

Sermon Guides for Isaiah - Jeremiah

Series Title: Hope for Hard Times

Tag Line: Comfort and Challenge in Exile

Dates (2020): July 5, 12, 19, 26

Key Verse:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
(Isaiah 43:1b-2 NRSV)

Series Overview

There was no more dangerous job in the Old Testament than that of the prophet. They were unpopular messengers of God who were called to, as it's been put before, "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." They bore hard truths that both kings and commoners were reluctant to hear, and it often resulted in a threat of their lives. But the task and message of the prophet is still alive and well today, as we face a society that finds itself wayward from God's commandments, and often situations that feels hopeless and bleak.

As we study the work of all the prophets, and Isaiah and Jeremiah in particular, we can live with confidence and conviction, for the purpose of praising God.

Colors, Images, Mood, Vibe:

Lush, green colors that evoke life.

Images of an oasis, signs of life amid a vast, hopeless, deserted wasteland.

Feelings of difficulty but with hope.

Sermon 1

Title: Hope for Hard Times: Consecration

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-13

Key Word: Consecration

Theme: The Call of Isaiah

Main Idea: God calls us to holiness.

Sermon Description:

The call of Isaiah is one of the most vivid and memorable call stories in the Bible. It contains a majestic view of God, seated on a throne in the heavens, surrounded by heavenly beings. A hot coal touches Isaiah's lips, essentially purifying him for the task of being a holy messenger for God. The story is a reminder that on our own, we are ill equipped to do God's kingdom work. But in our baptism, and through salvation that comes from us in Christ, we are not only equipped, but we are compelled to do God's holy work.

Sermon 2

Title: Hope for Hard Times: Restoration

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-7

Key Word: Restoration

Theme: The promised return of the exiles

Main Idea: God is with us through the toughest times, and God will see us through.

Sermon Description:

Isaiah 43 is a hallmark passage in the book, one of the best examples of the comfort that the prophet promises to the exiles. We can, in many ways, identify many ways that we feel like we are “going through the fire” and “passing through the flood waters”—not least with the global pandemic that characterized much of 2020-2021. But even beyond those more obvious contemporary connections, this passage compels us to identify the ways that we feel lost, desperate, and in need of God’s saving hand.

Sermon 3

Title: Hope for Hard Times: Courage

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Key Word: Courage

Theme: Speaking truth with conviction and fearlessness

Main Idea: God calls us to get our hearts right with God.

Sermon Description:

Of the many who had the unenviable job of being a prophet, Jeremiah was the most burdened. His repeated call for the people to repent fell on deaf ears, and was met with resistance and hostility. We are not always open to repentance ourselves. We would prefer the course of either naivete (blissful ignorance of our sins) or denial (willful rejection of the need to repent). Either way, Jeremiah's message is clear: to claim the life and promise that God has for us, we must willingly acknowledge our faults and surrender them over to God.

Sermon 4

Title: Hope for Hard Times: Covenant

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-40

Key Word: Covenant

Theme: A New Covenant, written on our hearts

Main Idea: God has chosen us to be in a special relationship.

Sermon Description:

The concept of covenant is one of the most important linchpins in the Bible. God has chosen us to be in a unique relationship with God. We are God's people, and God is our God. That privilege is accompanied by a responsibility: to adhere to God's commandments and follow God's ways. For Jeremiah, this reality was more than just a set of rules and expectations (written on stone). It was the basis for identity, and the governing principle of one's life (written on hearts). This is a key to deep, whole-hearted discipleship.