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Sermon Notes

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Christ Unveiled as Restorer of Israel and Light for the Nations

Isaiah 49:1-26

This is one of the greatest missionary chapters in the Bible, for it takes us into the secret counsels of the Triune God for the extension of the glory of God to the ends of the Earth. Here, we are privy to an immeasurably deep conversation between the Father and the Son concerning his glorious mission on earth. Here, God the Father tells the Son that it is insufficient glory for him to be merely the Savior of the Jews. That mission is unspeakably glorious, but the Father says it is insufficient for the Son. God did not send his only begotten Son into the world to save Israel alone, though he did send him for that. But God has commanded Jesus Christ to be the light for the Gentiles, that he may bring his salvation to the ends of the earth. So, at present, the glory of Jesus Christ is great – he sits at the right hand of God the Father and the seraphim continually cry aloud to each other of the glory of the Lord. But there are as yet many elect peoples from unreached nations that have not heard of his fame or seen his glory, and that is intolerable. God wills that Jesus be a light for people from every nation on the face of the earth. He wills far greater glory than Christ presently has.

This chapter also brings us face to face with the constant and apparently disappointingly small results that we face as we yearn for the advance of the Kingdom of Christ... it will always seem TOO SMALL... we will always wonder, "Is this all there is?" It seems that Jesus Himself might have asked such a question on the cross... looking at the apparently small cluster of followers around the cross, verse 4 implies that Jesus might have felt "I HAVE LABORED FOR NOTHING! EVERYTHING I HAVE DONE HAS BEEN IN VAIN!" But if He might have felt that... even in the verse it doesn't last for long. His mind immediately goes to the amazing and hidden power of God to MAKE SOMETHING out of what Christ has done.

A summary theme of this chapter is that Christ is TOO SMALL if He is only the Savior of Israel... Jerusalem will be TOO SMALL to contain all the people God is going to assemble from the ends of the earth... Christ might become GREATER and GREATER and GREATER all the time! Greater in the number of people who follow Him; greater in the number of churches planted in His name; greater in the number of saints who die and go onto eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem; greater and greater in the hearts and estimations of all His people as we meditate on His infinite worth and majesty!

My goal in this sermon is to MAGNIFY the Lord Jesus Christ among you! Make Him greater and greater in your hearts and mind, in your estimation... by the words of Isaiah 49

I. Christ Unveiled as God's Salvation to the Ends of the Earth (vs. 1-7)

A. Who is the "Servant" of Isaiah 49? [Second of four "Servant Songs"]

1. Not an easy question to answer... three reasonable answers:

Isaiah the prophet... The nation of Israel as a whole... The Messiah, Jesus Christ

2. Difficult verse: 3

Isaiah 49:3 He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

Because of this, many commentators believe that the servant in this passage is the nation of Israel... but

3. The key verse: 6

Isaiah 49:6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

4. The servant is someone who BOTH restores the tribes of Israel AND is the light for the Gentiles

5. This eliminates the nation of Israel from contention... for how can Israel restore the tribes of Jacob and the house of Israel?

6. The "light for the Gentiles" expression identifies this person as JESUS

Luke 2:28-32 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ ... my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

[Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch] ***Acts 13:47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."***

The Greek "you" in the quote is SINGULAR... Paul and Barnabas were not the light, but came to bear witness to the light... who is Jesus!

So... the Servant in Isaiah 49:1-6 is none other than JESUS; and he tells the world what the Father has said to Him and about Him!!

B. The Servant of the Lord Calls to the Nations (vs. 1)

Isaiah 49:1 Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the LORD called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name.

1. This verse shows the scope of God's saving plans... Christ, the King of Kings, is CALLING TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH
2. He summons the ISLANDS and the DISTANT NATIONS... the farthest places and remotest locations: the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic; the semi-nomadic Meakambut cave dwellers of Papua New Guinea; the blonde-haired Norsemen, descendants of the Viking who now live in civilized cities in Norway; the tall Dinka of South Sudan, perhaps the tallest tribe on earth... all these distant lands are summoned by Jesus Christ, the King of the Earth
3. He wants them to know the ORIGIN of His saving mission... it was by the call of the Father BEFORE HE WAS BORN

1 Peter 1:19-20 [you were redeemed] with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

4. Jesus is the pre-existent one, who chose as an act of His will to enter the world at His Father's command

C. The Servant of the Lord Concealed and Prepared (vs. 2)

Isaiah 49:2 He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

1. Concealed
 - a. "in the shadow of God's hand" Christ was hidden
 - b. This concealment was in the mind of God... and little by little Jesus was revealed to the world through the prophetic word

[Balaam] Numbers 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.

- c. Jesus was concealed by the incarnation...

Charles Wesley: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing":

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

Jesus left His glory in heaven:

Isaiah 53:2 He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

The incarnation was BOTH a revealing and a concealing

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus revealed to Peter, James, and John some of His radiant heavenly glory... but for the most part He was normal looking

- d. Concealed especially at the cross... the grim spectacle of his horrific death in which He appeared so humiliated and weak... how could this be God???
- e. Concealed after His glorious resurrection: only to a select few did Jesus reveal Himself
- f. Concealed by the spread of the gospel by humble ordinary messengers

Matthew 13:33 The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and hid [“lit. enkrupito] in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.

- 2. Jesus is a WEAPON in the hand of God against the power of Satan’s dark kingdom
 - a. God the Father made His mouth is like a SHARPENED SWORD...

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword

- b. It acts like a scalpel for the elect... cutting out the tumors of sin that are sucking the life out of our souls
- c. It acts like a sword of condemnation and eternal death for the enemies of God

Revelation 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

- 3. Jesus says that God the Father made his mouth also like a polished arrow... a perfect weapon of destruction sent toward Satan’s Kingdom

D. The Servant of the Lord Is Called “Israel” (vs. 3)

Isaiah 49:3 He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

1. Jesus is powerfully identified AS Israel here, in whom God will display His glory
2. Jesus is everything Israel was supposed to be

Exodus 4:22 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son

Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew ascribes this directly to JESUS when Joseph and Mary took Him from Egypt back to Palestine after Herod was dead

Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of what Israel was supposed to be; the TRUE Israel of God (the elect, Jew + Gentile) find their right standing in Christ... He is the head of the church... He is the perfect Israel, in whom God will display His splendor

E. The Servant of the Lord Apparently Discouraged (vs. 4)

Isaiah 49:4 But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.

1. Another difficult verse to reconcile with this passage being Jesus
2. But this has to do with the APPARENT FAILURE of Christ's mission
 - a. The only perfect life that had ever been lived... no sin at all
 - b. The only perfect preaching that had ever been proclaimed
 - c. A river of astonishing miracles such as the world had never known before
 - d. Despised and rejected by His own people
 - e. Jesus died on a cross with only ONE apostle, and with His mother and a few women who were friends of the family
 - f. It would have been very easy for Jesus to look at the outward impact of His ministry and feel that He had labored to no purpose
3. YET as He died, He entrusted His ministry to God

Vs. 4 Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."

Luke 23:46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

So also throughout church history, the success and power of the gospel of Christ has been HIDDEN, concealed in the plans of God

So many servants of the Lord have been strongly tempted to DISCOURAGEMENT in the work of the Lord

1. Martin Luther was so discouraged about the apparent lack of fruit from his preaching in Wittenberg that he gave up preaching for over a year and a half!
2. Adoniram Judson labored in Burma, losing his wife and burying an infant son; six years of hard labor before he'd seen any fruit at all; so discouraged that he dug his own grave and sat by it, waiting for God to kill him. YET by the time Judson died, a government survey recorded 210,000 baptized Burmese Christians—one out of every 58 Burmese in that nation had come to faith!!
3. Hudson Taylor labored in Ning-Po, China for three years before the first convert; after six years in China, Taylor's health began to fail, and he prepared to sail back to England—the gathered church in China was about forty people at that point; BUT by the time Taylor retired from the work in 1905, 52 years after first setting foot in China, there were 849 missionaries, 1282 native workers, and 35,726 baptized believers in over 800 mission stations
4. How encouraging to stare into the mystery of Christ's APPARENT DISCOURAGEMENT and realize what God has done

B. The Servant of the Lord Prepared to Restore Israel (vs. 5)

Isaiah 49:5 And now the LORD says-- he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength--

Matthew 15:24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

That was His first mission field... "To the Jew FIRST, and also to the Gentile..."

C. The Servant's Mission to the Ends of the Earth (vs. 6-7)

Isaiah 49:6 he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." This is what the LORD says-- the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel-- to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

1. It is TOO SMALL A THING, though, for Jesus ONLY to save Jews
 - a. "too small" = literally "too light"
 - b. Glory = *kavod*... weightiness... it is NOT ENOUGH GLORY for Jesus!

2. Jesus is ALSO the light for the Gentiles, to bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth...MISSIONS!!!!
3. The "people walking in darkness" see the eternal light in Jesus... the light of the world
4. The mission will be successful, despite the apparent failure: KINGS will "see" Jesus by faith when they hear the gospel; they will rise up out of their thrones and then fall on their faces in worship

Isaiah 52:15 so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

II. God's Day of Salvation for the Exiles (vs. 8-13)

A. God's Day of Salvation (vs. 8)

Isaiah 49:8 This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,

1. Paul quotes this, and applies it to the Gentile believers in Corinth

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

2. God has set a day of salvation calling it TODAY!!! COME TO CHRIST!!!
3. Christ is the Mediator... God the Father speaks these words to Jesus; we come to Jesus for salvation, Jesus obtains it from His Father

B. The Restoration of the Exiles from the Distant Lands (vs. 8-12)

Isaiah 49:8-12 This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!' "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up. See, they will come from afar-- some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan."

1. This theme is powerful, as we've seen again and again
2. The restoration of the Jewish exiles to the Promised Land
3. They are making a JOURNEY... travelling from the lands of their exile back to the Promised Land
4. God promises to protect them on their journey, to provide food and water on their journey, to get them safely home, to level mountains before them
5. The Promised Land is pictured here as a "desolate inheritance"
 - a. Nehemiah's brother, living among the remnant in rubble-filled Jerusalem, wrote to his brother, Nehemiah, who was cupbearer to the Persian King
 - b. The desolation of Jerusalem, its terrible degradation, its huge piles of rubble, its destroyed wall were a matter of extreme grief and shame to Nehemiah and the Jewish nation
6. God promised to rebuild the city... and gather the exiles, even from VERY DISTANT LANDS... ("Aswan" = "Sinim" in Hebrew... possibly as far as China!!)
7. This would be physically fulfilled by the Jews returning and rebuilding under Nehemiah and Ezra
8. BUT this is not the final fulfillment!
9. The city of Jerusalem was rebuilt SO THAT Christ could live and die there! SO THAT the gospel could go out from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth

Illus. Wealthy producer of off-Broadway musicals finds a historic but neglected theater where he wants to produce a magnificent musical for that city... so he pours money into the reclamation, clearing away the rubbish and sweeping up the dust, painting it, getting it ready... especially the STAGE where the amazing musical is going to be performed.

So it was with the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem after the Exile... it was NOT AN END IN ITSELF... but God was getting the stage ready for the greatest and most glorious drama ever to be unfolded before the eyes of the human race – the life, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinners all over the earth!!

So the steady stream of people making a pilgrimage is not only the Jews returning to Israel, but also ALL who hear and believe and COME TO JESUS for salvation... they begin a spiritual pilgrimage to the TRUE ZION... heavenly glory!

C. A Song of Joy for the Lord's Salvation (vs. 13)

Isaiah 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

III. Despite All Appearances, the Exiles Will Return (vs. 14-21)

A. Zion Feels Forsaken by the Lord (vs. 14)

Isaiah 49:14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me."

1. "Zion" = "the city of God"... the place where God dwells with His people in direct fellowship; where He puts His name for His own glory... usually simply Jerusalem; but often representing the TRUE CITY OF GOD... the New Jerusalem, the true people of God
2. In this section, we have Zion lamenting at the apparent IMPOSSIBILITY of the restoration of Jerusalem... it is so desolate, so rubble-filled, the "odds" of people leaving their new homelands and streaming back to such a desolate place seems impossible
3. "God has FORGOTTEN ME, FORSAKEN ME!!!"

B. The Lord's Sworn Oath: I Will Never Forget You! (vs. 15-18)

Isaiah 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride.

1. It is IMPOSSIBLE for God to forget the covenant He made with His people, His sworn love to Abraham's descendants!!
2. God DEEPLY YEARNs for us to understand how secure we are in the covenant He made with Christ for us... He can never forget us
3. He compares His love for His people with the most passionate and secure love relationship we can imagine... the love of a mother for her baby, her sweet infant nursing... she would lay down her life for her children; a mother's compassion for her children is WELL-KNOWN and the benchmark for all other forms of committed love in the world

4. BUT EVEN SHE may forget!!! Some mothers abandon their children to save their lives, or for other selfish reasons... and even loving, healthy mothers are only sinners with a limit to their love
5. BUT GOD WILL NEVER FORGET His chosen ones... He uses extreme language, saying He has engraved His beloved people on the palms of His hands, and the walls of Zion are ever before Him... He will defend her from every enemy, He will rescue His precious bride from every assault and bring her safely into His heavenly Kingdom

C. Despite All Appearances, the Exiles Will Return (vs. 17-21)

Isaiah 49:17-21 Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride. "Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.' Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these-- where have they come from?'"

1. THE IMAGE SHIFTS: “Zion” (the heavenly Jerusalem that Paul calls our “mother” in Galatians 4) is addressed directly by God, our Father... Zion is the “you”/”your” in these verses; Zion is told that she will see her children hasten back to her
 - a. The restoration of the remnant of Jews from Babylon is clearly predicted here; Zion the earthly Jerusalem is a dress-rehearsal for the true restoration
 - b. But that restoration is a foretaste and a lived-out prophecy of the true work of grace for Zion... the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth, assembling the scattered elect children of God and making them one
 - c. Zion will WEAR THEM LIKE ORNAMENTS... like a bride putting on jewels... the heavenly Jerusalem will be filled with precious converts who will beautify it for all eternity—converts from Muslim tribes in North Africa, from animist tribes in Irian Jaya, from skeptical previously atheist communities in the Czech Republic, from good solid Christian homes in the Bible belt... from EVERYWHERE that God the Spirit has been working
2. Zion will be TOO SMALL for all the children who are coming, streaming in
 - a. Literal fulfillment with exiles coming from all over the Persian kingdom to settle in Jerusalem

- b. Ultimately, these verses refer to something vastly more glorious than just the restoration of the population of Jews in the physical city of Jerusalem
- c. Isaiah 49 speaks of God's saving plan that extends to Gentiles, even to the ends of the earth
- d. The spiritual journey of these converts to faith in Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of these restoration verses...

IV. The Gentiles Will Aid the Redemption of Israel... or Be Destroyed (vs. 22-26)

A. God Calls on Gentiles to Honor and Help His People (vs. 22-23)

Isaiah 49:22-23 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders. Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

1. Gentiles will come to faith in Christ in all these nations and they will get involved in evangelism and missions...
2. They will lead many of their own people to Christ... the gospel will spread in their own lands, and they will lift and carry their own people to Christ
3. Even powerful leaders, Kings and queens, will use their power and influence to spread the gospel
4. The Gentiles will also have a deep respect for the Jewish nation and will be instrumental in leading many of them to Christ
5. They will so respect the Jewish heritage, they will humble themselves completely and yearn to know the God they have been proclaiming... **SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS**

Zechariah 8:23 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"

B. The Vicious Captors Plundered and Slaughtered (vs. 24-26)

Isaiah 49:24-26 Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce? But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save. I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine. Then all

mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

1. However, some Gentile kings and queens and leaders will use their power and influence to FIGHT the spread of the gospel...
2. Like Hitler, or Stalin, or Mao, or other Communist authorities, they will brutalize the people of God
3. Just as in Biblical days, opposition arose to Nehemiah from Sanballat and Tobiah, so in every generation, enemies will fight the church
4. So "plunder" will have to be seized from violent, warlike enemies; converts will have to be rescued from such brutal leaders
5. BUT GOD will ultimately judge such enemies of the church with astonishing vengeance... God says they will eat their own flesh and drink their own blood... this is the language of total wrath, total judgment falling on these enemies

V. Applications

A. O Magnify the Lord with Me!

1. "It is TOO SMALL A THING" for Jesus only to save the Jews... God has made Jesus to be the light for the Gentiles to bring His salvation to the ends of the earth
2. The physical city of Jerusalem was TOO SMALL for all the exiles... God has BIG PLANS for the salvation of a steady stream of people who will come to Him through Christ
3. So at present Jesus' glory is TOO SMALL... too small in our estimation; too small in the number of people who worship Him
4. We should ask the Holy Spirit to expand the glory of Christ in our own estimation AND to expand the glory of Christ through evangelism and missions
5. Think GREATER and GREATER thoughts of Jesus... love Him, adore Him, learn about Him... go over the words of this chapter carefully, especially verses 1-7, and find ways to praise Him... think of His mouth as a sharpened sword, the skillful sword of a surgeon, to cut out the tumor of sin from your life
6. Think of His mouth as a flashing sword with which He will cut down His enemies when He returns in glory

7. Plead with the Lord to expand the Kingdom of Christ through missions
8. Ask Him to involve you... more and more!!! You should want to be a part of what God is doing in advancing the gospel to unreached people groups...
LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING... and Great Commission Fund year round
9. Give yourself to caring about unreached people groups... find out what our missionaries are doing and how you can support them through email and by prayer... get to know Matt and Christina Blaxton; Jonathan and Gauhara McDonald

B. Understand the Temptation toward DISCOURAGEMENT in the advance of the Kingdom

1. Both Christ AND Zion seem tempted to be discouraged at the seeming impossibility of success
2. The Kingdom will always appear unimpressive to the naked eye...
3. Missionaries working in the HUGE city of Shanghai (14.4 million people) will look at the tiny house church they lead, and the handful of other house churches they are aware of... at the fact that they have led three people to Christ and have a handful of others interested... and THAT'S IT... it is so easy to think "I have labored to no purpose..." But we cannot judge the advance of the Kingdom of Christ by mere external appearances... GOD THE FATHER IS IMMEASURABLY ZEALOUS to advance the Kingdom of His Son! And the Holy Spirit is powerfully effective in bringing it about
4. Pastors laboring to grow a church numerically and in Christian maturity will feel tempted to be discouraged at the slow progress
5. Parents laboring to see Christ formed in their kids will feel this same temptation
6. College students trying to win a dorm mate to Christ will feel all their efforts have been for nothing
7. We must fight off discouragement and see the perfection of the Church on the final day as absolutely guaranteed:

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

C. URGENCY IN SALVATION!!!!!! Come to Christ NOW!!

2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

James 4:14 you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

D. Meditate on How God Has Promised to NEVER FORGET YOU or FORSAKE YOU!!

Isaiah 49:14-16 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands

Hebrews 13:5 God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

E. Meditate on the Future Glory of Heavenly Zion

Revelation 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

Revelation 21:11-12 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

A huge multitude will fill the place... from all over the earth!!!