

# The Gospel Message

*Book of Isaiah*

By Ken Wimer

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Isaiah 62:10-12

**Preached On:** Sunday, April 14, 2013

## **Shreveport Grace Church**

2970 Baird Road

Shreveport, LA 71118

**Website:** [www.shrevegrace.org](http://www.shrevegrace.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech](http://www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech)

Look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 62. I want to read for us from verse 10 down to verse 12 and speak with you about "The Gospel Message." Last time, we looked at what it is to be a watchman on the wall and I hope you heard the part where I brought out that a watchman is not necessarily just the preacher, but every one of the Lord's people is to be a watchman. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." In other words, if the Spirit of God has been given to us, we have that discernment as to who Christ is and a watchman, his view is looking to where the enemy is coming and we know that the enemy is subtle. I've often said that the greatest lie is that which appears to be closest to the truth and I believe this is where many today are being deceived because somebody shows up and mentions the name of Christ, mentions grace, mentions the cross and there are many that think, "Well, there's a Christian because of mentioning these things." But attention to detail and I believe that's what discernment the Lord gives a watchman looking for any little movement that might be contrary to the glory of God and the glory of Christ.

So what is the measuring stick? What is that message by which those who are the Lord's distinguish themselves from the rest? Here in verses 10 through 12, I believe this message is summarized, the Gospel message. Verse 10 says,

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

That's important. There is a standard. There is an authority. There is that basis upon which error is judged. "Lift up a standard for the people."

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. 12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

The first thing that I would point out to you here is in verse 10: the mandate to preach the Gospel message. I know there is some thinking that if we believe in God's sovereignty

and that he has already chosen that people that he has purposed to save, Christ has already redeemed them, then all we need to do is just sit and wait. I can remember when William Carey was led of the Lord to go over to Burma a number of years ago. They call him the father of modern missions. I don't really like that title, but if you read anything about him, he did have some understanding, from what I can read, of the Gospel of grace and the glory of God in Christ and his death, but he was among a number of staunch Calvinists congregations of his day and there was a man who contradicted him and the Lord's direction in his life to go over to Burma and to India, in that area, and told him, stood up and told him, he said, "If God wants to save the heathen, he'll do it without you." That was the notion and is still the notion of many today, what they call themselves as absolute predestination people, predestinarians. You'll run into them. There are a few around this area. I had a conversation with one not too far from here and he told me that. He said, "God's elect, if they're elect, they're saved and I don't care if they're flat on their face in front of a totem pole, when they die, they'll end up in heaven."

Well, such is not the message of Scripture. It is true that God has chosen and ordained those that he will save and they are referred to in the Scriptures as "the people." Just like we have here in verse 10, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people." You say, "Who is that people?" Well, they've been chosen of God the Father from eternity, given to the Son, the ones for whom Christ has come and paid the debt and that in time the Spirit calls. But how is it that the Spirit calls them? How is it that the Spirit draws them? Well, the Scriptures say, "Blessed are the feet of those that carry forth the Gospel," the Gospel of God's grace and glory in Christ.

So the picture that we have here of the Lord's work and how he is working is that of an active church going out. Notice in verse 10, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people." Imagine here a city that has been built and is designed as a refuge for the Lord's people; one into which they are to come and to dwell. The picture is not of the gates being shut and everybody hunkered down and hoping for the best. No, it's one of victory, especially when we consider that this foundation of this city was laid in the very blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and that he will have his people. Remember what Christ said to his disciples, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

So there is a mandate for every one of us that names the name of the Lord to go through, to go forth. I don't want you to think in terms of how you were raised in religion to think that this is the work of just a few missionaries, so-called, and they're out there and, my, aren't they doing a great work and all of this nonsense that religion has developed. Every one of the Lord's people that he has chosen and redeemed and called is a light, is a witness in that place where the Lord has put you. When you go forth to work, you're going through the gates, in essence, you're going out into this world. But we are not of that number that thinks that we're trying to get everybody saved. That would be contrary to what the Scriptures teach. Not even Christ prayed for every single person in the world. He said, "I pray not for the world but I pray for those that though hast given me in the world." I would that each of us have this mindset of being on the trail of God's sheep. I work with Aflac and I often tell people it's not about the ducks, it's about the sheep. I'm

on the trail of God's sheep. I don't believe the Lord would have me doing that outside of these four walls were it not that he's going to be pleased to cause whatever light he's given me of Christ to shine in those areas where he directs my path. The same is true with you. We are in the world.

We have been put in this world and as it describes here, God has purposed that through his people the Gospel go forth and that the gates, as it says here, be opened to prepare the way of the people, "cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones." When you stop and think about what that's describing, there is a lot of ignorance in men's minds and hearts with regard to salvation, with regard to Christ, with regard to who God is, and it muddies the waters. These are like stones in the way and what we are called to do here in going forth, this mandate is to go out into the world and gather out the stones and, "lift up a standard for the people." That standard is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself: who he is; what he has accomplished; where he is now; for whom he did it; why he did it. These are all questions that need to be answered as we go forth.

So we not only see here the mandate to preach the Gospel message but, secondly, the manner. The manner in which this Gospel message is to be preached. There is a preparation. It says there, "prepare you the way of the people," in other words, by declaring Christ. "Prepare you," notice, "the way of the people," pointing sinners to him who is the way. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me." Men can argue all they want to about whether you're saved or lost apart from Christ. Scripture makes it very plain: apart from Christ, all men are lost. That's the declaration of the Gospel, of the message. But in Christ, those for whom he has paid the debt, those for whom he paid the debt are saved. That's their salvation.

So "prepare you the way," notice, "of the people." Now, there are two ways: there's the broad way and the Scriptures say "many there are that are therein, but it leads to destruction," and that's the majority of people that we have to deal with; but there is "the way" which is for "the people," that people whom the Lord has redeemed.

So there is a preparing but there is also a gathering where it says, "gather out the stones." Now, you could understand that in one of two ways, as I first explained it that there is a lot of false doctrine; there is a lot of false worship; there is a lot of idolatry and superstition which are in the way in men's minds and hearts and has to be removed. Or you could understand this in the sense of relating back to the people. When it says, "gather out the stones," every one of the Lord's people is a precious stone. They are one that the Lord has declared to be precious and therefore to be brought in, to be gathered in and that is the whole purpose of going forth and preaching the Gospel. Those stones which are to be gathered out of those places wherever they're found and brought and laid upon that foundation which is Christ alone.

You could understand it in that sense, but there's a preparing, there's a gathering and then also as it says there in verse 10, a lifting up. "Lift up a standard for the people." Now, the preacher is not the standard. A denomination is not the standard. There are some that you talk to and all they want to do is defend a denominational line, whether Baptist or

Presbyterian, or whether it's Protestant, Reformed. I've heard all of these things. Calvin. No, the standard here is the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

When it says "lift up a standard for the people," what did Christ say? He said, "I, if I be lifted up, I will draw all unto myself, all men." In other words, all kinds of sinners. Whatever the tribe, nation or tongue, if they're the Lord's, he will draw them. But he had to be lifted up. Lifted up, first of all, on the cross in order to satisfy God's law and justice, that God might be just to justify those that Christ came to save, but then lifted up in the preaching. Paul said, it wasn't that Paul couldn't have preached other things but he said, "I determined." This is what he wrote to the Corinthians. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

You know as a speaker you can get up and say a lot of things and never get to the point, but when it comes to preaching the Gospel, the Gospel message, there is a determining not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified and that is the mission which the Lord has given to his church, to any that witness, any that testify. And I say it to you in practical terms: when people engage you in conversations, don't let them take you down little bunny trails of debate just because they're there to promote a particular point of view. You answer in every case and in every way with what is fundamental to their souls and to the glory of God and that is who is the Lord Jesus Christ if you're going to talk about anything: why did he come; what did he accomplish by his death; for whom did he die; and where is he now? If you would stick to those main aspects of Christ, you will have addressed what is essential to men's souls and nothing else really matters. If there is no agreement there, there is no agreement. You might as well leave it alone.

So we see there the mandate to preach the Gospel, the manner that the Gospel is to be preached, but then in verse 11, we can see the universal nature of the Gospel. Now, I know as soon as I say that someone will say, "Whoa, wait a minute, I thought you said that the Gospel wasn't for every single person in the world?" That's true. Christ said, "I pray not for the world," but there is a universal nature to the Gospel in that it is to be preached throughout the world. It's not for any one particular nation. We're not to think that we're a favored nation above any others, that in the end when it's all said and done, there will be a people gathered around the throne of glory that will worship God through the Lord Jesus Christ and they will have but one theme: worthy is the Lamb that was slain. That's it, if I were to sum it all up. You say, "What is the Gospel message?" That's it: worthy is the Lamb that was slain.

Okay, now let me explain that to you, but that's the Spirit's work. "Behold the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world." That's what John the Baptist declared, "He must increase, I must decrease." The Spirit of God, contrary to our prideful thinking, doesn't need all of our explanations to make it clear to the sinner. If we will but by his grace point sinners to Christ, even as our hearts, if the Lord has dealt in our hearts, has been drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is through this one distinctive and clear message, "Behold the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

And where the Spirit is at work, he gives a desire to search out the Lamb in the Scriptures. It wasn't Philip that put the desire in the Ethiopian eunuch's heart to read the Scriptures. Philip found the Ethiopian eunuch. The Lord drew him to the Ethiopian eunuch already reading the Scriptures. He had already procured a copy which in that day would have been very difficult. He had to have been a man of means, which he was. He was the treasurer of Ethiopia so he had some means and he probably paid heavily to get a copy out of the hands of some people in Jerusalem because they were merchandisers. "Oh, you want a copy? Okay, we can give you a copy." They didn't just give them away.

But all that the Lord directed and prepared his heart and caused him to be reading in Isaiah 53 and then caused his path to cross with Philip and what was his question? "Who is this portion of Scripture, of whom does it speak?" And what did Philip do? He opened the Scriptures and pointed him to Christ and in the end he said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" There was right there a drawing. I'm sure Philip wasn't preaching to him about baptism but the Spirit directed him to say, "How does a poor sinner identify with this Christ and this Scripture that the Spirit now is drawing my heart to?" And Philip said, "There's the water. You get in the water." It's not walking an aisle. It's not saying a prayer. It's not raising a hand. It's not bowing a head. It is identifying with Christ in his death. That's what the water represents and his burial and his resurrection. Unless that is the purpose of being baptized, it's just a lost sinner getting wet and bringing him out of the water, but to identify with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, that's what is the work of the Spirit.

So the universal aspect here of the Gospel, notice verse 11, "Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world." So you could understand in the sense, to the ends of the world, to every extreme corner of the world; not that there are any corners, that's a way of speaking but you understand it. To wherever God may have his sheep. Whatever that remote place of the world is, this is the message that is to be declared.

When I was going to preacher's school, they taught us that you had to adapt the message to each culture and so whether you were talking to a Jew or whether you were talking to a Muslim, or talking to a Jehovah's Witness, whether you were in Africa or China or France or England or the United States, each different culture had to be considered. I can't tell you how much money I wasted in paying a professor's salary to teach me about world cultures. But, you know, when the Lord teaches you the Gospel, that all goes away. Before the Lord directed me to Africa, I didn't have to study African culture to figure out what was the message that I was to declare. Going to Haiti. Going to England. Going to France to preach. Coming here to the United States. I didn't have to go through a rehabilitation, come to the United States to figure out what was the message I needed to preach in Shreveport, LA.

It's the same message worldwide. Maybe there's a difference in language and so you have to be careful to find somebody that's going to carefully translate that for those that are your hearers, but the message doesn't change and that's what verse 11 is, "Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world." Notice, this is a mandate from the Lord himself. This is what the Lord has been pleased to reveal of himself. Do you realize

the very first preacher of the Gospel in all of history, who that was? It was the Lord himself. It was the revelation of the Lord. When Paul spoke of having received of the Lord, "In that which I have received of the Lord and that which I have received, I have delivered unto you."

We're not coming up with a new message. You will not find an older and truer message than that which the Lord himself has declared. You say, "Well, where did the Lord declare it?" Right there in the garden when Adam and Eve fell and there they were clothed in their fallen state in those fig leaves just like men do today, clothe themselves in the fig leaves of their works. What did the Lord do? Took off the fig leaves. Killed an innocent animals and took the skins of those animals and clothed Adam and Eve. That was the declaration of the Gospel. That was the message that was to be proclaimed from there forward. They taught it to their sons, Abel and Cain. In the Lord's mercy, it was revealed to Abel but Cain was left to his own reprobate mind.

That's the way it is, but the message doesn't change. It's the same today that is to be declared to the end of the world, but also to the end of time. If you look in Matthew 28, just look there with me. This message transcends all cultures, but it also transcends all time. We don't ever have to think that there is going to come a time when, "Well, maybe this is going to be...we'll have to make it adaptable." No, it's the same message. Here in Matthew 28, notice our Lord before he ascended on high, after his death, burial and resurrection, verse 18, "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power," all authority is what that word is, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore." So you can see it parallels verse 10 of our text in Isaiah 62, "Go through, go through the gates." Actually, "go ye therefore" in verse 19 of Matthew 28 in the original it is "as you are therefore going." So it assumes an active going out into the world.

And doing what? "Teach all nations." There is an instruction in "the way," that's the lifting of the standard, declaring unto sinners who Christ is as "the way." "Baptizing them in the name," one name, "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." What are the things that Christ commands his followers? He doesn't take them back to Sinai. He's not taking them back to duties and dos and don'ts, all things that he has commanded concerning himself. You think about what the Gospel commands are. They have everything to do with looking to Christ, resting in him, believing on him and turning from any other way but him. That's the command of the Gospel and to add any other duty, any other obligation, lay it upon men, is to do anything but teach the commandments of Christ. He has fulfilled that law. He has satisfied it for those sinners for whom he came to die.

And he is "the way." He didn't just come to show the way, he is the way. He didn't come just to tell people about the life, he is the life. He didn't come just to teach us about the truth, he is the truth and when he says, "No man comes unto the Father but by me," that means that he is that authority by which any sinner that comes will be brought. It will be through him, by him and to him.

So he says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." You could understand that "end of time" or "to the extreme ends of the world." But either way, it shows the universal nature aspect of the Gospel message.

But coming back to verse 11 of Isaiah 62, let me give you one more thought here and that is the wonder of the Gospel message that we have to declare. The wonder of it. Oh, the wonder of it all. The wonder of it all. Whenever you see in Scripture the word "behold" as we see here in verse 11 of Isaiah 62, that's designed to show wonder. Have you ever been out and driving with your kids in the car and you want them to see this beautiful sight and so you tell them, "Kids, look! Look!" And they're back there arguing and punching and carrying on and doing something and, "Come on, look! Isn't that wonderful!" That's what we say when we are amazed by something, "Come and see this!" That's what the disciples that Christ first revealed himself said to the rest, "Come and see this one who is the Messiah whom Moses spoke!"

I pray, dear friends, we never get over the wonder of the Gospel. The wonder of the person of Christ. "Behold!" What are you so excited about? "Christ. Who he is and what he has accomplished." It's not just a doctrine and I don't mean to belittle doctrine because doctrine is teaching. It takes instruction. You know, one of the things that turned me off in history classes over time was my very first history teacher that I had. He was a fuddy-duddy. He walked around and yawned and had glasses down on the end of his nose and head dandruff. He was always brushing it and talking history. I thought, "What a bore." It was the man and I think about standing up here week in and week out, it's not a performance. It's not a production. It's a sinner standing before other sinners and declaring unto you the wonder of wonders that God should ever love somebody like me or you and send his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pay the sin debt in full and to walk my days and life on this earth, not only here but throughout eternity in that salvation that he has wrought. That's the wonder of the Gospel message and I'll tell you what: if the Spirit ever teaches you, you'll never get over the wonder of it. But that's what it is.

"Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion." Again, Zion here is a picture of that church that Christ has purposed to assemble in glory throughout eternity. The Father has chosen already the bride for his Son. That's the way it was done in biblical times. The father chose the bride for the son and the son endeared himself to that bride. That's the picture here.

"Behold." See how it's written again? "Behold, thy salvation cometh." Christ was God's salvation but he is the sinner's salvation. His only salvation. "Thy salvation cometh." That's speaking there of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in his first coming, but look again, "behold." Three times "behold": behold the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world; behold thy salvation cometh; and what else? "Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." Whose work is it to save? It was Christ's.

When it says "his reward is with him," what is that reward? It's not something you earn, but it's something he had to earn. In order to justify the justice of God the Father, he had to come and work this out and based upon his faithful substitution, that reward is what?

Pardon, justification, peace with God, reconciliation, propitiation, satisfaction. That's what that word "propitiation" means.

But notice, it was his work to do. His work before him. I believe as strongly as anybody that God from eternity purposed the salvation of sinners, but that purposing of the salvation wasn't the accomplishing of it. It had to be worked out, otherwise we wouldn't read here "his work before him." There had to be in time on this earth in a body and with the real shedding of blood unto death a working out of this salvation in order for God to be just and to justify. That's why if anybody asks me based upon how the Lord has taught me from these Scriptures, "When is the sinner justified before a holy God?" it's when Christ shed his blood. God purposed it from eternity and nothing would change it, but it wasn't accomplished until it was done. His work before him and his reward with him. What was his reward? It's those sinners that the Father gave him. "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me." What a wonder and that's why we marvel at such love that he would lay down his life for such wretches as we are.

But what a wonder it is. That's the wonder of the Gospel message and what's the result of this Gospel message? Well, verse 12, "And they shall call them, The holy people." Boy, isn't that a wonder? A wonder that they would be called a holy people? How so? Not in themselves. You see, this is imputed righteousness. This is Christ having done the work to the satisfaction of a holy God that he should then call them holy.

It's based upon him redeeming them. Do you see that? "The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out." When people say, "I found the Lord," I've said it back to them and it's just the word that the Lord has given to say back when someone says that to me is, "Well, I didn't realize he was lost." You didn't find him.

Here the people of the Lord are called or "shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." What is that a reminder of? Well, there are plenty of cities that God has passed by, but if you're the Lord's and you can, by his grace, own him as your Lord, it's for one reason alone and that is that he purposed that you be of that number; that Christ's work be imputed to your account that he might count you as holy; that he redeemed you, the redeemed of the Lord; but then also he sought you. He sought you.

That's the testimony of the Gospel. That's the Gospel message about as clearly and plainly as what I know and Brother Isaiah, I trust one day to be gathered around that throne with him as one of these redeemed ones giving all the glory to Christ and singing with the rest of this people, that's my hope, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." I trust that's your hope as well.