

The Pierced One

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 December 2020

Preacher: Matthew Capone

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.
- We do welcome you. If you're new with us and you're joining us virtually, we invite you to connect with us through our digital visitor card, which you'll find if you go to our homepage at cmpca.net.
- There will be a pop-up with immediately a link to go and fill out one of those cards, and that will help us to connect with you and connect you with our community. For those of us who are old-timers, of course, I invite you to make comments as they're relevant to what we're discussing this morning and to greet one another if you missed us at the very beginning, so that we have a sense of our fellowship with one another even as we're separated, and also that we have a record that you are here with us.
- We're continuing our study in the book of Zechariah, and we're going to be in Zechariah chapter 11 this morning as we continue through the season of Advent. You'll remember that Advent comes from a Latin word that means to come or to arrive, and during the season of Advent, we take a special focus on Jesus coming or arriving to Earth.
- And there's two things that we do. We celebrate what God's done in the past, and so that's why we sing Christmas songs like Joy to the World, and we also long and look forward to what He'll do in the future, and so that's why we sing songs like O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.
- [1 : 2 4] And that is a summary of what we do in all of the Christian life, because in all of the Christian life, we celebrate what God's done in the past, we look forward to what He's going to do in the future, and we live faithfully now in the present in light of both of those things.
- And so it's with that that we are turning again to the book of Zechariah. We're going to be in chapter 11. You can track with me in your worship guide. Those of you who are here are also in your Bible or on your phone. And you'll remember that Ezekiel was a prophet to the nation of Israel during the 6th century.
- And he prophesied to them after they had returned from exile in Babylon. Persia had defeated Babylon. And just like a collection of sermons would cover a variety of topics, so this collection of prophecies covers a variety of topics as well.
- The chapters that we are in, chapters 9 through 13, talk about the coming or future kingdom of God. And you'll remember also that we're asking this question that came to us in chapter 9.
- How can we rejoice when it comes to Advent? How can Advent be for us not like a commercial that's played over and over, that becomes old and stale, but how can it be like a cup of water that we desperately need, something that refreshes us over and over?
- [2 : 3 9] We saw in chapter 9 that Jesus is our coming King, and as our coming King he causes us to rejoice because he's a king on a donkey, which means that he is a humble king and he's a peaceful king.

Last week we saw that Jesus was not just our humble king but also our shepherd. And in being our shepherd we realize that we live in a world filled with bad shepherds and we live in a world that hates good shepherds.

But Jesus is actually the great shepherd and he's a better leader than we deserve. And he was a shepherd who was rejected by his sheep and he dies for those very same sheep.

This morning as we come to chapter 11, we are going to focus on the cleansing that Jesus brings. If you've been in the church for a while, you have heard the phrase, Jesus washing us clean.

And we're going to take a look at that this morning because that concept is going to come up in chapter 13, or excuse me, in chapter 13, verse 1. We're going to see that there will be a fountain open for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

[3 : 47] Now I'm going to warn you as we get started that there is a lot here in this passage. We're not going to focus on all of it equally. So there's a lot of things going on with the relationship between Israel and Judah, specifically in verses 1 through 9.

We're not going to focus on that. We're going to talk a little bit about verses 1 through 9. We're especially going to focus on verses 10 through 14 of chapter 12 and then verse 1 of chapter 13.

And we're going to simply see this morning some simple but profound truths. We're going to look at the gospel, simple, full, and free. And so it's with that that we turn to Zechariah chapter 12, verse 1.

And remember as we read this that this is God's word. And God tells us that his word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold. And it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.

And so that's why we read it now, starting at verse 1. The oracle of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him.

[4 : 52] Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples.

All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. On that day, declares the Lord, I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness.

But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the Lord of hosts, their God.

Verse 6. On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a blazing pot in the midst of wood, like a flaming torch among sheaths. And they shall devour to the right and to the left all the surrounding peoples, while Jerusalem shall again be inhabited in its place in Jerusalem.

And the Lord will give salvation to the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not surpass that of Judah. On that day the Lord will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the Lord going before them.

[6 : 19] And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Verse 10. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn.

On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-Rimen in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn each family by itself, the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves, the family of the Shimites by itself, and their wives by themselves, and all the families that are left, each by itself and their wives by themselves.

On that day there shall be a fountain open for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you again that your word is powerful and it does not return to you empty, even if it's coming across the internet rather than in person.

We ask that you would send your Holy Spirit now to us, no matter where we are hearing and listening to your word, that you would use it to soften our hearts, to show us our need for your cleansing, and you would also assure us that you are the one who cleanses us.

[8 : 10] And we ask that you would use that to give us great joy, no matter what else is happening in our world, and in our lives. And we ask these things grateful that we do not have to earn them, but we ask them instead in the name of Jesus.

Amen. We just finished an election season, and no matter which candidate you were cheering for, candidates, I guess, multiple, we all know this, that if you're going to have power, it takes a battle.

It takes a battle to stay in power if you're the incumbent. It takes a battle to gain power if you're not the incumbent. And so we saw previously in chapter 9 that Jesus was going to be a king who brings peace.

And if he's going to bring peace, he's going to be in power. You can't have power without a battle. Same thing is true of this kingdom, and we see it again in this passage.

Verses 1 through 9 are telling us that the battle that has to happen for Jesus to rule. Now, we often think of Jesus as this gentle and kind man, and he is.

[9 : 18] He's also a fierce and ferocious warrior. He is coming to make all things right. That means he has to destroy his enemies. We talked about this two summers ago when we were in the book of Psalms.

We looked at Psalm 5, which is what we called an imprecatory psalm, or a psalm that prays for justice. And I told you then that every time we say the Lord's Prayer together, we are praying for God to destroy his enemies because how else could his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven?

And so it's that battle that we see at the very beginning of this passage. I'm just going to go over it for you very quickly. First, verse 2, there's going to be a siege against Jerusalem. Verse 3, this siege is going to involve all the nations.

So we see at the end of the verse, all the nations of the earth will gather against it. That is Jerusalem. Okay, verses 3 and 5, battle against Jerusalem, all the nations. God is going to crush all the nations.

And in crushing all the nations, the end of verse 5, we see he's giving his people strength. The clans of Judah shall say to themselves, the inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the Lord of hosts, their God.

[10 : 27] And then in verse 9, we're given a summary statement of this entire section. So 9 sums up verses 1 through 9 when it tells us, and on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

And the point is this. Ultimately, the Lord will establish his kingdom. Ultimately, the Lord will establish his kingdom. Christ secures victory for his people and therefore for the church.

That's what we take from this battle against Jerusalem. It's an image to show us, it's an illustration to show us ultimately what's going to happen in the battle between God and his enemies in the world.

Moving from that battle then, we see this idea of cleansing and we also find out something very surprising. Remember last week we had a little bit of a twist.

We of course agreed that the world is filled with bad shepherds. The counterintuitive twist was that people also hate good shepherds. We see here that the Lord defeats his enemies.

[11 : 32] Counterintuitive twist. Verse 10, The Lord who defeats his enemies also dies. He dies in this battle and that's what we see here in verse 10.

When they look on me, on him who they have pierced. So these are the people who have won the battle. This is Jerusalem being victorious and suddenly they're looking on me.

That's God speaking as one they have pierced. Somehow as they win the battle, they've actually injured their own leader. And we learn, remember these passages that we're going through in Zechariah are the ones that are quoted in the New Testament.

We learn in John chapter 19, verse 37, that this one who has been pierced is referring to Jesus because John tells us that this is a fulfillment. When Jesus dies, it's a fulfillment of this verse.

And this word pierced, when it's often used in the Old Testament, refers to someone who is dying because of the wound that they receive. And we know, of course, that Jesus was pierced in his side as he died on the cross.

[12 : 35] And so we now understand this passage in a way that the original hearers would not. They have killed God. The victory of God's people comes through the death of God.

And we see even more echoes of that in verses 10 and 11 because how are they going to mourn? They shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn.

And of course, we know that Jesus is referred to as God's only beloved son, his only begotten son. And so we know now that this battle is telling us about the battle that Jesus wins through his death.

The one who is pierced is Jesus. The one who dies from this battle is God. He cleanses us. In Jesus' death, winning this battle, we'll see that he changes us and he also cleanses us.

First, we see that he changes us. Verse 10, I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy.

[13 : 45] Pleas for mercy, meaning these people are going to repent. They're going to cry out for God to forgive them, but notice the order. They cry out for God to forgive them after he pours out his spirit, not before.

In other words, outside of God pouring out his spirit, they are unable to cry out for mercy. They are unable to repent. It is God's spirit that comes first and softens and changes their heart.

It is God's spirit that makes it possible for them to actually see their sin and confess that they're wrong. In fact, this is foretold throughout the Old Testament. Prophets like Ezekiel and Joel and Isaiah talked about a day when God's spirit would be poured out and it would change his people.

They would have new hearts, hearts of flesh rather than hearts of stone. Of course, it's no accident here that the pouring out is the image of water being poured out. It's a cleansing image. Now, I won't go off on a bunny trail, but that's part of the reason that we pour out water on someone when we baptize them.

We believe that's a continuation of this imagery, that it's water that cleanses coming from above. And it brings repentance, repentance that can only come from God's spirit.

[14 : 59] And so we see here, first, remember we saw a couple weeks ago, only God can bring peace to the nations, right? We actually are not capable of fixing this world.

The accompanying truth is this, only God can bring change to us. Yes, only God can bring peace to the nations. Only God can bring change to us.

It is only when we are touched and affected by God's spirit that we are able to change. And that's what we see in this passage. We see people who are moved deeply by true repentance of their sin.

You probably noticed near the end we had this phrase repeated over and over again. We heard itself and themselves in verses 12-14. Each family, verse 12, by itself.

The family of David, by itself. Their wives, by themselves. The family of Nathan, by itself. Wives, by themselves. Levi, by itself. Wives, by themselves. Shimei, it's by itself. Wives, by themselves.

[16 : 02] You get the point. The question is this, why is that repeated over and over? Remember, I've told you before, repetition matters a lot, especially when we are reading the Old Testament.

They are telling us here, when they're repenting by themselves, that this is not for show. It is easy, tempting at times, to repent in public because you know that's what you're supposed to do.

It's tempting at times maybe to apologize for something that you're not sorry for because you know you need to do that to fix the situation and to make people feel good about it. Maybe you're holding your hand, you know your fingers crossed behind you.

I'm sorry, but you know you're really not. These people are actually sorry because they are not gaining anything publicly from it. They are doing it by themselves in private.

It is real repentance that's not gaining them anything in the eyes of other people. They're not using it as a manipulative strategy. They're not doing it because that's what their teacher told them they had to say to a classmate.

[17 : 02] They're not doing that because they know what they have to do to keep their job or keep moving forward. These people actually have a real and true and deep sorrow over their sin.

And so, they're able to repent not just in public but in private. Now, you might also ask why the husbands and the wives are separated. Why are the wives repenting by themselves? Probably, most likely, for the same reason.

They are not just sending the heads of households, these men, to repent on behalf of the family. But again, it's emphasizing for us how much each individual is repenting.

Each individual is moved by their sin. Each individual sees the part they play in the death of this king. And so, when God's spirit is poured out in this way, it leads to true and real, personal, individual repentance.

These people understand how much they have offended God and they are able to grieve over it. You'll remember if you were here with us when we went through the book of Nehemiah, when I preached on Nehemiah chapter 1, I shared with you the story about the English writer G.K. Chesterton.

[18 : 15] You'll remember he read a question in the newspaper asking for a response and the question was this. Write in to the editors and answer the question, what is wrong with the world? And you'll remember Chesterton wrote in a famous one-sentence answer.

He said, Dear sirs, I am. I am what is wrong with the world. I'm not going to point my finger at everyone else.

I'm not going to point it at institutions and say, if we could fix those, everything would be right. I'm not going to point it at politicians and say, if we could fix them, suddenly everything would be right. I'm not going to point it at government or rulers or pastors or elders.

I'm going to say at the end of the day, what is wrong with the world includes me. I cannot just point my finger at other people. That is what's happening with these people.

They are experiencing repentance. They have just won, by the way. Remember, verses 1-9 is a victory. These people are on the right side of history. They have every reason to be proud, every reason to believe that they have done nothing wrong.

[19 : 19] And yet, their response after their victory is to repent. They're on the right side of history and it doesn't cause them to gloat. Instead, being on the right side of history here causes them to have a sense personally of their sin.

It causes them to be moved in repentance towards God. And so for us, as we talk about rejoicing, many people want joy. Few people are willing to do what it takes.

You want to sing joy to the world? Joy comes from repentance. Joy comes from repentance. There are all sorts of things we can try to do, all sorts of money we can spend, and things we can buy to try to make ourselves feel whole.

None of them will work. Repentance will. It's when we know that we are free of guilt and shame, a guilt and shame that relationships and experiences and products cannot free us from, that we're able to experience real and true joy.

And it's not repentance as we've talked about as a performance. It's not saying, okay, I need to say this to get this person off my back. No, when God's spirit is at work in our lives, we actually want what is right and good.

[20 : 42] There is a humility that comes with it, rather than a smug self-righteousness. Remember, these people have won. Their king is victorious and they're repenting.

They want what's good and right and wanting what's good and right causes them to see what's not good and right in themselves. Their desire for righteousness leads them to repentance.

Of course, Jesus tells us the very same thing about cleansing. In John chapter 7, he's at the Feast of Booths and he decides he's going to stand up and give a speech and he says this.

This is verse 37. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

water, we see this idea of life and water, of pouring something out, goes not just from the Old Testament but to the New Testament. Actually, if you fast forward to Zechariah chapter 14 or verse 8, you'll hear about streams of water flowing out from Jerusalem.

[21 : 51] Jesus fulfills this for us. He is the one who is pierced. He is the one who brings life to people. He is the one who allows living waters to flow from within them if they believe in him.

I was at the post office on Friday mailing something and the man ahead of me in line, I'm not sure why, turned around to me and he said, the world is no good anymore. I'm sure he was referring to all the things going on in our nation with politics and coronavirus and the government and whatever else.

I didn't really have a lot to say. But this is telling us we are no good. Yes, the world is broken. We are broken as well.

Jesus and only Jesus offers streams of living water. He says, whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

It's the one who is pierced that offers us that and the joy that comes with it. And so remember, first, God changes us.

[23 : 02] But repentance is a scary and dangerous thing. It's an understandable that most people avoid it, right? It is risky. It might even be in some situations foolish to admit you've done something wrong, that you are wrong, at least from a worldly perspective.

Repentance makes no sense unless there's also forgiveness. Repentance makes no sense unless there's also forgiveness.

There are few things more dangerous than admitting that you're wrong. And so that's why it's important that God not only change us, but he also cleanses us. He doesn't just change us, he also cleanses us.

I've noted before in chapter 10 this water imagery from verse 10. We see it more fully in chapter 13 verse 1. On that day, that's the day that God is victorious and these people repent, there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David.

And the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. And so there's not just a pouring out of God's spirit, there's not just the change, there's also the cleansing, there is this fountain.

[24 : 10] And the idea of this fountain is that this is a place where people would go and wash and they would be set free from the guilt and shame and power of sin. That it would be safe to confess because it wouldn't lead to condemnation, it would lead to forgiveness.

forgiveness. That's the joy that is coming for these people. It does not lead in their repentance to condemnation but forgiveness because this one who is pierced will wash them and cleanse them of our sins.

Now this image in chapter 1 or verse 1 of chapter 13 is a simple one. Simply it's one of cleansing in a fountain. And so I'm not going to go on explaining fountains to you.

You all know what it's like to take a shower and a bath to wash away the dirt that's on you. It's a simple image here for us. The point is this, because of Jesus' death, because he is the one who is pierced, it is safe to repent and confess our sins.

Because Jesus is the one who is pierced, it is safe to confess our sins. Our righteousness, our standing before God and other people does not hinge on our performance.

[25 : 23] Our standing before God and other people doesn't hinge on our performance. And so admitting that we are wrong is no longer dangerous. For us, it means this, as God changes us and he cleanses us, we are finally able to admit to ourselves and others and to God the places where we need help, we need to grow.

We are able for the first time to speak with a trusted friend about our struggle with pornography. Maybe you're able for the first time to finally tell someone about your abortion.

You are able to recognize what is good and right about people from the political party that you hate. You are able to know that those who disagree with you, while they may be flawed and corrupt, there's also things about them that are admirable.

people. While your party, you think, has things that are admirable, but there are also things about it and you that are flawed and corrupt. It is safe to finally admit that. Your righteousness does not stand on there being nothing wrong with your political party.

It is being able to confess to your kids that you're not a perfect parent. Not as a general statement, but able to name specifically the ways you failed and ask for their forgiveness.

[26 : 49] You no longer have to hold up the image of never making a mistake. You have a fountain opened for you to cleanse you from sin and in cleanness.

And so we don't have to just choose anger over what's wrong in the world, although there are plenty of things that are wrong and a lot to be angry over. We can also choose grief and sadness and recognize the ways that we contribute to it as well.

Remember G.K. Chesterton's answer, Dear Sir, I am. And so we see here, as I mentioned earlier, the gospel.

Simple, full, and free. We can rejoice because God changes us and he cleanses us. In his third book, I believe it is in the Narnia series, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, C.S.

Lewis tells the story of King Caspian, who goes on this journey at the beginning of his reign to find the seven lost lords of Narnia. And as he goes on this journey to find the seven lost lords, we meet a character named Eustace.

[28 : 00] And Eustace is kind of a jerk. He's very selfish. At one point, there's a problem because they have to ration out the water and Eustace is taking water that's not his.

He's taking rations that aren't his. He tries to get out of work whenever he can. He is a problem to the whole group. In fact, he has this very tense relationship you'll remember with Repacheep, the mouse.

And there comes a point at which they land on this island and Eustace decides to get out of work. He's going to go on a walk, conveniently, right as all the work is being done. Walks away. He gets lost, unfortunately, and he finds himself in a dragon's cave.

Now, he falls asleep in this cave. When he wakes up, he has turned into a dragon. Lewis gives us this image of him turning into a dragon as part of what it looks like to have sin as part of our world.

We lose some of our humanity. Eustace is unable to communicate now with his friends. They're not even sure. They don't even know it's him for a while until they finally guess it. But he's trapped in this dragon body.

[29 : 04] However, Edmund, one night, sees this person approaching him and he realizes that it's Eustace. Eustace has lost his dragon form and has returned to a boy.

Of course, he wants to know how this has happened. And so Eustace tells him the story of how he stopped being a dragon and he was able to become a boy once again.

First of all, a lion comes to him. And if you're familiar with the story, you know that this is Aslan, the great lion who's meant to represent God. Aslan comes to this dragon and as Eustace tells it, the lion told me, I must undress first.

So Eustace tries to undress himself. He realizes he's talking about shedding his skin and so he's scratching all over himself to take the dragon scales off and he's able to take one set of skin off. He thinks he's good, but there's another set of dragon skin.

He tries to take that one off. He's successful. I believe he takes off three different sets of dragon skin until the lion finally tells him the truth. The lion says this, you will have to let me undress you.

[30 : 04] We see this truth here. We must be cleansed. We cannot cleanse ourselves. We must be cleansed. We cannot cleanse ourselves. And so the lion begins to take the dragon skin off him.

The first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt.

The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. Then he tells us after that it's been peeled, there I was smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been.

Then he caught hold of me. I didn't like that very much for I was tender underneath now that I had no skin on. And listen to this, threw me into the water. Cleansing.

It smarted like anything but only for a moment. I turned into a boy again. After a bit, the lion took me out and dressed me.

[31 : 11] After this experience, Eustace begins to change and the chapter ends like this. It would be nice and fairly true to say that from that time forth, Eustace was a different boy.

To be strictly accurate, he began to be a different boy. He had relapses. There were still many days when he could be very tiresome. But most of those I shall not notice.

The cure had begun. Eustace needed to be cleansed. He could not cleanse himself. And so the lion came and did it for him.

Eustace needed to be changed. He could not change himself. And so the lion did it for him. He did not become perfect, but as Lewis tells us, the cure had begun.

Brothers and sisters, how can we rejoice at Advent? We rejoice because God cleanses us and he changes us so that we can have true and full joy.

[32 : 18] Please pray with me. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for the good news that you have given us in your word. We thank you for the gospel, simple, full, and free.

We ask that you would use this story and these words that you've given us in your word to encourage us that we would rejoice in you because you have made it safe to repent.

And you are the one who has provided a fountain for us to wash free from our sins. We ask these things grateful that we don't have to wash ourselves, but instead we can ask them in Jesus' name.

Amen.