

DATE OF MESSAGE: June 19th, 2016

MESSAGE TITLE: Fearless Fathers

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 41:1-10

OBSERVATION

What from Pastor Titus' message meant the most to you?

Having reassured the exiled Jews in chapter 40, whom does God address in verses 1-7?

What is the main truth uncovered in this passage?

What does this passage say about the sovereignty of God, even over brutal events like war?

Bible scholars believe verse 2 refers to King Cyrus of Persia. Who is behind his rise to power?

Compare the reaction of secular nations to the onward march of King Cyrus in verses 5-7 to the response God urges his people to have in verses 8-10. Why the difference in responses? What does that tell you about the reason for their hope or hopelessness?

How does God address the Jewish exiles in verses 8 and 9?

Read verse 10. What promises does God give the exiles and what reasons does He give them to hope in God?

APPLICATION

What world forces seem to be beyond anyone's control in modern times? How do you react to these seemingly unstoppable forces: hopelessness, despair, disgust, sorrow, hope? What might your reactions reveal about your belief that God is in control?

God encouraged the Jewish exiles to react differently to King Cyrus' advance than the way secular nations reacted. Re-read verses 8-10. How might these verses inform the way we as

believers respond to problems that seem out of our control? What did God say was the source of their courage in these verses? What is the source of your courage? How might we encourage and remind each other to trust in God's sovereign control in the midst of chaos?

PRAYER

Dear God, I think about the opening verse of Psalm 123 when I consider your sovereignty: 'To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!' Help us God not set our eyes on forces or problems over which we have no control. Instead, teach us to lift our eyes to You! May we always look to You for courage, wisdom and strength when we don't know what to do. Help us also remember that you are the one 'enthroned in the heavens.' You are in complete control, so there is no need to fear. There are no maverick molecules in your universe.

SHARE POINT

Read Isaiah 41:1-10 and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

Verses 1-7: God argues for his sovereignty over history and the terrifying inadequacy of all idolatrous hopes.

Verse 1: Let the unbelieving nations try to match the strength God gives his believing people. God invites the nations to validate their own made-up explanations of history.

Verse 2: Cyrus, the Great, is the leader of the rising Persian Empire, soon to conquer Babylon. The Lord gives up nations before him. The Lord also makes them like dust with Cyrus' sword. God is guiding 'secular' events, even brutal events, by his own overruling, redemptive purpose.

Verse 4: The rise of Cyrus is not a unique event but is evidence of the one divine plan governing historical events from the beginning. The Lord is the one and only God, the ruler of every last bit of history.

Verses 5-7: The nations respond to the upheavals of history by nervously constructing more gods to believe in. But how can created creators save anyone?

Verses 8-9: God reminds his people of his active commitments to them. Mention of God's having chosen Jacob and of Israel's status as the offspring of Abraham speaks clearly of God's promises and therefore reminds them that they inhabit a story filled with God's purposes.

Verse 10: The word 'you' here is the people as a whole. Unlike the terrified nations of verse 5, the people of God have in Him reason to be fearless. Unlike the gods of the nations which must be strengthened and secured, the God of Israel secures his people.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study