

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 5th August 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.
This morning - "Reacting to stress"

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Reacting under stress

Where do we place our trust?

Where do we place our hope?

Where do we get our security?

What does that look like in the "nitty gritty" of life?

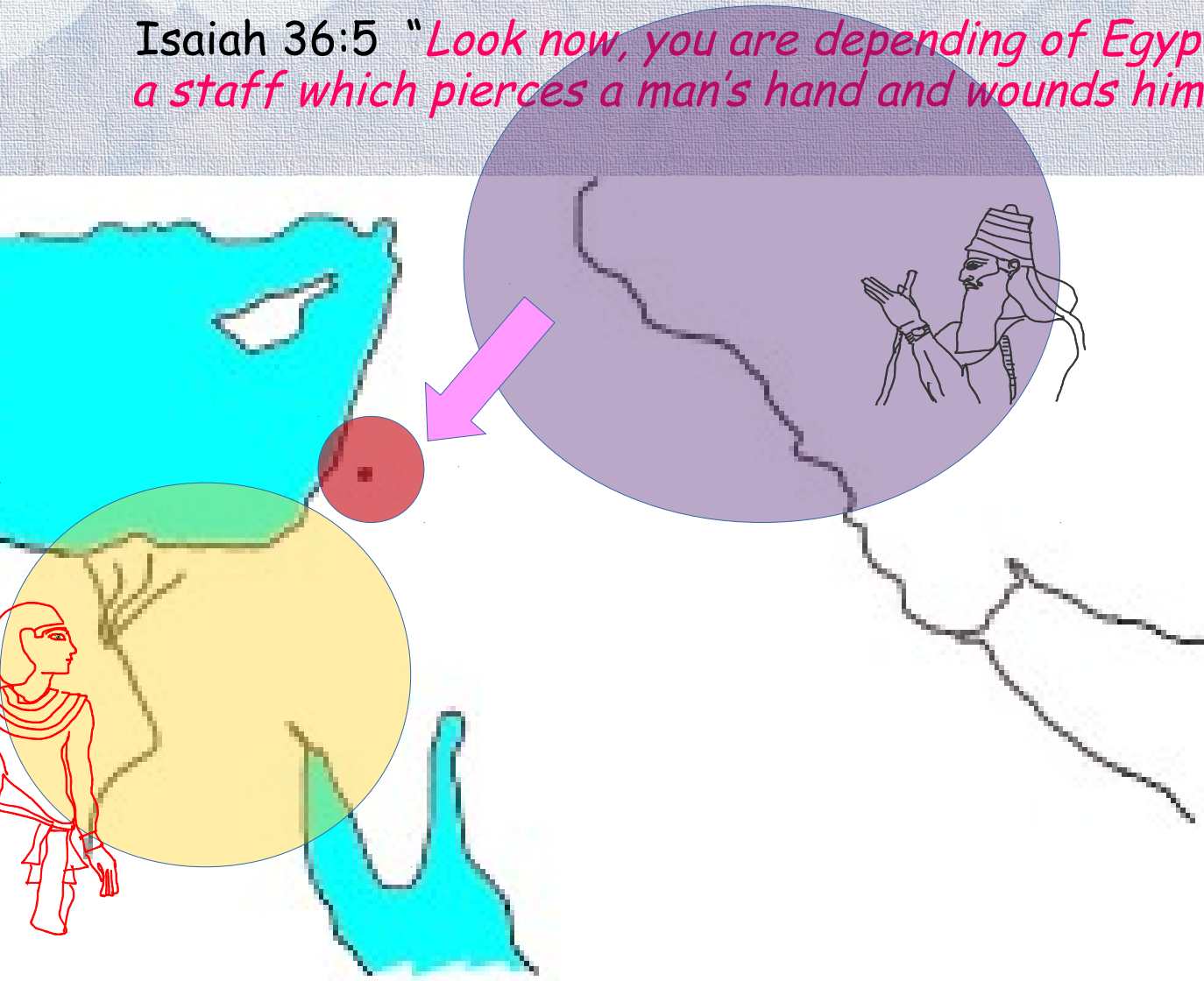
N.B. In the book of Isaiah, how it looked for them ...



History: the threat of Assyria

Isaiah 36:1 "In the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them"

Isaiah 36:5 "*Look now, you are depending of Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it*"



Jerusalem
= God's HQ

Egypt = Exodus
rescue from
slavery, and
tempting ally

Assyria = Rising
aggressive
super power -
offers security,
but turns into
deadly enemy

Isaiah 30,32

1. Reaction to stress now: description of the fault

- Behaviour and its consequences

2. Perspective for the future: (long-term, medium-term, NOT short-term "wait")

- Victory for the LORD
- Place, people, person -the King

3. call to respond in the present

- Repentance and faith

1a. Reaction to stress now: description of the fault

Behaviour of leaders (30:1,2)

- Not any old leaders ... but leaders of the nation formed by the grace, promise, power of LORD God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt to be his people (= covenant)
- The stress: they are threatened by the aggressive power of Assyria, and - despite LORD's promises - they turn to Egypt for help
- *36:4 "on what are you basing this confidence of yours. You say you have strategy and military strength - but you speak only empty words. Look now, you are depending of Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it... you depend on Egypt for chariots and horsemen ..."*
- ==> extreme condition - how will they react? Will they remember? Will they trust the promises?
- ==> extreme situations: bereavement? Loss? Financial crisis? Trouble at work? In the family? In the church?
- What would we have done? What do we do each day?

1b. Reaction to stress: description of the fault now

30:1 Children ... obstinate/rebellious

- Plans [counsel] ... *not mine 30:1*
- Covering ... *not by my Spirit 30:1*
- Who go down to Egypt ... *but not by my mouth 30:2*

31:1 Go down to Egypt for help 31:1

- Who trust in chariots that they are many
 - And in horsemen that they are strong
 - *BUT do not look to the HOLY ONE*
 - Men ... *not God (31:3)*
 - Flesh ... *not Spirit (31:3)*
- “plans” strategy, intelligence, wisdom ... man’s ~~vs~~ God;s
- power / flesh ... vs... Spirit, power of God
- => one particular stress = our own sin
- => solved by flesh? (i.e. our own goodness, efforts) - NO!
- => or by faith in the claims and promises of God? (“the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”) - YES!

1c. Reaction to stress now: description of the fault

[Behaviour of women (32:9ff)]

Specific rejection of "word" of God e.g. through the prophet Isaiah

- 28:2 "childish"
- 29:10 eyes sealed, [mouths] gagged
- 29:11 it's all "double-dutch" (unreadable)
- 30:10,11 "stop telling us this stuff"
- ==> *specific reaction to God's words*
- ==> *God's words are in the Bible*
- ==> *it's bad when the church closes her ears to God's word, and closes her mouth from speaking it*
- ==> *AND when Christians stop living by God's word*
 - *e.g. in deliberate determined disobedience*
 - *Just stop listening ... don't bother*
 - *Jesus "abide in me // abide in my word"*
 - *"Quiet time"*

1d. Reaction to stress: description of the fault now

Future outcome for non-listeners = failure

– “shame” v.3,3,5,5

- Nothing wonderful, glorious, noble
- ==> shame - moral and personal failure that all will see

– It doesn't even work!

- 30:12 like a cracked and dangerous wall

- N.B. some wrong things do “work”

- e.g. the unethical person who prospers
- BUT it is only temporary

- v.5 useless, v.6 unprofitable, in vain v.7, “do-nothing”

– God's wisdom doesn't profit necessarily in money, or health, or fame, or success

– BUT faith in the wisdom of God is for achievers

- e.g. Hebrews 11 - people of faith - achieved!

2a. Perspective for the future: victory for LORD (long-term, medium-term, NOT necessarily short-term)

Key: we can't live life in the present without putting it in the context of the long-term future

Objection: the "now" is all! Pleasure, pain, fleeting experience

Ans: thankfulness! - sugar - childbirth - addiction - reward

- Rich variety of several examples:
- 30:23-26 rain, fruit, animals, the moon will shine like the sun
- 31:4,5 the LORD will shield [his people]
- 31:8 Assyria will fall
- 32:1 a king will reign in righteousness
- 32:15 the Spirit will be poured out from on high
- 32:16 justice, righteousness, fruit=peace, security

2. Perspective for the future: victory for LORD (long-term, medium-term, NOT necessarily short-term)

==>Victory for the LORD against his (and our) enemies

- The world, the flesh, the devil. Be on the winning side!

==> Salvation for his city, land, people

- A place that makes it all worthwhile

==> the reign of the [for ever] King

- *"and God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over all things for the church" Eph 1:22*

Through the pouring out of the Spirit

- The Spirit - the wise side of God, the reviving side of God
- Jesus - the baptizer with the Spirit
- The Spirit = the Person of God

Finally transforming the whole environment

- " a new heaven and a new earth" via resurrection

Total future security

- 32:17 quietness and confidence for ever
- And so will we be for ever with the Lord
- = Christian Hope!

2. Perspective for the future: victory for LORD (long-term, medium-term, NOT necessarily short-term)

Particular promise about:

30:21 - you will have teachers, you will be able to hear

32:3 eyes unblinded, ears opened

(Theological term is "effectual call")

i.e. God promises to solve the problem of deafness/blindness/hardness

e.g. blind, deaf, dumb

- Jesus' miracles: "tell John: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, ... lepers cleansed ... deaf hear, dead raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the one who does not fall away on account of me" Luke 7:21-23
- Jesus's disciples: "do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see? And ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?" Mark 8:17
- ==> the key blessing - can you hear? Do you see? Do you get it?

3. Call to respond in the present

The reason he tells us all this is to produce a different attitude in the present

- [30:1, 31:1 DO trust in the LORD]
- 30:15 in repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength
- 30:18 the LORD waits to be gracious to you ... Blessed are all who wait for him
- 31:1 "Look to him"
- 31:9 return to him
- ==> faith: the key to security
- ==> faith in LORD: associated with the Spirit, the key to righteousness, peace, confidence, life security, fruitfulness
- ==> *N.T. "therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God ... God poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" Romans 5:1-5*

3. Call to respond in the present

The reason he tells us all this is to produce a different attitude in the present

Start now to live as someone who trusts God!

Is this not the deep characteristic of our Christian lives?

If it is not faith ... it is nothing!

- Works ... faith
- Hope ... from faith
- Love ... from faith
- Experience ... by faith
- Deep sense of trust
 - Deep sense of anxiety, insecurity, unbelief
 - "in quietness and trust is your warrior-strength" 30:15