive us our sins" we are acknowledging that He alone is the supreme one against whom we have sinned. All sin is in some measure a failure to acknowledge His rule in our

lives. If I do not see Him as ruler, why would I ever confess my sin to Him and ask for His forgiveness. To seek His forgiveness is to acknowledge His authority.

3. Provision for our future trials – This perhaps is the most difficult part of the prayer to understand. **“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil...”** It is true that God does not tempt us to sin, but it is also true that He may lead us into the path where we will be tempted. That was true for Jesus. Look at Matthew 4. **“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”** There are a whole host of reasons why Jesus was tempted and why it was the will of the Father for Jesus to be in the path of satanic temptation. Here Jesus demonstrated that even in a direct confrontation with Satan himself, the Father would deliver Him because the Father was in control. And everything the devil offered the Father would eventually provide for the Son. I have no desire to be led into temptation, but when I am, I should want to be delivered from evil. Only one who has absolute authority is able to control the enemy and determine the outcome of the temptations he brings our way. So, the Lord's rule reaches into my past, covers my present needs and extends all the way into my future. As I yield to His rule, He takes care of every need. He is a wonder of a Governor! Now this can be true for all who will yield to Him, but some will rebel. Some will refuse His rule. Some are totally ignorant of His rule now. But there is coming a day when His rule and reign will be fully known and fully implemented. A fascinating passage to consider is Psalm 2.

II. HIS COMING RULE (PSALM 2)

A. The decree is firm (7)

1. For those who know the Lord and love the Lord, knowing that He rules over all is a great comfort and a great blessing. We trumpet that truth as a wonderful thing. But those who do not know the Lord and do not love the Lord have no interest whatsoever in anyone ruling over them. In fact, their desire as quickly and completely as possible is to tear away any restraints or prohibitions that may be present as a result of some residual acknowledgement of God. **“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed...”** Do you wonder why there is such a bitter hatred toward values and righteousness? People do not want to be told what to do. They want to do whatever they want. When they counsel together it is to devise ways to

circumvent the laws of God. **“Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us...”** And they think they have managed to wiggle free, and they are gloating. They are doing an end-zone dance, but the home team hasn't come out of the locker room yet! For we read...

2. **“He who sits in the heavens laughs...”** And it isn't funny. This is a laugh of scorn. His wrath is coming and they will be crushed! And here is God's promise. **“As for me I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill...”** The decree is fixed. It is done. The Lord Jesus Christ is King and His rule over all is about to begin!

B. The ruler is established

1. The nations are about to be His heritage, all the earth His possession. Remember the temptation of Satan – “All these (kingdoms of the world) I will give you if you will fall down and worship me.” Satan was sent packing, and then the Father gave them to the Son!
2. Those who resist will be broken like a clay pot intersecting an iron rod! Again, it is not a matter of if, but only a matter of when He will take over what is rightfully His. Jesus will take the title deed of the earth (Revelation 5) and He will rule. It has already been established. It will happen. Listen to the revelation of this event: (Revelation 19:11-16 - ***11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*** His reign has been established! And it comes with a warning. And...

C. The warning is real (to the kings of the earth and everyone else)

1. Be wise, be warned... Those who are wise recognize warnings when they hear them and they take action. The kings of the earth initially “set themselves...against the Lord and against His anointed.” It is time to reconsider such action! Those who

are wise will heed the warning and change their allegiance. Those who are not wise will perish!

2. Serve and rejoice... When we serve the Lord with the appropriate awe, we will rejoice in His terrifying greatness! Our service will be joyful even as we realize and respond to His awesome power and glory.
3. Kiss and take refuge... The initial response was to cast the Lord away. Those who are wise will come close and embrace Him as Lord and Savior and King. There is great blessing found when we take refuge in Him, but His holy wrath will result in our destruction if we do not heed the warning! (Finally, let's quickly look at Philippians 2. For His rule is...)

III. HIS CERTAIN RULE (Philippians 2) (Jesus is presented as both human and divine)

- A. His deity establishes the right to rule – Make no mistake, Jesus was and is God. Isaiah taught it (He is “the Mighty God”) and the entire Bible affirms His undiminished deity. He always was God and He always will be God, but He became something He was not. He took on human flesh; He became a man. When that happened, in no way was He diminished in deity, but He became fully human and all of that for a powerful purpose. That purpose ultimately involved His glory.
- B. His humanity earns the recognition in rule
 1. His glory would come from obedience to the Father – “Becoming obedient” describes the action but only implies the one toward whom the action was demonstrated. But clearly, the implication of His obedience was to the Father. Jesus followed through on the purpose and will of the Father. That was no easy thing to do. Remember the Garden experience. **“If it be possible, let this cup pass from me...” “Nevertheless, your will be done...”** And the Father **“highly exalted Him and bestowed on him a name above every name...”**
 2. His glory would come from His redemptive work on the cross – “Obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Throughout eternity will be heard the “song of the redeemed.” Here in part are some of the lyrics: **“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living**

creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

3. His glory would come from universal recognition from all humanity – All who ever lived, believers and unbelievers alike will one day fall at the feet of this great Governor and will confess that He is indeed Lord. Some will do this with joy as He finally receives what is due Him. Others will give their concession speech – “You were right; we were wrong. You are Lord and we are not masters of our own fate. We do not love you. We continue to hate you. But we acknowledged that we have been beaten.” They won't be happy about it, but they will be forced to confess the truth. And their judgment for their failure to acknowledge Him during their earthly life will be permanent. It will be forever. And even that never-ending punishment will glorify God the Father declaring His infinite worth as God and the severity of the rejection of the infinite value of the sacrifice of His Son! The punishment truly will fit the crime.

Conclusion

1. He will reign. The government will be on His shoulders. And of His government and of peace there will be no end – all true for those who trust Him!
2. A few years ago I came across an illustration laying out the reasons why we should trust the Lord Jesus. I have used it a couple of times over the years and there were hints of it in the narration in last week's choir presentation. Without apology (and with only a few edits, I read it again, reminding you that this Jesus can be trusted and we ought to trust Him with everything, in everything. Here it is. **He is the fundamental doctrine of true theology; He is the cardinal necessity of spiritual religion. He can satisfy all of our needs and He can do it simultaneously. He supplies strength for the weak. He's available for the tempted and tried. He sympathizes and He sees. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He cleanses the lepers. He forgives sinners. He discharges debtors. He delivers the captives. He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He regards the aged. He rewards the diligent. He beautifies the meek. I'm**

trying to tell you, "You can trust Him!" He is the maker of the mighty. He's the captain of the conquerors. He is the head of the heroes. He is the Prince of the princes. He is the King of kings. He is the Lord of lords. You can trust Him! His life is matchless. His goodness is limitless. His mercy is everlasting. His love never changes. His Word is enough. His grace is sufficient. His reign is righteous. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. I wish I could describe Him to you. He's indescribable because He's incomprehensible. He's irresistible and He's invincible. You can't get Him off of your hands and you can't get Him out of your mind. You can't out live Him and you can't live without Him. Herod couldn't kill Him. Death couldn't handle Him and thank God, the grave couldn't hold Him. There was nobody before Him. There will be nobody after Him. He had no predecessor and He'll have no successor. You can't impeach Him and He's not going to resign. He is the Lord Christ, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and He is the Prince of Peace! And He will reign forever! My dear friends, "You can trust Him!" Amen!