

PP Beautiful Feet: The Good News Proclaimed

Part 1-Isaiah 52:1-8

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I remember reading an old story of a kind, wealthy master who died, and he left his slave a large sum of money in the bank. The slave received a bank note informing him he had inherited a sum of money and to come in to sign the documents. He went to the bank with that note, and the teller got the bank manager who sat down with him to explain the inheritance, valued at over a million dollars, an enormous sum in that day. At the end the manager asked if he had any questions. The slave, never having owned anything in his life, simply asked the manager if he could withdraw 75 cents so he could buy a sack of potatoes so he could make some dinner.

He was in reality a millionaire, but in his mind he was a pauper, living day to day
I believe there are a great many Christians who have not realized the riches they have in Christ
And that life-transforming truth begins by understanding the good news bound up in the word
'gospel'

As you open your bibles to **Isaiah 52**, let me ask if you would be able to answer someone who asked you to explain the gospel?

Churches use that word a lot

A friend recommends a gospel-preaching church to you, or you like to listen to gospel music
Maybe you remember the opening song of Disney's animated *Hercules*, called *The Gospel Truth*

PP 'Gospel' is the Greek word *euangelion* and when we break that down, we have *eu* which means *good or pleasant* and *angelos* which is *message...good message, good news*

In OT times, the word was used for when a doctor examined a sick person and afterward told the patient that what was wrong was nothing serious...certainly good news for that sick one

When soldiers went out to battle, people back home waited in suspense for a report

If you are old enough to remember Desert Storm when our troops were fighting, you were probably glued to a TV trying to get updates

When the outcome of a battle was sure, runners were sent to hurry back to tell the people

Watchmen in the towers of the walls would be looking for the runner, and they were trained by the way the runner ran if it was good news or bad news

As we turn to the NT, we see that Jesus often talked of the gospel as the good news that the kingdom of God had broken into this world

Yet for any person to come in to this kingdom, they must be delivered from their sins

PP "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 1:13-14

NT writers developed the word more fully, and the gospel centered on the Person of Jesus, who was born among humanity and died on the cross and rose to life offering forgiveness for all who believe in Him

This is the heart of the gospel, that salvation is made possible by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection

PP "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." **Romans 1:16**

The gospel overlays the entire bible cover to cover like an interpretive grid, so as we approach
Isaiah know that the good news of Jesus Christ is squarely in view

PP Isaiah was the greatest of Israel's OT prophets, his name meaning *Jehovah is salvation*

The first 39 chapter he speaks to events that were happening in his day, warning faithless Israel
to repent, but they wouldn't, so chapters 40-66 he foretells the judgement God will bring
as a power stronger than them would enslave them

Yet, he promises that God would preserve a remnant of people, and through them the Messiah
would come Who would save the nations from bondage to sin

This salvation is in view here in chapter 52 and the good news comes to the forefront

PP 1-God offers redemption to those in bondage

*“Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem,
the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.
Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your
neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus says the LORD: “You were sold for nothing, and
you shall be redeemed without money.”* **Isaiah 52:1-3**

Their exile has come to an end, and God is commanding them to awake and find the power of the
Lord

Jerusalem, Zion, was destroyed by foreign invaders, and lay in ruins

Rise from your ruins Jerusalem, shake loose from your bondage and leave the ruins of your life

In case you aren't seeing the good news here, let me offer you an analogy

Imagine you're invited to visit a prison, but you noticed that several of the cell doors are wide
open, civilian clothes are draped on their beds, but those prisoners remained in their cells

You ask your guide what was happening in these cells, and the answer is that these prisoners
were given a pardon from their crimes, and they were free to go and they were given
clothes and money to live on

Puzzled, you ask why they aren't going, and you're told that when you are in prison for a long
time, you don't know how to see yourself any other way than a prisoner

With urgency you walk into these cells, and you look at each prisoner and tell them, You can go,
you are free, and plead for them to get up and walk out of that cell and live

You declared to them good news, and it is precisely what Isaiah declares to these exiles

Christian, there are people all around us in bondage to sin and Christ can redeem them

Do you want to hear the words that God wants to speak into their ears?

PP *“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”* **Ephesians 5:14**

You may have seen the movie, The Matrix, where human beings are trapped inside a simulated
reality called, the Matrix, created by artificial intelligent machines

They do not know it, but human beings are actually kept in these pods serving as the energy
source for the machines that enslaved them and they are helpless in their bondage

But a group of rebels have escaped their pods, woken up to reality, and they offer the main
character, Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, a choice: he can swallow a red pill which
will wake him up to the truth, or a blue pill that will return him to his simulated life

God doesn't offer a red pill to wake us up to the truth, He offers His mighty word, the gospel
PP *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* **Romans 10:17**

Every person's born into bondage to sin, and unless God awakens them, they do not even know it

For just as it was for Israel, that unsaved sinner was '***sold for nothing***' but they can '***be redeemed without money***'

I really, really love the word **PP** '***redeemed***' which mean to be bought back, or re-purchased
 The Apostle said it clearly, **PP** *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."*

Romans 3:23-25

This incredible word '***redemption***' was often used in two situations, war and slavery

Wars were usually a very lucrative business, did you know that?

The objective was to defeat the enemy, and capture as many of the soldiers as you could

Each captured soldier was a financial opportunity as a letter would be sent to his family with a redemption price, a ransom, that could be paid to buy that man back

In Israel's slavery system, if a man's crops failed, he could sell himself into slavery to avoid poverty, yet a brother could pay the redemption price to free him from his debt

In either case, the one who paid the ransom price is the redeemer, and the one freed is transferred from his former captivity, and now belongs to the redeemer

PP (Chart of Romans 6:22-23)

Every human being is born into exile from God, in bondage to a power greater than us

All the beautiful babies being born in our church have a nature that is unavoidably fallen

Though they lack the capacity for their fallen nature to express itself it won't take long to happen

They inherited a sin nature, born into its bondage, and their hope is in the One Who will redeem

We dedicate these babies, and their families to teach the good news of Jesus Christ, that it will awaken them to believe on the One who offered Himself as the ransom price to buy us out of bondage to belong to God

PP *"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God."* **1 Peter 2:16**

God offers redemption to those in bondage

PP 2-The redeemed have the honor and responsibility to proclaim the good news

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion." **Isaiah 52:7-8**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news

Remember, the image here is that the watchman on the walls is looking for the runner to come and share the outcome of the battle, and he is trained to tell if the news is good or bad by the way the runner is running

That runner enters the city and says to all the people, Our king is returning victoriously

This is the good news of the gospel that we have the privilege to share with those desperately needing our Savior's redemption...Jesus overcame death on the cross, rose to life and has sat down at His Father's side reigning over all

It is the truth that God reigns over all that we can **'publish peace'**, for God is in control, **PP** sovereignly bringing all things in accordance to His will

This is good news and it is truly a pleasure to share, life-giving medicine to the spiritually dead Why would we ever be ashamed of telling someone that Jesus Christ wants to save him or her?

In fact, look at verse 8...the **'watchmen'**, those who tell of the good news, the ones who have seen the LORD, the Christians, they are the joyful ones, and they get to shout it out to those without hope, mired in bondage and despair

Christian, of all people, we can joyfully proclaim the good news to those all around us

PP ***"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may PROCLAIM the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."** 1 Peter 2:9*

It was April, 1912, and a man and his daughter started on their way to America

He was traveling from England where he had started and was pastoring two churches, one in London and the other in Glasgow

PP (Pic) John Harper, 39 years old, widowed with a 6 year old daughter, Nana, grew up in a strong Christian home, and at 13, he had believed on the good news of Jesus Christ

Harper worked in a mill by day, and preached on the streets at night, consumed by the gospel

In 1986 he started a church with 25 people that grew to over 500, attracting the attention of Moody Church in Chicago, who called him to become their next pastor

This is why he and Nana boarded a colossal ship, one you're familiar with, the RMS Titanic

Along with an estimated 2,222 other passengers, they began the voyage to America

2 days into the voyage, at 11:40 pm on April 14th, the largest ship ever built struck an iceberg a glancing blow on the starboard or right-hand side

It was the beginning of the end for more than 1500 souls

Harper got his daughter to a lifeboat, accepting women and children first, and then he began to run to everyone who would listen, telling them about how they could be saved in Jesus

Even after jumping into the freezing waters of the North Atlantic, he swam to person after person telling them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their soul

He swam to a young man floating on a piece of debris, shared the gospel, and the man said no

Harper took his life jacket off and threw it to the man and said, *"Here then, you need this more than I do"* and he swam away to plead to more drowning victims

But the current brought Harper back to the young man a few minutes later, and Harper cried out to him, 'Are you saved now?' to which the man said, 'I cannot honestly say that I am'

Again, John Harper quoted **PP Acts 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"**

Then, losing his hold on that piece of debris, Harper slipped below the surface and drowned

This story was told 4 years later at a survivor's meeting in Ontario, by that man whom Harper shared the good news of Jesus Christ

He ended his recounting with these words, *'I am John Harper's last convert'*

God offers redemption to those in bondage, and the freed have the privilege and responsibility to

proclaim this good news to all those that we can
Amen?
Let's pray