

“Hasten” December 10, 2017, Isaiah 40:1-11, 2
Peter 3:10-13, Mark 1:4-8

Then he went home; and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. And then his friends heard it, they went out to seize him; for they said, “He is beside himself (Mark 3:19-21).”

And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they called for him to come out of the house. And he answered, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ...Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister and mother (Mark 3:31, 33, 35).

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Jesus had said, “No one who follows me and does not despise his familial relationships with father, mother, sister, brother and their own social status in the world is worthy of being my disciple.

When our children go off to military service, to a new job, to college, to university or to graduate school, they leave home. They are in a hurry to leave home. There is a calling for them beyond family, indeed it is

a necessary calling, even if they continue to live in the home, something has changed.

Family is not an ultimate, an unconditional relationship. Friendship with the world is alien and the Gospel of Christ calls us to become adversarial with the principalities and powers that rule this world. We represent another world, another realm, another society. This is why Peter said to the church,

In everything that you do you should be working to make God's kingdom come sooner rather than later.

We are to HASTEN God's day by our lifestyle. We are to hasten God's day by our choices. We are to hasten God's day by our value judgments. How do we speed up God's day? How do we make it come faster and sooner? What does Peter mean?

In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord;

We are to call out to the wild places, the wilderness, the places where God is ignored or has been forgotten, or to the places that we have ignored or forgotten. We are to proclaim truth to power, to places and people and where greed has replaced God, comfort has replaced kindness, and the pursuit of wealth and material idolatry has replaced the pursuit of values which guarantee the holiness and sacredness of every human life.

Make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

We need to stop beating around the bush with our weakened situational moralism of some say, this, some say that, and we will not commit to saying anything, rather than being God's prophetic witnesses to truth. Make it plain and make it straight, no chaser, because our world and the lives in it are at stake.

4 Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

We need to stop shying away from the radicalism of Christ's Gospel. As the Virgin Mary prophesied in Luke 1:46-54, we need to forthrightly state that God is going to turn things upside down from a human perspective. Mary sang Gods song:

My soul exalts the LORD. My spirit rejoices in God my savior. His mercy is upon generation to generation among those who honor and reverence him. He has scattered the proud and those with high-minded thoughts about themselves, he has brought down rulers from thrones, he has exalted the oppressed. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has remembered those who seek after and serve him.

This is the message that we must proclaim, first set forth in Isaiah. The coming Advent of Christ and God's day of judgment upon the world calls us to get moving with this message. It calls us to stop going on with business as usual, and move forward as God's militant people determined to bring justice, love and human fulfillment to all.

5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

All means all. The gospel is not just for the good, in fact Jesus judged that those who see themselves as good, as the in crowd, will never truly receive it. But it is a glorious future that we are to hasten to make happen. It is a future that includes everyone, after our performance has been judged by God, and it is certain because God said so.

Finally, we are told by the Prophetic Word:

“All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the
field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.

Surely the people are grass.
⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever.”

Those we live and work among, even those we pray with and share lives with as families need to know the truth. Everything you are holding on to, including you, who you think you are, and the false consciousness that you have been socialized into, will soon fade away, but not God’s truth, not God’s eternal decrees, and not God’s divine transcendent utterance. We are bringing a message of comfort, even though it is a painful one. And we must remember, it is an urgent one, for of that day and that hour no one knows, expect God most high who is going to bring it.

⁹ You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,

lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;

say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

We are to BRING IT. We are to SHOUT IT. We are to do so fearlessly. The only way we can do so is to not even think about it. As Jesus house was jammed packed with people, his family was concerned, his friends were concerned, but Jesus was in his stride, and so shall we be, hastening, speeding up the day of God’s coming. Making it happen. Amen.