

Awake! Awake! Put on Your New Clothes

Isaiah 51:17 – 52:12

Halifax: 5 December 2010

Introduction

For weeks now we have been looking at God's message of comfort to His people in a time when being His people did not seem to make much difference.

- They seemed, in fact, to be just like the other nations...
 - Having been bullied around by Assyria, with the one exception of the glorious deliverance God had given them at Jerusalem,
 - they were now going to be exiled to Babylon, just like all the other nations!
 - Far from being a glorious city of holiness, they were a city in bondage and darkness.
- And you can be sure that the few among them who truly did love God and believe in His promises were greatly discouraged!
 - Perhaps you feel that way at times as a Christian.
 - We hear discouraging statistics that the divorce rate in the church is not much different than the divorce rate in the world.
 - Perhaps you yourself are struggling to have a godly marriage that is a true picture of the relationship of Christ and the church.
 - We see children of Christians rebelling and turning from their precious inheritance in the faith.
 - We see how weak we are when it comes to bearing witness for Jesus Christ—
 - You find that you wilt as soon as opposition comes.
 - Where is the power?
 - Where the victory that we have been promised?
 - Perhaps you find it hard just to get through the week—to honour the Lord in your daily life.
 - Perhaps you have many trials—in health, in relationships, in finances,
 - and you wonder when it will all end.
 - Perhaps you find it hard to overcome stubborn sin in your life...
 - anger, lust, pride, whininess, selfish thinking, laziness in just sticking to your work, contentment, patience...
 - all the same struggles go on and on.

But we have seen in Isaiah that God has a glorious plan for His people.

- That plan was described for us in summary at the end of the passage we looked at last week—in Isaiah 51:16.

- God said to His people there:
 - Isa 51:16: And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’”
- The church may not look like much just now,
 - but the day is coming when all that it means for us to be God’s people will be accomplished in us!
 - God is making a people for Himself!
 - He is planting a new heaven and He is laying a new foundation in the earth—a whole new world it being brought forth before our eyes.
 - This glorious kingdom of righteousness was begun by Jesus Christ.
 - He bore our sins and emerged with eternal life for all the people that the Father had given Him.
 - He gives them righteousness that they might live in that glorious kingdom forever.
 - They will be God’s people in the very fullest sense of all that that it means to be God’s people!
 - Until that glorious day, God has “put His word (His word of promise and encouragement) in our mouth...”
 - Do you see that in Isa 51:16?
 - He has given us the gospel!
 - Even though we are not yet perfected, we are sustained in the kingdom by faith in His promise in Christ...
 - And not only that, but He has also “covered us with the shadow of His hand” so that we cannot be destroyed or wiped out...
 - Even exile to Babylon is part of His plan...
 - nothing comes into our lives but that which is brought in to bring us to that glorious climax of all history when we will be fully revealed as His people.
 - I spoke recently to a young woman to whom it has been given to suffer many things in this world—one thing after another...
 - and I encouraged her with this verse!
 - She is trusting in Jesus and His promise.
 - She is part of the church that God is perfecting through history, and her sufferings are part of the whole plan... to bring us to that goal.
 - So are your sufferings as well as your service.
 - We are all given different roles and different callings, but all of us who are in Christ are part of that people that being formed into a people that He will reveal to be His people at the last day.

- We will be like Him, we will live with Him in sweet communion, we will be blessed, no more tears will be shed!

That is what we concluded with last week!

- That is not a message that ought to leave us dragging around as if we were slaves without hope!
 - Glorious things of you are spoken!
 - This is the very encouraging message that we have been given from the LORD.
 - But we are not so responsive to it.
 - We are still dragging around, discouraged, and downtrodden!
 - And it is in this condition that the LORD comes to us in Isa 51:17 to 52:12...
 - He calls us to wake up to the reality of what He is doing!
 - He calls us to wake up to what we now are according to His promise in Christ!
 - Two times He says to us “Awake! Awake!”
 - In Isaiah 51:17 and again in Isaiah 52:1.
 - This call to wake up is for *you*—*you* who fear the LORD and obey the voice of His servant!
 - *You* who follow after righteousness and seek the LORD.
 - *You* who *know* righteousness and in whose heart is God’s law!
 - Indeed, if you have no regard for righteousness but just want to have a smoother life,
 - then I have hard news for you.
 - You are excluded from the hope of this kingdom.
 - But of course, that is what you want—you don’t really want to be righteous and to be brought forth as God’s people...
 - You want peace and prosperity, but you have no interest in being God’s people, purified and made righteous.
 - But I must tell you that you will never have peace and prosperity unless you turn to the Lord—only judgement and wrath.
 - But I say, if you are looking to Christ for righteousness and the life that He gives to us,
 - You are going to be God’s people in the fullest sense—
 - You are on your way to it.
 - Jesus is working in you and in His whole church to bring us to the goal.
 - You need to wake up and see that!
 - You need to see what you are in Jesus Christ!

- Let's examine His wake up call to you and to all of us who are His people.

I. First He tells you what to wake up *from*—your drunken stupor.

- In verse 17 He says:
 - Isa 51:17: Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of His fury; You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, And drained it out.

A. This is a call to those who are drunk, not with wine, but with God's fury.

1. God has given them this cup because of their sin, and they have had to drink it right down to the very dregs—to the very bottom of the cup.
 - They have experienced the chastening hand of the LORD to the fullest.
 - Yet, the good news is that they have finished the cup.
 - That is why they are told to wake up and to stand up!
 - They have been lying around in a drunken stupor, but now it is time to get up and go forward for the Lord.
2. You can see here the condition to which God's cup of fury reduces His people when they must drink it.
 - a. It makes you lie around in a drunken stupor!
 - It is a terrible thing—a cup of trembling or reeling!
 - It makes you useless.
 - You have no strength and you have no hope.
 - You can see no use in going on.
 - b. Ordinarily in the church, the LORD raises up sons in the church to guide her and to comfort her...
 - But because God's wrath has come upon His church, no one is able to help her.
 - Her own sons are worthless like drunks, lying around without care or concern for their mother.
 - What drunken son cares for his mother? He is rather a burden to her than a help.
 - That is what is described in verses 18-20:
 - Isa 51:18-20: There is no one to guide her Among all the sons she has brought forth; Nor is there any who takes her by the hand Among all the sons she has brought up. These two things have come to you [the two things are those that have just been spoken of—no guidance and no comfort from her own sons]; Who will be sorry for you? [If the church's own sons will not comfort her, who is left to do it?—Desolation and destruction, famine and sword —By whom will I comfort you? Your sons have fainted, They lie at the head of all the streets, [in a public place] Like an

antelope in a net [completely helpless]; They are full of the fury of the LORD, The rebuke of your God.

- c. Oh my brothers and sisters, this is the condition in which Jesus found the church when He came!
- All Israel was scattered like sheep without a shepherd!
 - There was no one to care for her or bind up her wounds.
 - There was no one to have compassion for her.
 - Is this not far too much the condition of the church today as well?
 - Where do you find faithful elders and ministers who labour to serve the people?
 - Where do you even find faithful Christian fathers to care for their own children?
 - Where are the men of wisdom that ought to be teachers and guides by now?
 - They are reeling away like drunks under the displeasure of the LORD.
 - They are paralysed because they do not know the grace of God.
 - They have spurned His grace and they don't have any hope or comfort to share.
 - They have lost the gospel—
 - The lampstand has been removed and they have no light by which to guide the flock.
 - Pray earnestly and regularly that God will raise up faithful men to serve his church—men who know the gospel of hope!

B. But look! The LORD has good news for His drunken people!

1. He calls us to hear the good news in verse 21:

- Isa 51:21: Therefore please hear this, you afflicted, And drunk but not with wine.
 - You see how He comes to us and addresses us with words of hope even in our drunkenness—
 - He speaks right into our lives, right where we are—wretched and worthless...
 - He speaks into our drunken stupor so that we are able to hear His voice—His powerful, invigorating, life-giving voice!
- And look at what He says to us (v. 22):
 - Isa 51:22-23: Thus says your Lord, The LORD and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people: "See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; You shall no longer drink it.

- We are done with the cup of trembling!
 - The LORD has removed His wrath from us!
 - Judgement must begin with the house of God, but it does not remain there!
 - The time comes when He takes away His judgement and restores us.
 - Remember Isaiah 12:1?
 - Isa 12:1: And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.
 - His anger is but for a moment, but His grace is for a whole lifetime!

2. This is the glorious gospel!

a. This is the news that did not sound forth in all its fullness until Jesus came and drank the bitter cup for us.

- Do you remember how He told His disciples that He must drink the cup of wrath that Father had given Him?
 - That is what He came to do...
 - He came to drink the whole cup—for us!
 - He was cursed for us that we might be pardoned.

1) And once He had drunk it, He came forth with the glorious message of the gospel...

- He came forth declaring to all the forgiveness of sin if we will repent and come to Him!
 - The end of condemnation!
 - There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!

2) Don't you see, He took all the sin—we are going to see this fully unfolded to us when we get to Isaiah 53...

- All our iniquities were laid on Him... by His stripes we are healed!
 - The cup has been finished and now God's anger is turned away and He comforts us!
 - He drank it all, so now there is remission of sins through Him.

3) As we read in Romans 6, Jesus has been raised so that death (wrath and judgement) no longer has dominion over Him.

- He was sunk into the grave by our sins, but He came forth with eternal life and we are brought into that life through union with Him—

- by baptism into His name—baptism mixed with faith so that we become partakers of the life that He was raised up into!
 - We are, through Him, alive to God and dead to sin!
 - Sin no longer has dominion over us and we are able to serve God.
 - Instead of lying around in a drunken stupor, paralysed under the wrath of God,
 - we are able to present our members as servants to God and to righteousness.
 - We can serve because we are no longer condemned!
 - The cup has been drained and there is no more condemnation for us!
- b. Of course I do not mean to suggest by this that we will never have to receive chastisement from the LORD in this life.
- He chastens those that He loves...
 - But underneath all that chastisement is the assurance that Jesus has borne the ultimate chastisement for us that would have sunk us in Hell.
 - We are God's people and we have hope that God will reveal us as His people because Jesus has drunk the cup of God's eternal wrath for us.
- c. That is why the LORD tells you to wake up and stand up!
- 1) Quit reeling around as if you are under condemnation!
 - You are pardoned in Christ!
 - He has borne it all!
 - Quit lying around in your guilt as if you were still under wrath.
 - You are acquitted, you are pardoned!
 - Stand up and present your members as servants to God in Christ!
 - 2) Isn't the gospel the message that sets you free?
 - God is reconciled!
 - Awake, awake! Stand up and serve the LORD!
 - You don't have to drink the cup anymore!
 - It has been drained by our dear Lord Jesus!
3. But look—when God takes the cup from His people, He gives it to those who are their enemies!
- Woe to those must now drink the cup!

- In verse 23, we are told that God gives the cup to those who afflict His people.
 - Isa 51:23: But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you, Who have said to you, 'Lie down, that we may walk over you.' And you have laid your body like the ground, And as the street, for those who walk over."
 - Here is a horrid description of a common practice in those days that we are told about in the Assyrian records...
 - The conquering nation would force the people it had just conquered to lie down in the streets and then it would trample over them to show its dominion and superiority.
 - Many would be mangled and killed.
 - It was both painful and deeply humiliating.
 - This is what God's people had to endure because of their sin...
 - Much more, this is what Jesus had to endure because of our sin!
 - It is a picture of the humiliation that He had to bear from the hand of God's enemies.
 - They hated Him because He was righteous.
- God's enemies get at Him by attacking His people.
 - This is what they do to Jesus
 - They showed their hatred of God in the way they treated the One who perfectly represented God because He was God in human flesh.
 - This is what we all are but for the grace of God.
 - Jesus had to drink this cup that we might be saved.
- But the LORD is going to put the cup in their hands.
 - Jesus has drunk it all for His people, and now it will be given to His enemies to drink it forever.
 - If you care nothing for righteousness,
 - for the true righteousness that Jesus came to give sinners...
 - this is your cup and you must drink it.

TRANS> But you see the call here to you—to you who believe—

- Wake up from your drunken stupor!
 - You are no longer condemned!
 - Do not think of yourself in that way—
 - think of yourself as pardoned and cleansed by Jesus.
 - Do not go on as if you are cut off from God.
 - That is the first thing for God's people wake up about...

II. Second, He tells you what to wake up *to*—your identity as His people.

- You see the double call to wake is repeated in 52:1:
 - Isa 52:1: Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion;
- Just as you were called to wake up *from* your drunken stupor...
 - Now you are called to wake up *to* your new identity as the people of God—
 - This new identity has three characteristics that you need to wake up to—characteristics that are set forth in chapter 52...
 - First, in verses 1-4, that as God’s people, you are no longer children of bondage, but free sons!
 - Second, in verses 7-10, that as God’s people, you serve the One who reigns over all.
 - Third, in verses 11-12, that as God’s people, you are to leave Babylon behind and pursue holiness in God’s house... (v. 11-12)
- You can see how this relates back to verse 16 of chapter 51...
 - You are the people that God is going to reveal to be His people...
 - He says to you, “you are my people.”
 - It changes everything to be His people—everything!
 - You are the people that God, when He has done His work, will not be ashamed to call His people...
 - It is a whole new identity in which you are to live.
 - You are to assume this identity *now!!!*

A. Wake up—you are no longer in bondage, you are now a free son!

1. There is a call here to replace the garments of slavery with the garments of a free son...
 - Listen to what Isaiah says in verses 1-2:
 - Isa 52:1-2: Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; Put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city! For the uncircumcised and the unclean shall no longer come to you. Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!
- a. You see the overall thrust of these two verses—
 - You are no longer in bondage as you once were so quit acting like you are in bondage!
 - God has delivered you from bondage to sin, so, to use the language of Romans 6, yield your members as instruments of righteousness.
 - You have no business serving sin now!
 - You are not in bondage to sin anymore...

- b. Let's look more closely at the details of these verses and at how they apply to us...
- 1) Awake, awake!
 - Wake up to your new identity in Jesus Christ as His servants! Come to grips with what you are!
 - 2) Put on your strength!
 - The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you!
 - Sin shall not have dominion over you so stop being dragged around by it as if it does!
 - Live in the strength that you have been given as your clothing.
 - Why are you dragged around by your sinful passions and desires!
 - You are crucified with Christ!
 - Put those sinful ways to death!
 - 3) Put on your beautiful garments!
 - Why are you wearing those old clothes of bondage—those ugly clothes of malice and cursing and grumbling and anger and bitterness.
 - Don't you see how loathsome you look in those clothes?
 - You live in God's house and He has new clothes for you.
 - When the prodigal son returned home, his father put new robes on him and adorned him with precious jewels.
 - Sport your new clothes as a free son!
 - Put on love, put on mercy, put on tender mercies, put on brotherly kindness, put on the beauty of the imitation of Jesus Christ.
 - You are Jerusalem, the holy city; not Babylon, the city of sin.
 - 4) He goes on to say, "the uncircumcised will no longer come to you."
 - Now that you are in Christ, they will no longer come to take you into bondage to themselves...
 - You will never again be a slave to Babylon—you are now a free Son!
 - Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law, but under grace!
 - You live not in the realm of condemnation, but in the realm of God's gracious help.
 - 5) Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem!
 - You have been crawling around in the dust like the serpent—the Devil.

- But now it is time to arise and sit down in your father's house as a free son!

6) Loosen the bonds off your neck...

- You are not on the world's leash, like a dog on a chain, to be led around wherever your lusts might drive you!
- To be dragged around by the world!
 - You are *free* to serve in the newness and freshness of the Spirit!
 - Drop the chains, rise up and serve the LORD!

2. The Lord reminds you that He never sold you to Babylon—

- In verse 3 He says:
 - Isa 52:3: "You have sold yourselves for nothing, And you shall be redeemed without money."
- a. He does not owe anything to Babylon and neither do His people.
 - He is not going to buy them from Babylon.
 - They will be redeemed without money because they were never sold to Babylon for money.
 - God did not come up on hard times and have to sell His people as slaves because He could not keep up with His bills!
 - He raised up Babylon to chasten them—they sold themselves to Babylon by their sin.
 - Remember in chapter 50 verse 1 when He asked them which of His creditors it was to which He had sold them?
 - God has no creditors—
 - His people belong to Him and He takes them to Himself whenever He wishes—with permission from his enemies!
 - My dear brothers and sisters, the past has no claim on you!
 - You belong to the Lord!
 - Your identity is to be found, not in what you were in bondage to sin, but in what you have become as His sons.
 - Let go of the past and serve your Lord today!
- b. He gives a brief summary of Israel's history—to illustrate this.
 - Look at verse 4:
 - Isa 52:4: For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at first Into Egypt to dwell there; Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.
 - God redeemed His people from Egypt in one way and from Assyria in another,

- but in neither case was a penny given to the captors!
 - When the time chosen by God to redeem had come, He simply came and redeemed.
 - You don't owe a thing to the old life—so stop holding on to it!
 - Your LORD has taken you to be His own.
 - There are no outstanding debts that must be paid...
 - You own nothing to sin or to the world.

TRANS> So this is the first thing we learn—that we are redeemed from bondage and need to reckon ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God,

- You are His servants through Jesus Christ, so put on your beautiful garments and put off your chains.
 - Come and live in freedom from bondage.
- This is all well and good, but what about the present state of affairs?
 - Israel did not *look* very free and sometimes the church today doesn't look very free either!
 - Having looked at Egypt and Assyria,
 - The Lord looks at the present state of affairs—He says...
 - Verse 5-6:
 - Isa 52:5: Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name is blasphemed continually every day.
- 1) As long as His people remain in Babylon, His name is blasphemed—
 - a) It is blasphemed with a blasphemy that never stops...
 - “continually every day”
 - As long as they are there, the pagan nations believe that the God of Israel has been overpowered by their gods.
 - b) My bothers and sisters, this blasphemy ought to grieve us!
 - Our sin makes it necessary for the LORD to chasten us!
 - It makes it necessary for Him to deliver us over to bondage to the world and to the sin...
 - But when He does, the world looks at us and they mock at our God!
 - “These are God's people? ha!”
 - We bring reproach on His name!

- We are the ones, by our sin, who brought reproach on Christ so that He as made an object of shame and spitting and so that they said, “Where is your God?”
- 2) And too often in such times, we start to echo the world’s question...
- We say, “indeed, where is our God?”
 - Does He really reign?
 - Has He forgotten us?
 - Has He forgotten to be gracious?
 - Has He been overpowered by our enemies?
- And this brings us to the next thing that we need to wake up too!
- B. Wake up to the reality that Your God reigns!
1. In our struggle with sin, Satan, and the world, it may seem at times as though He does not reign!
- a. But the point is that the present struggle will turn out just the way the struggle with Egypt and Assyria turned out—
- God will work in such a way that it will be very clear that He is LORD!
 - He sent plagues against Egypt that struck at the gods they worshipped.
 - He parted the Red Sea so that His people could cross over.
 - At the end of it all, everyone knew that He was LORD.
 - And He let Assyria come with all her boasting right up to gates of Jerusalem, helpless in her own strength,
 - and struck down 185,000 soldiers in one night...
 - Then everyone knew that He was LORD!
 - No one questioned it.
 - He did not have to pay off Egypt or Assyria to redeem His people.
- b. And Isaiah tells the people in His day that just as it was with Egypt and Assyria, so it will be with Babylon!
- 1) When He delivers, we will see Him as the God that He is rather than as the God that those who blaspheme make Him out to be!
- Verse 6 tells you so:
 - Isa 52:6 Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: ‘Behold, it is I.’”
 - They will know His name when His redeeming grace and power is revealed!

- That is how He reveals His glory to His people in this fallen world!
- 2) How much more do we know Him through the redemption we have in Christ Jesus!
- We are redeemed from sin, Satan, and the world, but no payment is made to them!
 - Jesus comes and releases us by His grace and power.
 - He had to bear the curse for us to propitiate the wrath of God, but we were rescued, snatched away from Satan and the world.
 - His power will be fully revealed on the last day when all His work is brought to completion and the sons of God are manifested—
 - in all their glory, without spot or wrinkle or blemish!
 - Wake up! Your heavenly Father reigns!
 - There is no question about it!
2. What a delightful thing it is when the news of God's gracious, powerful redemption breaks into your purview!
- That is what verse 7-10 is talking about!
 - It looked as though God, perhaps did not reign!
 - Our enemies mock us because the church is so pitiful and weak!
 - But don't believe a word of it—your God does reign!
 - The Gospel comes to us and it makes us rejoice because it tells us that He reigns for His people!
 - It tells us that He has overcome for His people!
 - It tells us that death no longer has dominion over us because He has come and He has established a kingdom of righteousness!
 - He is risen as the first-fruits of that kingdom of righteousness!
 - He has broken forth into new life and all who are in Him share in that life!

a. Look at verse 7:

 - Isa 52:7: How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
 - What a beautiful message for a people that have laid in bondage under the wrath of God for so long!
 - How glad you are when the messenger of the gospel comes and declares that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ!
 - You were under God's wrath—but He has overcome!
 - Your mighty God has come to save you!

- The Gospel message is that our God reigns!
 - As Jesus put it, “The kingdom of God is at hand!”
 - The reign of God for His people, establishing His kingdom of righteousness in this fallen world!
 - The God who made it His business to make us His people reigns so that He will do just what He has promised to do!
 - He will take sinners like us and He will make us His People!
 - Already He has sent Christ and He has accomplished pardon for us by His death!
 - Our God reigns—only He could do it!
 - Do you know Him as the God who reigns?
 - You say, but I still struggle with sin...
 - Yes you do, yes I do...
 - But soon He will free us from all our corruption and sin so that we will become like Him...
 - He is freed us from guilt through Christ—what makes you think He will not free us from Babylon at last?

TRANS> What a glorious gospel!

- b. The whole church breaks forth with rejoicing when the message comes to them!
 - 1) Verse 8 shows that it begins with the watchmen:
 - Isa 52:8: Your watchmen shall lift up their voices,
 - The watchmen are the ones whose task it is to proclaim the gospel. They are the ministers of the word.
 - With their voices they shall sing together;
 - When they know the gospel they lead the people in praise to God.
 - For they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion.
 - To see “eye to eye” means to see it up close—to see clearly and unquestionably what God has done, just as it was when He delivered from Egypt and from Assyria.
 - It will not be an uncertain thing that He delivered—it will be very clear that it was Him.
 - 2) And as the gospel is preached, the church is commanded to break into joyful praise because of what the LORD has done!
 - Isa 53:9: Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.

- How can we be silent when we understand that great deliverance that has been accomplished for us in Jesus Christ!
 - Our God reigns over all
 - He will do all that He has promised concerning our salvation!
 - Do not be discouraged!
 - Praise your God who reigns and whose reign will soon be made evident to all who mock Him now!

3) Verse 10 shows that at last, all will see that He is the God who saves His people!

- Isa 53:10: The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.
- No one will be able to miss His work when it is completed.
 - No one ought to miss it now, for Christ has already been revealed openly in the sight of the nations...
 - but many will not acknowledge Him until the end when every eye will see Him and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
 - There will be no more blasphemy then!
 - There will be awe and terror and shame before His glory.
 - And for those who know Him, eternal rejoicing!
 - Our God reigns!

TRANS> My dear brothers and sisters who believe in Jesus, you need to see this now...

- You need to see both of the things that we have looked at that pertain to your new identity in Christ...
 - Wake up, you are a free son!
 - Wake up, our God reigns!
- And now thirdly,

C. Wake up—leave Babylon in Babylon—don't bring Babylon into God's house!

- Verse 11 says:
 - Isa 52:11: Depart! Depart! Go out from there, Touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD.

1. This is a clarion call to keep the world out of the church!

a. God is telling His people to leave Babylon completely behind.

- There is always this tendency to want to hold on to the ways of sin and idolatry,
 - But the LORD is saying “depart depart!”

- Leave it behind!
 - Babylon's ways to belong in God's house!
- b. This was always a problem...
- As soon as Israel came out of Egypt, they were ready to set a golden calf to worship the LORD by... the way the Egyptians worshipped their gods.
 - The LORD kept telling them to leave Egypt behind.
 - The purging out of leaven represented leaving the ways of Egypt behind!
 - They had a new identity as God's people!
 - When they came to Canaan, the Lord warned them not to look at the way the Canaanites had worshipped their gods and then worship the LORD in that way...
 - They were to keep Canaan out of God's house—to touch no unclean thing—
 - but that is exactly what they kept doing!
 - And now in delivering His people from Babylon,
 - The LORD is telling them to leave Babylon completely—
 - Don't bring Babylonian ways into His holy house!
 - His house is not Babylon—they are His servants now and they are to serve Him according to His commandments.
- c. But does this apply to the church?
- Are we not to adapt to whatever culture we are in?
 - Are we not to let the world from which we have been redeemed shape the way we worship our God?
 - Should we not have worship that makes pagans feel right at home?
 - Should we not let the world join our worship teams so that we can evangelise them—as I saw an article advocate this week?
 - Isn't this an Old Testament prohibition that only pertains to Israel under the Law?
 - Apparently Paul did not think so!
 - He quotes this very verse to the Corinthians who had a tendency to bring their pagan ways of worship into God's worship.
 - He told them to leave the old ways behind.
 - They had become God's servants and must break with the world and its ways:
 - In 2 Cor 6:14 – 7:1, he says: Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with

lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- God is with us and God has is holy.
 - We are to learn the ways of His house and obey all that Christ has given to us to observe rather than bringing Babylon into His house.
 - As we are told in Hebrews 12:22-24:
 - Heb 12:22-24: you have come to you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.
 - It is odd that this should seem like such a strange thing to us when we realise that we are desperate sinners being redeemed from bondage.
 - How could anyone ever think that they should bring in the ways of their old master into God's house?
 - We are to sit at His feet and learn His ways!
 - We have come to Him, not to bring to Him what we were in our sin, but to become what He calls us to be in His house!
 - Our identity is that of those who have left the old ways to serve in the newness of the Spirit.
 - What could you possibly want with the Old ways?
 - That is what we are delivered from!

TRANS> But even though the logic is clear, we still struggle with shaking the old ways.

2. The Lord promises that He will be with us to help us break away from Babylon.
 - a. When Israel was brought out of Egypt, they had go in haste as the Egyptians pursued them...
 - But the LORD tells them it will not be the case when they are brought out of Babylon.

- Verse 12 says: For you shall not go out with haste, Nor go by flight; For the LORD will go before you, And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.
- b. But the main point here is that the LORD will be with them...
- He will work things out in such a way that they will not need to flee...
 - And His protection will be so complete that He will surround them—going before them and as their rear guard at the same time!
 - What an encouragement for us as we struggle with leaving our sinful way of life!
 - The LORD is with us—leading us and guarding us from behind so that we cannot be dragged back into Babylon!
 - Let us be glad for His protection!
 - Let us see that He is all around us and that we no longer in the world.
 - Let us be holy as He protects and defends us from sin that so easily entangles us.
 - And He will bring us forth into the glorious new ways of His kingdom.

Conclusion:

This brings us right back to the place we started from!

- Yes we struggle, yes we see the weakness of the church, yes we are being chastened by the LORD.
 - But we do not need to be discouraged.
 - He knows how to bring forth His Sons and daughters and He will do it!
 - Wake up from your drunken stupor—your are forgiven!
 - Wake up to your new identity!
 - You are free sons in your Father’s House...
 - Your Father reigns and will do all His Holy will...
 - Leave Babylon behind and come to serve Him in His house.