

Isaiah 11:1-9

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Preacher: Paul Levy

[0 : 00] Some time ago I read a story which I gather is a true story, it's not a joke. Outside Bristol Zoo! There was a car park and the car park was for cars and buses and motorbikes. There was a very nice man outside Bristol Zoo! who collected the fees for cars and buses. £2.50 for a car and £7 for a bus. He did that for 25 years and one day didn't show up. The zoo contacted the council and said to them you need to send a new collector. The council wrote back to the zoo and said the car park is your business it's got nothing to do with us. In other words the council basically said we've not employed anyone to collect fees and the zoo was saying we've not employed anyone to collect fees. But this man for 25 years had turned up with his homemade booth and collected around about £350 a day for 25 years. That amounts to around about half a million pounds. And so as we sit here this evening that man is presently probably in a villa in France or Italy or Spain. So my question to you is this was he clever or is he corrupt? And the answer is yes. Now who's going to deal with that? Who will bring that man to justice?

Multiply that by 50 billion and you've got the problems in the world that need sorting out. Now we're tracing over these weeks we began this morning the promises of God which are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus and we're still in Isaiah. He served God in the 8th century BC and the text that Reuben read to us is a wonderful wonderful promise that God somehow in some way is going to send somebody who will finally fix the world.

And if that sounds like a pipe dream to you let me assure you that that's somebody we've already seen come into the world. And we've been given a preview of what God will do when he finally fixes the world by his son the Lord Jesus when he walked this earth.

And I really value this passage in Isaiah 11 because the longer that you live in the world you realise don't you like I do that human leadership it's necessary but it's inadequate.

The longer you live you see that human leadership is necessary but inadequate. And so we see that in our country now don't we? You pin your hopes on the next leader and then after a while you get rid of that leader.

[2 : 58] And then you pin your hopes on the next leader and then you get rid of that leader.

Malcolm Muggeridge was a writer in the 20th century.

He was one of Graham's patients when Graham worked in a pharmacist so Graham knew him. But Malcolm Muggeridge was quite a famous writer. He lived in Cambridge then in India in Egypt. He also lived in Moscow for a time.

And he wrote for many of the British newspapers. He was converted to Christ a little bit later in his life. And his biographer says this of Muggeridge. He says this, he says the kingdoms of the earth were seen to be failures.

And he turned his attention to that kingdom which is not of this world. And that's what Isaiah 11 does. Isaiah 11 shows us that we need to turn our attention to that kingdom which is not of this world.

And so I really value Isaiah 11 because if you keep putting your confidence in people, whoever they may be, or institutions, or powers, or your own abilities, I can promise you you will get very disappointed.

[4 : 08] You will keep putting your feet on sand. And you'll keep looking for a rock. If we change the illustration, the great preacher Spurgeon, he reflected on that moment where Noah sent out a dove from the ark.

Some of you remember that scene. Where Noah released the dove from the ark to go and see if there was any land. And the dove flew around for quite a long time and it found nowhere to land.

And then eventually it came back probably exhausted to the ark. And Spurgeon says in a little comment, he says this, you will never find rest in this world for your soul.

It is only when you come to the ark that is Christ that you will find rest for your soul. And so this promise in Isaiah chapter 11 is very important.

You're not dealing with a fairy tale. You are dealing with the solution of God for the problems of this world. Because without the person who is called Christ, who is Christ, this world has got no answers.

[5 : 16] Although there have been some very good leaders in history, human leaders, nobody has been up to the task of fixing the world, have they? No one is able to do what the Lord Jesus is able to do.

And we will see that as we look at Isaiah 11. Because when Isaiah wrote these words in chapter 11, he's got a very challenging job. He's got to persuade God's people that God was actually going to reduce them.

We might say God was actually going to decimate them. So if you look at chapter 10 and verse 22, he says, you are like the sand. You are like sand on the beach.

There's going to just be some survivors. Or chapter 10 and verse 33, there's going to be some trees. God is going to bring down some lofty trees. In other words, God is saying in Isaiah 10, I'm going to bring down the proud.

And I'm going to bring down the disobedient. And that's what he did. And why did he do that? He did that because his people were disobedient. Disobedient.

[6 : 20] But after that, after he's brought God's people down, Isaiah was able to tell the people that God would eventually restore and revive his people. And that's what we pick up in 11 verse 1.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, David's dad. And a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

There will rise up a righteous leader and a saviour. Why would God do that? That is the sheer grace and the kindness of God. Two points this evening. I want to be brief.

Firstly, the answer is a person. The answer to the world is a person. That's the first point. And secondly, the person has the answers.

Did you see what I did there? I was very impressed with that. The answer is a person. And the person is the answer. So first of all, the answer to the world is a person. Look at verses 1 to 3.

[7 : 18] So can you see verse 1, the people of God have been reduced to a stump. You know you cut down a tree and there's a stump left in the ground? They're going to be removed from the promised land.

They would be reduced, but eventually they would be restored. But can you see in chapter 11 verse 1, God is going to raise up somebody from the stump, from the line of David, who would be a shoot, a branch.

And we know of course that can't be David. Because David is long gone. He's long dead. When Isaiah was writing. But obviously Isaiah is promising that there's going to be a new king who's going to emerge from that royal line.

And we know that it's a person because we see in verse 2, can you see that? That the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him. On this person. And the Spirit of the Lord will remain on him. And of course, the new king would be Jesus.

Born in the hometown of David, Bethlehem. Referred to repeatedly as the son of David, the son of David, the son of David. And actually in the last book of the Bible, he calls himself the root and the offspring of David.

[8 : 26] Revelation 22. And the Holy Spirit rests on Jesus. Yes, he does. We know, don't we, that when Jesus was baptised, that the Spirit came down in the form of a dove.

And the Spirit rested on Jesus and never left him. And so is Jesus just another passing leader? No. You read the Old Testament, and every king and prophet before him.

And every king and prophet after him has been flawed and sinful, but not Jesus Christ. And in verse 2, if you look at the text, it tells us about this king. And it gives us some beautiful words to describe the king.

There are couplets, can you see them? To show that Jesus is supremely qualified. So look at verse 2. This king is going to have, verse 2, wisdom and understanding. In other words, he is going to have the ability to think properly.

Think properly. Now, he mentioned, didn't I, that crazy situation of a man who runs a car park that's basically illegal.

[9 : 34] But think of the headlines that you read in the news, on the internet. Think of situations globally that are so difficult, aren't they, to work out.

Think about government decisions that have to be made about the economy. Think about our own local government with all the decisions that have to be made with all the disagreeing factions. Or think about this Christmas time when families will get together and it's just impossible to sort out the mess of the family. It's so messy.

And the sadnesses in our homes and in our families and the problems. Who is going to be able to think the right way?

Who is going to be able to think the right way forward to make wise decisions? And in many cases, the answer to that is nobody, isn't it?

[10 : 35] You just don't know. I find myself in so many situations in life, I just don't know. And we get a preview, don't we, of the sheer genius of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament.

Think about it. Read a Gospel this week. Every issue that is brought to Jesus, he immediately and somewhat easily solves. He never uses Google. And sometimes people come to Jesus and they attack him and he leaves them speechless.

And sometimes people come to Jesus and they come with a very, very difficult question to trap him. And he has extraordinary insight. And sometimes people come to Jesus in great distress and they do not know what to do.

And he gives them the exact perfect reply. The wisdom of Jesus. But look at the second couplet. Can you see?

The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him and he'll have the spirit of wisdom and understanding, but the spirit of counsel and of might. In other words, he's got the ability to do something about it. This King Jesus, he is not only going to have the ability to see what needs to be done, but he's got the ability to do something about it.

[11 : 54] And so contrast that to the leaders in the world, who often, they can see the problem of what needs to be done. And they can see the way forward, but they just don't have the resources or the influence to do it. Think of your family.

Think of the situations that you face. And maybe you can see what needs to be done, but you just haven't got it in you to be able to do it. And so think again about the picture we're given of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament.

Jesus could see the corruption that was going on in the temple and what the religious leaders were doing to the biblical faith. But could he do anything about it?

Yes, he could. Can Jesus see the damage that is done by sickness in the world? And how it was ruining lives? And can he do anything about it?

Yes, he can. And when Jesus saw a dead person and the effect of what death had on families and friends, did he have the ability to do anything about it?

[12 : 57] Yes, he did. And when Jesus saw the sin in the world and the separation between us and God, did Jesus have the ability to do anything about it?

Yes, he did. It's what we come to remind ourselves of at the table, isn't it? That truth, yes, he did.

He knows, he understands, and he is able to do something about it. And so Jesus not only has the ability to see what needs to be done, but he also has the might and the power to do it.

The third quality is this. He's got the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He's got the ability to be the person fit for office.

There is nobody who knows God like Jesus. He himself said no one knows the Father properly except the Son.

[14 : 02] In other words, Jesus is in a league of his own when it comes to knowing God, being God. Does anyone fear the Lord in that truest sense of the word like Jesus feared the Lord?

He revered God. He trusted God. He obeyed God. There is no one like Jesus. It's amusing and it's wonderful that when God is going to do something in the world, he bypasses the leadership.

Dail Ralph Davis in his commentary on Luke brings this out really helpfully. As he takes you through the New Testament Christmas accounts, Dail Ralph Davis says it borders on the hilarious.

So for example, in Luke 3 we're told that in the time of Caesar, who's a very important person.

Pilate was the governor, quite another important person. Herod was the junior governor, a very

important person.

Annius and Caiaphas were the high priests, reasonably important people. And then Luke tells us that the word of God bypassed them all and went to a bloke called John in the wilderness.

[15:09] John the Baptist, you can almost see the word of God pushing the leadership of the world aside and saying, I don't need you, I'm going to John the Baptist. To give him the message to announce the Savior.

Ralph Davis puts it like this, Luke pulls up the movers and shakers of the times who dominate the headlines and get the interviews. And there are a mere prelude to the main and most significant event that the word of God came to a bloke called John.

Isaiah is announcing in Isaiah 11, someone who is going to outperform and outlast all the leadership of the world.

There is a person on whom the spirit of God will rest. And this person is going to have the ability to think and do and be the solution of the world as he is.

And that person is Jesus. Historical Jesus. The human and divine and supreme Jesus.

[16:18] He is the answer to the world and he is a person. And that is the person, this is the person that you need to put your feet on so to speak.

He is the rock on which you and I need to stand. The second thing is that the person has the answers. We see that in verses 3 to 10.

Well I want you to notice just how Isaiah describes Jesus as Jesus sits on the kind of magisterial bench. Look at verse 3. It says he shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide disputes by what his ears hear.

In other words, he won't be swayed, he won't be deceived, he won't be manipulated. But his decision, verse 4, will be righteous.

No mistakes. No injustices. No injustices. And that tells us that the person who deserves hell will receive it. Do you remember King Solomon was given a gift, wasn't he, of great wisdom and power.

[17:39] He's once presented with a baby and there are two mums claiming that the baby was theirs. It's a very emotional and difficult situation.

But Solomon, with incredible wisdom, solved the case in a second. You can read about it in 1 Kings chapter 3. But Jesus announces that he is a greater person than Solomon.

And now the flip side to this justice. That where the needy are provided, justice punishes the guilty. Look at verse 3 and 4. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide disputes by what his ears hear. But with righteousness he shall judge the poor. And he will decide with equity, with fairness for the meek of the earth. And he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth.

And with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked. And you might read verse 4 and you might think that is a good thing.

[18:45] That people would be brought to justice. The evil that's been done all over our world. That is a good, good thing. But I need to remind you and I want to remind you that you and I are guilty before God.

The Bible very clearly says that the soul that sins will die. And therefore I will die and you will die.

The Bible also says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And therefore I have fallen short and you have fallen short. And therefore I will die and you will die. And unless you have a saviour you will experience the wrath of God for eternity.

Unless you put your sins and yourself into the hands of Jesus Christ. Hands that you will discover are nail pierced hands. Because he is keen to save and deliver.

I told you on Wednesday night those of you who are at the half year L.A.M. And I think I'll speak about it probably at Stuart's funeral. But the last time I met with Stuart Cashman we met in the hospital at Hammersmith.

[20:03] And it was obviously very clear he was unwell. And for some reason I don't normally do this when I come and visit people. When they're in hospital and say are you ready to die? And I said that to Stuart.

Stuart said I hope so. I said to Stuart we can do better than that can't we? And we talked about the gospel and he was ready to die. He as I left kind of sent me a text with all the things he wanted done and said in his funeral.

He was ready to die. And ever since that Thursday every time I look in the mirror I keep trying to ask myself the same thing. I ask myself the same question. Are you ready to die? Are you ready to die? What will you do on that day when you stand before the judge of all the earth. The king of kings and the lord of the lords.

The judge of all the earth. And if he would ask you why should I let you into my heaven what will you say? What will you say? I hope and I pray that the only thing that you can say the only thing that I can say is because he died for me.

[21 : 14] He died for me. Because Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. And this person who is described here in Isaiah 11 is going to decide well because Jesus is the perfect judge.

He is going to destroy well because he is also going to deliver well. Because this Jesus lived well and died well and rose well.

And as we close this evening there is something that you and I need to understand about these verses in Isaiah 11. Because Isaiah is focusing his knee on the two comings of Jesus.

Isaiah is so brilliant. He is focusing on the two comings of Jesus. Not just the first coming of Jesus but the second coming. The first coming of the Lord Jesus is where Jesus will show up.

And he will show himself to be the one who can think and do. And be exactly who the world needs. And exactly who you need. And Jesus did that. He absolutely did that. But the second coming of Jesus.

[22 : 28] Is where he will come. To perfect things. And finish what he has begun. And we see this picture don't we beautifully in the last verses of the chapter verses 6 to 9.

Because we read in verses 6 to 9 that the dangers and the tensions of this world that you and I live in. Will one day completely disappear. And it's described again in two sentences.

So can you see it? The wolf and the lamb happy together. The leopard and the goat. The calf and the lion. The cow and the bear. The child and the snake. All at peace.

Harmonious. It's a beautiful, beautiful portrait of what one day Jesus will bring. And the summary is there in verse 9.

A world without hurt. Can you imagine that? And they shall not destroy. There will be no harm or destruction.

[23 : 35] Because the one who has reversed the fall. The fall where Adam and Eve sinned. Do you remember it? And the fall began. And when Jesus came the great reversal began.

And Jesus will reverse. And he will restore everything to what it was supposed to be. Back to Eden. And God's people. All of God's people. Will know him intimately.

Can you see in verse 9? Verse 9. The earth will be filled. Full of the knowledge of the Lord. As the waters cover the sea. And there will be no tension.

And no fear. And no suffering. And no distress. And no death. And no disease. Let me remind you. The words of that biography of Malcolm Burgerish. Malcolm Burgerish. He turned. His attention. To the kingdom. Which is not of this world. The one that will last.

[24 : 41] And Jesus himself. Who said. When he came the first time. This kingdom is right in front of you. Turn around. Enter into it.

Belong to it. And belong forever. Because one day. This king. This king. This king. Who's already shown himself. To be the complete master of the world.

Will perfect it. And all his people. Will be present. With him. He has proved this.

And he has certainly promised it. And I think at Christmas. That is a very. Very great thing. To remember isn't it? That someone has come.

And will come. Who will make things right. That's funny. Let's pray.

[25 : 38]