

THE TWO-FOLD MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM

ISAIAH 40:3-11 • TV204B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9TH, 1983

By
HENRY T. MAHAN

Transcribed, edited and published
APRIL 8TH, 2012

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
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Isaiah 40:3-11

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

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I'm going to try to speak from my heart to you today in a very plain and simple, yet I trust, forceful manner, on the subject: **“THE TWO-FOLD MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM.”**

I wish that I had in my audience today every professing religionist and every preacher in this land of ours. I would like to have their ear for just a moment.

If I had the ear of every preacher, of every religionist, every deacon, elder, Sunday school teacher, or choir member and every church officer, I would turn to **Isaiah Chapter 40** and I would read **verses 6 through 9.**

I want to read it to you. If you will; take your Bible and open it there before you and listen carefully as I speak to you on this subject: **“The Two-fold Message of Evangelism.”**

“The voice said cry, and I said; what shall I cry?” The voice said, “Preach and I said, what shall I preach?” That’s a good question isn’t it? Here is the answer; *“All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof is as of the flower of the field.”*

“The grass withereth; the flower fadeth because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely, the people is grass. Lift up your voice; lift it up and be not afraid, and say unto the cities of Judah; behold your God.”

My friends, the most humbling and challenging thing that I face today and I speak from my heart; God is my witness, the great concern of my heart, and I believe it is the concern of your heart, (at least some of you), is that our generation experience a return to the preaching of the Gospel.

That’s the great concern of my heart, that my generation experiences a return to the preaching of God’s grace and God’s glory in Jesus Christ.

Today we are plagued with a Gospel of works; you know it and I know it. Today, we are plagued with a Gospel of self-righteousness; everybody is bragging about his religion, his works, and his merit.

Do you know what we are hearing today? Paul said, *“We are hearing another gospel which is not another.”* He said, *“It is not another gospel at all.”* There is no other Gospel, there is but one Gospel.

What we are hearing is a perversion, a twisting of the Gospel of God Almighty. Paul said, *“Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”*

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The burden of my heart is this; I would like to hear somebody today preaching the Gospel. I believe that some of you would. Like a man said to me not long ago; “I am tired of fun and games. I am tired of entertainment in the churches. I am tired of all the singing, the programs, the pep and the promotion. I sure would like to hear somebody preach Christ.” Wouldn’t you?

We have an abundance of church buildings. There are church buildings on every corner. There is a community in Ashland where you can stand at one point and see four churches all of the same denomination.

We have the form and the ceremony. We have the religious programs on television and on the radio on Sunday from midnight to midnight and you can hear some kind of preaching. We have all of these things; we have preachers everywhere. There are preachers everywhere. There are preachers for every hundred people in our community.

But, one thing is missing. We have the buildings, we have the form, we have the ceremony, and we have the preachers but there is no real message; there is no Word from God.

Amos, chapter 8: verse 11 describes our day; *“behold the day is come, saith the Lord God, when I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, not a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the Word of God.”*

That’s where we are. We are in the midst of a dry and miserable wasteland as far as preaching is concerned. We are in that day. Men are preaching about God but they are not telling the truth about God.

Men are using the name of Christ but they are not telling the truth about Christ. Men are preaching salvation but they are not preaching the truth about salvation.

My friends, I warn you, I sound a clear note; this generation will perish with all of its form, ceremony, and religion, if there is not soon, a return to preaching the Word of God, if there is not a return to that message which God Almighty used in other days to make His power and His majesty known.

We have got to have a return. If anybody is going to know, if anybody is going to behold, if anybody is going to understand anything about the living God, we are going to have to go back to preaching His Word and quit entertaining men on their road to hell.

We are going to have to return to that message if anybody is ever awakened to his need, to his sin, and to his inability, and made to cry, God be merciful to me. We are going to have to have a return to that message if we see the redemptive glory of Jesus Christ.

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About all that Jesus Christ is to the average person is either a “super star” or “somebody up there who likes me” or “sweet little Jesus boy” or “poor little Jesus boy,” or a failing example or a frustrated reformer or a defeated martyr. He is not the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

We sing songs like:

**“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.”**

Then, our preacher gets up and asks; “won’t you please let Jesus do this or won’t you please let Jesus do that. Sweet little poor Jesus boy, won’t somebody have pity on Jesus? If you won’t take Him for a dollar I will give Him to you for a quarter.”

“But Jesus is such in a pitiful condition, up there leaning over the banisters in heaven crying His eyes out because people won’t let Him have His way.” Where is this “all hail the power of Jesus’ name” that we’ve been singing about?

We are going to have to return to this message if the proud, Pharisee’s heart, is humbled before God. We are going to have to have a return to this message of grace and glory for the guilty and mercy for the miserable if any sinner is going to have any hope of redemption.

The only hope that the chief of sinners can ever have is in the grace of God through Jesus Christ with a power to save.

I will tell you a verse of Scripture that sums up this generation; *“ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.”*

Here’s another one: *“Having a form of godliness, (having a form of piety, having a form of religion), but denying the power thereof.”* Denying the power of God, denying the power of the Spirit, denying the power of His blood, denying the power of His grace and denying the power and the efficacy of His sin-offering.”

If I could have all the preachers in this land listening to my voice today, I would ask the question; “Is there not a prophet in the land? Is there not somewhere, a man who loves Christ more than he loves his belly?”

“Is there not a man somewhere who loves Christ more than he does the praise of men? Is there not somewhere in our land a man who loves Jesus Christ and His Word more than he loves promotion, prestige and possessions, *“ye, even mother, father, husband, wife, brother or sister, or his own life also?”*

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If there is, God might use him. I would ask; “Is there not a prophet whose ear is tuned to God and not to the voice of his hearers? Is there not a man whose ears are tuned to God and not to the voice of his chairman, the board of deacons, or his women’s missionary society, or what the people want to hear?”

He said, “*In the last days they will heap for themselves teachers having itching ears.*” Both the people and the preachers have itching ears. “*They will turn away their ears away from the truth and be turned to fables.*”

I would ask, “Is there not in this land a prophet who fears none but God, who fears losing his soul more than losing his job? Is there such a man who fears losing his soul and not his church? Is there not in this land a prophet who dares to speak where God speaks and be silent where God is silent?”

Is there not a man in this land who is not promoting but who desires to preach, just preach the Word of God, whatever men think, whatever men say, or however men respond? Paul said, “*If I please men, (I know one thing) I am not the servant of Jesus Christ.*”

If such a man can be found, like Isaiah of old, or John the Baptist of old, then, when he preaches, the glory of God will once again be revealed. Wouldn’t that be something to behold the glory of God?

Men will once again sense the awesome presence of the living God, that God about whom David wrote when he said, “*As that thirsty deer panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, the living God.*”

Wouldn’t that be something to feel in our congregation, not just the whoopee spirit of happiness but the awesome, awful, presence of God Almighty, where men are broken under His power, with the visitation of His presence and His spirit?

Wouldn’t that be something, when men worship God, when men pray and we could feel the power of His spirit, when people sang and you could feel the rejoicing of the heart, when a preacher preached and you could know that God is speaking, not a man, God speaking?

We could go away from that place not saying, “We sure had a good crowd today didn’t we? Didn’t the choir sing pretty? Did you notice what sister so and so was wearing? How many did you have in your class?”

We would go away from that place saying, “*Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?*” Wouldn’t that be something?

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Not only that, but if we could find such a man, the good news of redemption would once again be heard. God said in **Isaiah 40**; *“Comfort ye my people. Speak peaceably to my people. Their iniquity is pardoned.”*

Good news, we would hear good news and our hearts would rejoice. Sinners would have hope. Sinners would have some help. Sinners would have some confidence. Sinners would have some comfort. Huh?

Gone would be the proud voice of the self-righteous Pharisee who stands in the church and talks about what he gave up for Jesus. He talks about how he tithed, fasted, and read his Bible, and gave alms to the poor.

Gone would be the proud, haughty voice of the Pharisee, who brags on himself and tells God how good he is. That’s about all the average testimonial meeting is, some proud Pharisee, bragging on himself and telling God how good he is and hoping the people will believe him.

Gone will be the voice of the haughty spirit who stands in the pew and debates whether or not he will accept Jesus, debates whether or not he will let God in his heart. But, ringing from that pulpit once again is the solemn, sacred, and holy message of God’s grace and glory in Christ Jesus.

It may be that once again, instead of the soul-winners who prissy up and down the aisle to get somebody to decide for poor, little, Jesus, instead of the church trying to have a record attendance and get more baptisms than the church down the road, it may be that if that message is once again preached, we may hear the cry of a broken heart somewhere in our congregation that will ascend to heaven and say:

**“Depth of mercy, can there be?
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
And me the chief of sinners spare?”**

“Do you reckon; do you reckon that there is any hope for me?” No, we are asking the sinner, “Will you let Jesus save you; will you let God redeem you; will you let us baptize you; will you be one of the bunch?”

The sinners at Pentecost cried; *“Sirs, what must we do?”* They were calling on the preachers; the preachers weren’t calling on them. They were crying out for help, for mercy. The preachers weren’t crying out to them.

It may be once again that we will hear men say:

**“Can it be, can it be?
That there is mercy still reserved for me?”**

**Can it be?
That I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me
Who Him to death pursued."**

I will tell you this; if such a man can be found somewhere in the land; let him know this, there is not much prospect as to pay, possessions, promotion, or prestige, not much.

He will feel the wrath of Satan, and the love of God, but also the wrath of Satan. He will feel the loneliness of non-conformity. His chief enemies will be other preachers. His chief enemies will be the religionists.

Is that not so of every prophet in the Bible? Who despised, and hated, and crucified our Lord? It was religious leaders. Who hounded Paul from city to city? It was religious leaders. Who martyred every disciple with the exception of John? It was religious leaders.

Who shed more blood than all the armies of the world combined? It was religious leaders and the churches of our day. Read your history books.

That man will feel the wrath of Satan and the loneliness of non-conformity. I will tell you this; there is not much prospect as to pay, promotion, possessions of prestige; *"great is his reward in heaven for so prosecuted they the prophets which were before Him."*

I will tell you of two happy notes that I can sound:

First of all: When God raises up a prophet, He gives him the promise of His presence.

"I will be with you. I will never leave you or forsake you. My grace is sufficient." You are never alone. He promises him that; He said, *"I will be with you."*

Every time God raises up a prophet He says, *"I will be with you."* The Lord is his portion. The Lord is his strength. The Lord is his life and the Lord will never leave him alone. *"I will never leave you alone."* "That soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose; I'll never, no never, no never, no never, forsake," that's a promise!

Secondly: He will give him a message.

I will guarantee those two things. *"Thus saith the Lord God."* If God raises up a prophet He will promise His presence and give him a message; *"prepare ye the way of the Lord."* That is what He will tell him.

He will tell him; "Speak to my people. The mouth of the Lord shall speak through you. Cry out; lift up your voice; I will give you my message to take to my people."

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Here in our text, old John the Baptist was such a man. He was out in the wilderness. They said, “*Who are you?*” He said; “*I am a voice.*” “Aren’t you somebody famous?” “*No; I’m just a voice.*” “What are you doing out here?” “*I am crying, prepare ye the way of the Lord.*” “God gave me a message. I am not alone. God gave me a message; God is with me.”

John the Baptist, here in **Isaiah 40**, God says; “*You go cry. Lift up your voice. Stand upon the mountain. Shout the good news. And I said, what shall I cry, what shall I cry?*” He said to cry two things:

First of all: “*Cry aloud; (don’t be afraid); lift up your voice.*”

“*What shall I cry?*” You have it here; “*all flesh is grass.*” That is what He said, “*All the glory of man is of the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of God blows upon it.*”

Then, the second part of that message is; “*Behold your God.*”

That’s our message; that is the two-fold message. It is not speculation; it is truth. “*All flesh is grass and behold your God.*”

Here is the first lesson to learn. Here is the first part of our message; “*all flesh is grass.*” Job learned it; he said, “*Lord; I have heard of you; now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore, I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes.*”

Isaiah learned it; he said, “*I saw the Lord and I cried; woe is me; I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*”

David learned it; he said, “*My sins are ever before me. Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight.*”

Saul of Tarsus learned it; he said, “*When the law came I died. I found out that there were none good, no not one. There is none that understandeth, none righteous, no not one.*”

A man will never be found until he is lost, never, never. A man will never receive grace until he is guilty. That is where we start.

A man will never be raised until he is dead, slain by the Law. A man will never be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ until the Holy Ghost has stripped him naked of his own righteousness.

You watch it now; “*All flesh is grass,*” (A-I-I). What does that mean? It means just this; all that pertains to the flesh is grass. There is nothing as worthless as withered grass; it is not fit for anything. It is fit for one thing and that is burning. You can’t use it for anything.

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You can use a dead log to burn and get heat but grass that is dead, withered grass, is fit for nothing but the furnace. That is what He is saying about the flesh; *“all flesh is grass.”*

There is nothing as worthless as a withered, old flower. There is but one thing to do with a withered, old, flower, and that is to throw it in the garbage; it is not good for anything.

That is what He says about our glory; *“all flesh, (all of it), is grass.”* All of man’s goodness is *“as the flower of the field. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God.”* Nothing about our flesh is good, *“even our righteousnesses are filthy rags.”*

My friends, this is viewing flesh in the light of God’s holiness and God’s righteousness. When you say, “He is a good man, (and we say that all the time), or she’s a good woman,” what do you mean, what do you mean by that?

The Word of God plainly says, *“There’s none good, no not one.”* Yet, we say that all the time; “he’s a good boy; she’s a good girl.” What do you mean by that?

Well now, if you mean this, I will agree with you; if you mean that she is a good woman compared with other women or with wicked women it is ok; I’ll buy that.

“He’s a good man.” If you mean by that he is good compared to the murderers in prison, compared to these tin-horned dictators that are leading nations into war, compared to the thieves; yes, I will buy that; he is a good man; you are correct.

My friend; we are not judged by others nor by the standards of men, we are judged by God’s holiness. If you are saying that he is a good man compared to God you are wrong; *“there is none good, no not one.”*

What is the standard of judgment? What is the rule by which we are measured? It is God’s holiness, God’s perfect Law, God Almighty’s perfect justice. God is love, absolute, unchangeable, infinite love. We do not have that. God is light and we live in darkness.

God is truth; we don’t tell the truth. All men are liars to some degree. You have lied today. You haven’t told the whole, complete, absolute, truth today. That means that you are a liar. *“To sin in one point is to be guilty of the whole law of God.”* To fall short of the absolute, ultimate, glory of God, is to be a sinner.

So, when we say that he is a good man compared to men, that’s all right. Do I mean by that there is any goodness in him spiritually? You are dead wrong; *“there is none good, no not one.”*

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None of us are as evil as we can be. None of us are as evil as we can be and none of us are as holy as God. So, that means all of us are under the judgment and wrath of God, *“all have sinned, all flesh, all flesh is grass,”* all the goodness of man.

When the spirit of God blows on this flesh, when the light of God’s holiness shines on this flesh, when the Word, when the perfect Word of God exposes this flesh, when the law of God touches this flesh, it is seen for what it is, dead, withered, rotten, corrupt, flesh, and it cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Then, and then only; if we will preach that, if somebody will preach that and tell the truth about men and women, then we will hear people cry; *“God be merciful to me a sinner.”* Then we will hear him cry like David of old; *“purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.”*

Then, we will hear them cry; *“how can man be clean that is born of a woman? How can He be just and justify? How can man be just with God?”* All confidence in the flesh will be swept away. There is nowhere to look, no one to trust, no hope, no help, without strength. *“Then, they cried unto the Lord in their trouble.”*

We don’t hear sinners cry because we are not telling sinners the truth about themselves; there is nobody lost. Nobody is a sinner.

“A sinner is a sacred thing The Holy Ghost hath made him so.”

Find a sinner; can you find a sinner; they are hard to find? They are hard to find and the reason is because we have never examined ourselves in the light of His holiness, His Word, His Law, and His truth.

Here is the second part of this message: He said, *“Behold your God.”*

If you ever get men lost, then you can tell them this second part, *“Behold your God.”* You can cry, *“Behold your God,”* not the God of your imagination, not the God of your denomination, not the God of your religious form and ceremony, not the gods of this world, or the idols of men, but *“behold the living God,”* the living God.

He is revealed in the heavens; *“The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament showeth His handiwork.”* He is revealed in His Word; *“To Him give all the prophets witness.”* But chiefly, He is revealed in His Son. They said, *“Show us the Father,”* and He said; *“he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* He is revealed in His Son; *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”*

Yes, His eternal glory is seen in creation. His redemptive glory is seen in Jesus Christ. As you behold your God in Christ you will see all of His fullness and all of His grace.

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Simeon, when they put the child Jesus in his arms, that old man saw the redemptive glory of God. He lifted his eyes to heaven and he said, *“Lord, now let your servant depart in peace; mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”*

If a man ever gets lost, if we can ever find a sinner, if any man is ever shut up to Christ, if any man ever has revealed to him the hopelessness, the helplessness and inability of this grassy, faded, flower of flesh, fit for the burning, worthy of damnation, and he sees the judgment and wrath of God upon all flesh, then maybe somebody will lift his eyes in the right direction and quit looking to the pulpit, or looking to the pew, or looking to the soul-winner, or looking in his own hind-sight, and looks to Christ, and if he does, he will see covenant mercies in Christ.

“Behold your God.” Behold Him, how? Let me give you in closing, five things:

He will see every promise and prophecy of the Old Testament fulfilled in Christ. *“He is the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.”*

He will see God’s righteousness and holiness fulfilled in Christ, His law honored and His justice satisfied.

He will see all of His elect redeemed, received, and accepted in Christ.

He will see the King reigning in glory and coming, His reward with Him.

“Behold your God!”