

Title: OUR DEEPEST YEARNING, ISAIAH 64:1 – 9
(Chatham, NJ; 12/3/17, AM) [Pt – Exegetical]

Theme: Isaiah expresses a deep yearning for God to deliver Israel, and in so doing he expresses humanity's yearning for forgiveness and communion with its creator.

Purpose: To demonstrate how Christ's birth still appeals to our deep sense of wanting communion with God.

Introduction:

1. Isaiah expresses yearning and longing for God to forgive and to redeem.
2. To understand this yearning all you have to have is a feeling of emptiness, a feeling that something is missing and has kicked your life out of balance.
3. The incarnation satisfies Israel's yearning for God to deliver them: Zechariah's and Mary's songs reflect this.
4. Their experience was the beginning of an important episode of the redemption story.
5. Isaiah 64:1-9 voiced an early yet contemporary expression of that yearning.

Isaiah's Plea for Redemption, 1 – 4

- A. Seeking God's presence
 1. Come down and shake the mountains, 1 (as at the Exodus)
 2. The effect of fire on wood and water is the effect of God's presence, 2
 3. The nations would tremble at his presence
 4. An allusion to Israel at Mt. Sinai – Israel's collective consciousness remembered this
 5. The prophet's yearning for God is also expressed in Romans 8:20-25
- B. Those who wait for him, 4b
 1. Romans 8:25 concludes with the same: wait patiently
 2. But for Isaiah the wait didn't quite have the same dimension of the incarnation
 3. Though we have seen the fulfillment of Israel's yearning, we still must wait in hope
 4. 2 Peter 3:4ff. – some were still complaining about the wait
 5. Gal. 4:4-5, the fullness of time has come upon us
 6. Isaiah 40:28-31, the prophet encouraged people to wait on God because of his nature
 7. 5a provides an encouraging reminder about God
 8. We can wait on God because of what he did by sending his Son
 9. We keep our yearning alive whenever we remember Him

Our Distress, 5 – 7

- A. Our sins have created distress
 1. God was angry at our sins, 5b
 2. We languished in them a long time
 3. "Shall we be saved?" his yearning pours forth in doubt mixed with anxiety
 4. Images of uncleanness: polluted garment, a leaf blown by the wind
 5. Like a leaf we are powerless over our sins
 6. No one calls you
 7. You have hidden your face
 8. We melt in our iniquities
- B. Alienation from God and others
 1. Sin has separated us from God
 2. Sin has caused disruptions in our relationships with others despite the fact that we were made to be in relationships
 3. Think of the negative impact of sinful behaviors: lies, anger, greed, sexual immorality

4. Sinful behaviors spread like an infection once they are introduced
5. More alienation, distress, and yearning are produced
6. Sin and alienation from God truly have created the emptiness in our souls

Isaiah's Confidence and His Request for God's Favor, 8 – 9

- A. You are our father, 8
 1. After Christ we have assuredly been adopted as sons, Gal. 4:4-6
 2. Christ assures us that the Father will hear our prayers, Luke 11 – ask, seek, knock
 3. Jesus has affirmed the relationship that he is our Father
- B. With humility we approach and are healed
 1. We humble ourselves before him
 2. The first step to healing: we admit to needing God's help since we have no power over sin
 3. We are the clay and God is our potter
 4. We allow him to mold us
- C. Don't remember our sins, 9
 1. Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant comes to mind in Isaiah's plea
 2. Ps. 25:7 – remember not the sins of my youth
 3. Israel's divine literature didn't lack in understanding of the problem of sin
 4. Ps. 80:3, 7 – “restore us that we may be saved”

Conclusions:

1. By remembering once again the incarnation of Christ, we find our yearnings realized in a humble stable in the humble city of Bethlehem.
2. The new covenant is one of complete forgiveness and cleansing.
3. Satisfied and forgiven we still yearn and wait for final salvation.
4. Remember again his coming and celebrate its healing power.
5. We invite you to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized.