

## Getting to Christmas, part 2

### Salvation and Safety are Waiting

- I. All things in their time.
  - a. I've heard that phrase (from my mom, from family, from good church folks) many times.
    - i. There's a sense that God's time is not the same as my time.
    - ii. In fact, the Bible would agree with them.
    - iii. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." – 2 Peter 3:8.
  - b. All of that never made me feel any better. I was always impatient and wanted more attention paid to my time table and less to God's. {I want it in 10 days}
    - i. But God's timing really is so much better.
    - ii. Habakkuk 2:3 says, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."
  - c. The Jewish people were waiting for their Messiah.
    - i. They'd been waiting for so long that they wondered if he would ever come.
    - ii. They forget the message contained in Habakkuk.
      1. God was waiting for the appointed time.
      2. It may linger – wait for it.
      3. It may seem to delay, but it will come.
  - d. We're celebrating our umpteenth Christmas. It's getting a little old and tired.
    - i. Oh, maybe not the celebration.
    - ii. But the reality of the promise of God has worn off.
  - e. This December we're talking about "Getting to Christmas."
    - i. While we're working our way through this month, we're trying to spot the good gifts that God has waiting for us at Christmas.
    - ii. We're trying to put the waiting time to good use by reminding ourselves that Christ's birth is worth the wait.
      1. It's worth the wait because righteousness and peace are waiting for us.
      2. It's worth the wait because we'll have a chance to know God.
      3. But there's more.
  - f. By the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Jeremiah, the people of Israel are about to get carried into exile in Babylon.
    - i. Hope is gone. Their homes are destroyed. The throne of David has been upended and is vacant.
    - ii. The last thing Judah wanted was a word from the "gloomy prophet" Jeremiah.
      1. Whatever he had to say, it wasn't going to be good news.
      2. But, it was!
    - iii. It was good news then and its good news now.
      1. The Messiah is coming.
      2. And he's got something waiting for us.
- II. Salvation is waiting.
  - a. "This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior," it says in verse 16.
  - b. Savior – what does it mean to say that the Messiah is the Savior?

- i. To be a savior means to save from something.
    - ii. In Jesus case, He saves us from our sin.
  - c. The wages of sin is death. It says in Romans 6:23.
    - i. We get what we deserve if God's justice overtakes His love.
    - ii. But, the coming of Jesus the Messiah saves us from suffering the penalty for our transgressions.
    - iii. A Savior also means that we are in need of being saved.
      - 1. "There is no one righteous, not even one." – Romans 3:10.
      - 2. We're a mess. Salvation is waiting to clean up that mess and remake us in the image of God.
  - d. This is something for the next life.
    - i. That's what the Messiah brings.
    - ii. Salvation from our sins.
    - iii. And that salvation is our entrance into eternal communion with God.
  - e. No small thing waiting for us at Christmas – salvation.
    - i. Getting to Christmas is tough, but it just got a little easier.
    - ii. Salvation is waiting – and it can change everything.
- III. Safety is waiting.
  - a. "In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety." That's from Jeremiah 33:16, the beginning of the verse this time.
  - b. Safety?
    - i. Freedom from harm, strife, trouble, pain, suffering?
    - ii. Then safety from what?
  - c. Safety from sin.
    - i. Let me try to explain this carefully.
    - ii. Sin is more that the things that we do that are not pleasing to God.
    - iii. Sin is also that "great gulf fixed" between us and God.
      - 1. Once we walked with God in the Garden in the cool of the day.
      - 2. Now we hide from God's presence and try to pretend that the break is something we can live with.
    - iv. But we can't – and what can possibly be worse than being separated from God; unable to communicate with Him, unable to feel his presence, unable to know Him.
      - 1. So what greater sense of safety can there be outside of knowing that God is with us?
      - 2. What more can we hope for than for God to say, "You're not alone. No matter what, I'm here."
    - v. The safety that Jeremiah prophecies is this
      - 1. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged." – Deuteronomy 31:8.
      - 2. Safety means – no fear.
        - a. There is no need to be afraid, because God is with you providing safety – care – banishing fear.
        - b. Fear plays a big role in many of our lives.
        - c. To be rid of the fear would be a blessing indeed.
      - 3. Safety means – no discouragement.
        - a. You don't have to be disappointed, feel as though there's a rain cloud that follows you around.

- b. Discouragement only has power when we step out from the safety of God.
  - d. Essentially, safety means Something for this life.
    - i. If salvation is God at work in preparing our future.
    - ii. Safety is God at work securing our todays.
    - iii. Every day of our eternity is shot through with the presence of God – beginning with today.
    - iv. There is no day, no circumstance, no moment that the Messiah (this Jesus) doesn't overshadow.
- IV. So salvation and safety are linked together.
- a. Salvation in the next life.
  - b. Safety in this life.
  - c. Getting to Christmas means understanding that salvation and safety are waiting.
    - i. In Confirmation class we try to boil things down to their simplest (and we hope) most memorable idea.
      - 1. Here's how we handled this idea of salvation – and the continued safety that God provides.
      - 2. Thanks to Amy Rust for this idea!
    - ii. Now + Then = Always.
      - 1. Now = safety.
      - 2. Then = salvation.
      - 3. Always = Always.
  - d. Earlier in the chapter, Jeremiah {33:3} puts it well – “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”
    - i. That unsearchable thing?
    - ii. God's plan includes the security of your present and the redemption of your future.
  - e. Getting to Christmas?
    - i. Not so tough to wait – knowing what's waiting for me there.
    - ii. But once again, God brings an additional blessing.
      - 1. For the people of Judah, the Messiah had not come.
      - 2. For us, the Messiah has come and this season of anticipation is a reminder of that day long past.
    - iii. We don't really have to wait. We can open our presents early.
      - 1. Salvation is waiting.
        - a. Messiah wants to save you from you sin.
        - b. There is no better day than today.
      - 2. Safety (the security of God's presence) is waiting.
        - a. God wants to be present in every moment of every day.
        - b. He's waiting for you to accept his invitation.
    - iv. God wants to take your Now.
      - 1. And your Then.
      - 2. And be with you Always.