

Reading Schedule for November 12-18, 2018

We are reading the Book of Isaiah, and you will find several connections to the Messiah, as well as promises from God to bring comfort and deliverance. I am enjoying the reading of these chapters as they reveal the heart of God. Several times God promises to restore his wandering people. I am sure you will be able to identify with the message of these chapters.

November 12 – Isaiah 42: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.” (v.1) The phrase “my servant” is sprinkled throughout these chapters in Isaiah. You will especially recognize this emphasis as we will read the most famous chapter in Isaiah next week – Isaiah 53. These servant songs are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Don’t you love the statement, “A bruised reed he will not break?” Aren’t you drawn to the message about a new song that’s available because there is hope in the Lord? Not everything about this chapter is hopeful, but I love some of these promises. One of the reasons I wanted us to read these chapters is about Isaiah’s strong message pointing to the ministry of the Messiah. The Messiah will not just be for the Jewish people, but he will be for all nations, as we read about this truth in verse 10. How do you see the Messiah woven into these verses? What else impresses you about the words of the prophet?

November 13 – Isaiah 43: “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (v.19) This is one of our beginning statements as a church. We believe that New Harvest was the beginning of a new thing. I like that our title includes the word “new.” This theme will repeat itself as we read through these chapters in Isaiah. There is a sense of crying out to the Lord and he will heal us. Even as they did in Egypt and God responded, so too today. Our God is always up to something new. But will we have eyes to see and hearts to respond? Can’t you also understand that woven into these words is the hope of the Messiah?! How do you respond to this chapter?

November 14 – Isaiah 44: “Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” (v.8) I always liked the idea that there is no god like our God. I am also thoughtful about this message, “fear not.” It is easy to recognize how often the idea of fear is in the Bible. Many times it is referenced as a negative idea because it makes us shrink back and feel hopeless. The prophet expresses a message that is meant to bring hope to the people. As the Lord is good to us, he calls us to share that message with others. May our cup overflow through our gratitude and ministry to others. God is good to us, and we then in turn share it with others. Is that how you see it? Are there any fears getting in your way? Is there any god like our God?

November 15 – Isaiah 45: “I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.” (v.7) This is affirmation of God being ruler over all. The Bible clearly portrays our Lord as sovereign. He is abundant in His blessings but also certain in his discipline. When good times

come, thank God and use your prosperity for Him. When bad times come, don’t resent them, but ask God what you can learn from the refining experience to make you a better servant of the Lord. In this chapter, Cyrus is an example of God using a pagan king for his purposes. Any victory that Cyrus experienced reveals God is at work accomplishing his purposes in any way he chooses. I hope you see God’s bigness in these verses. How do you respond to the sovereignty of God?

November 16 – Isaiah 46: “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.” (v.9) God’s self-affirmation is clearly presented as no pagan god can match the power, wisdom and strength of our God. God is unique in his knowledge and in his control over the future. His purpose will be carried out. Be careful when you want to pursue something that promises good but is not secure. There is no god like our God. As you hear the Word of the Lord, do not harden your hearts as the Israelites did. We can look back on history and see the hand of God accomplishing exactly what he had planned. Isn’t it impressive to read about the true nature of God? I remind you to review Isaiah 40 if you want to get a clear picture about who is in charge.

November 17 – Isaiah 47: “Sit in silence, go into darkness, queen city of the Babylonians; no more will you be called queen of kingdoms.” (v.5) For a time, Babylon was in control. But here Isaiah predicts the fall of Babylon, but it would not happen for 150 years. Babylon has not emerged as the mightiest force on earth, even though they conquered Judah and Jerusalem. In their pride God brought them down. We know that God used Babylon to punish his sinful people, but only for a season. Babylon believed in its own greatness, and claimed to be the only power on earth. Just like Babylon, our society is addicted to pleasure and power. But these will pass away quickly. How can you use your life for God’s honor rather than your own? This is a challenging chapter and confronts selfish power and human pride.

November 18 – Isaiah 48: “Leave Babylon, flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth; say, ‘The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.’” (v.20) Doesn’t that sound like a New Testament verse? Can’t you just see the captives leaving Babylon after so many years of being in exile? No wonder they were shouting with joy as they went from slavery to being free. Obviously, this is connected to the Gospel, that would last forever. The Lord has redeemed his servants from the slavery of sin. As we realize God’s goodness, we will shout for joy as well. This is a season of gratitude, and you can express your gratitude by giving praise to God and acknowledging his goodness to others. It had been a long season of captivity, but God was releasing them to freedom – and so too with you. Why not spend a few minutes thanking God for the marvel of the Gospel and the wonder of being saved by grace through faith?!

PRAYER: Pray for one of our most important Food Bank opportunities of the year as we give away a frozen chicken for each family as a Thanksgiving gift.