

God's Tender Mercies Part 2 - Preparing the Way

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance as the condition for forgiveness of sin and the need to make straight the way of the Lord to reveal the glory of God.

Duration: 1:15:14

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-5, Matthew 5:22-23, Acts 12:23

Topics: "Mercy Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Isaiah 40:3, which speaks of a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. The preacher emphasizes that this voice is not that of John the Baptist, but rather the voice of God Himself. The sermon emphasizes the importance of heeding and obeying God's voice, as disobedience can lead to negative consequences. The preacher also highlights the need for repentance and obedience in order for the glory of the Lord to be revealed in one's life.

Transcript

Lord, we ask you to once again reveal yourself to us. We thank you for your working on earth. And we pray, Lord, that your gospel would go forth in power and conquer the whole world.

And those going out to different countries in this week, Lord, we pray that you would be with them, your power would be with them, and that you'd protect them, and that your gospel would go forth, amen. I want to continue where I left off last Sunday, where we spoke about the mercy of the grace of God. And I trust that you have received this grace and held onto it too, and you've grasped it.

Now, we ended in the second verse, we're going to read the third now. It's Isaiah 40, verse 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

We'll read thus far. I remember once reading about our ancestry in Germany long ago, before the gospel had come, because they were pagans, heathen. The festival of the changing of the sun, because of the

sun as it rises more, the day becomes longer, till at its full height it goes lower and the days become shorter.

When the season would change, these heathen in Germany would have a special celebration. At that celebration, they would give human sacrifices. They were war-fearing folk, and they would go out to battle and bring back the conquered ones, and they had certain idols or altars, and I can't go into details about all the names of their different gods.

They would sacrifice these people, slaughter them upon these altars on the rocks. To appease their gods, in a similar manner with animism in Africa and ancestral worship bringing blood sacrifices for the deceased, placing special food for the departed spirits, it was similar overseas. When we visited the ancient Stegan homestead, they took us there and showed us the big rocks, the altars which their forefathers had used for worship in a pagan way.

When the gospel came, they converted. They repented of these sacrifices and left them. They parted from these gods.

Today, it's only in history books that you read about the different gods and their names. They would take as part of their worship and things, they would have certain ceremonies where they'd pick certain flowers and leaves and herbs which they would They would make special oil essence out of it, and that would be as part of the ritual. One of their rituals was the belief that taking a certain type of tree where it had forked, they would, as part of their witchcraft ceremonies, a person who needed healing from their disease, they would walk through that gap, through that fork, through the fork.

When the gospel of Jesus Christ came, things changed. They stopped with that worship. They stopped with their witchcraft.

And it is always the same that when people come to Christ, there is a conversion, a changing, a leaving of the old life and a new, bringing about of a new life. One who denies that and carries on with the old is just, he belongs to the devil. And so it is that if a person meets with Christ, they stop with the old, like with special rituals at gravesides, which the pagans do, and that is left behind.

In the same way, our German ancestry, when they came to Christ, they stopped completely with the slaughtering of their enemies on altars, and that summer feast or celebration of the sun was stopped, and they call it the Johannes celebration. Remember the meaning of John, as we said last time, meaning the mercy of God, the grace of God, meaning that we don't need that old life anymore. We have a new life.

And it was wonderful that they changed from the spiritism of the past, and they brought in grace, John meaning this John, John the Baptist, the one who prepared the way. And if you go and read in Matthew chapter 3, you see there about real repentance. Now, there was a royalty in Germany, one called the Duke for instance, and it was known that the Duke of Saxony paid tithes and money to build a church in our area there in Hermannsburg in Germany, and his name, the name of that Duke was Hermann Billung, Duke of Saxony.

He built a church for them. That was in the year 980. If you go overseas, you'll find some churches that are so ancient, they're over a thousand years old.

There are ancient buildings and castles in Europe. You find them going back to the previous millennium in like in 980, this Duke of Saxony then built this church and that area became known as Hermannsburg or

the Castle of Hermann. Now, the meaning of that festival then was the grace of God.

That people who were in the very depths of ancestry were ancestral worship and spiritism and occultism came out of that through repentance. And he preached the gospel of grace, mercy. And so through that they received grace, mercy, heaven.

A person who repents, receives all these things, receives mercy and grace, and all the privileges of life that go with it. If the gospel is preached without the response of repentance, it is useless. If you don't repent upon hearing the gospel, then it is in vain.

You're still on your way to hell. Repentance is a must. It doesn't matter how many good and wonderful sermons you listen to and that you might even praise, unless there is a response of repentance to it, it doesn't help you.

Forgiveness of sin. It doesn't just happen by itself. It must be met with repentance.

The two go together. The condition for forgiveness of sin is repentance. Now, if our ancestry in Germany had continued upon hearing the gospel, continued with their slaughtering of their enemies upon altars and human sacrifices, their faith would have been in vain and just stupid, silly.

God. If the drunkard says, I've repented, I'm now a child of God, but he still continues with his drinking. He's lying for the one who's been sexually immoral.

If he says he's repented, but he still goes further in his immorality, he's lying. He's still in his sin. Person who claims to be a Christian without repentance is just lying.

He's a child of the devil of hell. And you parents must know and realize that your children are children of hell. Unless they repent.

The one who truly repents doesn't just mouth the words of repentance, but he lives it. There's the righteousness of Christ. It's the change of life that Christ's righteousness is there in its place.

So now in our text, it says the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. It says the voice of one crying. It doesn't mean one who cried.

It's not just the past tense, but a continual cry in the wilderness. And it says, it is the voice of one crying out and saying and speaking. And blessed is the one who hears that cry.

Take careful note, listen attentively to what this voice cries out. It says, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness, a highway for our God.

That's speaking about leveling out. That it is a level and plain. Now, how do we make a plain, a highway? Through a godly remorse about your sin.

That truly cries out in remorse and repentance about your sin. That you feel the pain of it. Yesterday, some of our young people from Siza Bantu, who have motorbikes, either the two wheel type or the four wheelers.

They went and they arranged there at a fire. Now, they didn't take the normal road to get to Sunsprite. They went through Mapumuluhimbi to cross the Mvoti.

It's about 48 kilometers if you take that road. But if you go via Crowncroft, Great Town, Dalton, Fawnlees, then it's over 100 kilometers. So I thought, well, let me be close by.

I don't want anybody to be injured. And in case of anything, I would be there. So I thought, well, let me be close by.

I don't want anybody to be injured. And in case of anything, I would be there. So I thought, well, let me be close by.

And in case of anything, I would be there. of making straight the way of the Lord, making it level, because even though it is a shortcut, nevertheless it takes longer to get to the destination in comparison to the highway that goes around the other way. Here God says, make the way straight, lift up the valleys, bring down every mountain and hill, bring it low, make the crooked places straight and the rough places smooth, make smooth the place which is rough and with potholes, that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

And it says, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken this, it's not the mouth of John, it's God who spoke through John. Herod had John the Baptist decapitated because of this woman in his life and her daughter in the dancing and what happened there. Even though John the Baptist voice was silenced, it doesn't matter because Herod had him decapitated because his lover hated John so much because John had said openly, it is not right Herod that you should live with your brother's wife.

And as Umpirte said, that even ministers there in Europe and Netherlands living in perversion, the same was true there, he was living and as politicians may live in a depraved lifestyle, so too this Herod who got John killed, he went back to his wife and said, this John is such a nuisance to me, he's mocking me and he continually accuses me and she, his lover was very upset. Herod had a special feast. When the liquor was flowing and the wine had got to their heads and then there was dancing and this daughter of the lover of Herod, she came and in this erotic dance, King Herod was so aroused, he said, I'll give you anything, ask for anything, even half my kingdom, I'll give it to you.

The girl went to her mother. She then asked of her mother, King Herod has offered half of his kingdom, what should I say? And she immediately said, bring the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Let me just say it straight, you women can be wonderful but you can also be thoroughly depraved and terrible and sink to the lowest depths as well.

You are worse than the men. The heart of a woman is a devilish thing if Christ isn't there. Blessed is the man who is not married to such a woman, she can take the man to heaven was, bring his head, John the Baptist's head on a platter, oh the wickedness of a woman's heart but even though she succeeded in having him decapitated, his voice was not silenced for that voice speaks still, even for her after he was beheaded, still his voice was ringing in her ears and even though she's been in hell for 2000 years, she can still hear that voice.

You should have seen what it was like yesterday, I wish we had videotaped it for you so that you could see what rough places really are, the ups and downs, the crooked places, the hills and the valleys, that area is known in English as the valley of the thousand hills. Now John the Baptist was not speaking about these valleys and rough places, he's speaking about the crooked and rough places of the heart. When the revival first began this was a text that we just would not part with, it was close to us all the time, to make the rough places smooth, those places that are crooked that are made straight, that there's a highway made for our God, what does that mean to Now in those early days, and the older generation will

remember, when that road was then excavated to make a proper road, the government went to tremendous lengths with major earth moving equipment, and Letton was the brand name of some of that earth moving equipment, giant sized wheels, and it wasn't just wheelbarrows being pushed around, as they leveled the valleys and made straight the crooked places.

Now Letton by the way was a Christian, and he tithed to the Lord, and as he gave the Lord gave more back to him. You test the Lord and see whether you are not losing out because you are not giving back to the Lord, as you are stingy so too you find that you don't experience the benefits and blessings of the Lord. What do you pay back to the Lord, what do you give him as he gives you the benefits of sunshine, life, and health? Ten rand, ube tati rand, ten loto, al sale guge, une nine rand, afagem seventeen oikos.

Kukona makawe yabgela, kona makawe, atan pile food, ube waka okanda, ganda bakulu, aweka mania makulu, guna lawa awa kiwo uyeina. Letton went much further than just the legal demand of a tenth, the tithe. He said no, I would rather keep the tenth and give nine tenths to the Lord, and he was wise too.

He was a genius of a man, and so successful and blessed. But let me continue, not just lunch passes by but supper too. How is the way prepared? It is through a deep God-given remorse of sin, confessed as it is, not that you excuse your sin.

A coming to Jesus as a sinner with your sins. A coming to Jesus as a sinner with your sins. Not just that you come because you are sick and you want to accept it.

Watch what I'm going to say to you here. You have a very bad anxiety when coming to Jesus. A true coming to Jesus means a necessity of real repentance, truly confessing your sins.

In German, that's to say coming to him as the Saviour from sin. If you just come to Jesus for more comforts in life, or you say it's just so that I can get to heaven Then you're not being driven by remorse for sin If you just come to Jesus for more comforts in life, or you say it's just so that I can get to heaven Then you're not being driven by remorse for sin Or you say it's just so that I can get to heaven If you just come to Jesus for more comforts in life, or you say it's just so that I can get to heaven to Jesus because your sins drive you to Him. Let's speak about sin, it says fill the valleys, lift up the valleys and bring down every hill.

When it rains and it's there are gales and winds, when there's been an outpouring of rain and a real storm you find that it all gravitates down to the bottom of the valley all the dirt and rubbish and filth collects down there. So if it speaks of the valley it means right deep down there where sin gathers together and collects. Your deepest most intimate secrets of sin hidden from others, that private deep-down wickedness that it is lifted out of the valley.

I say it in German for the benefit of those sitting at the back, our German group, it means bringing out of the very depths the lowest bottom of the valley, bringing The sins right down in the bottom of the valley are the most depraved, the vilest of sins. Your thoughts, the sins of your thought life deep down, the sins of lust, your thoughts of sexual immorality, jealousy, hatred, to be jealous or envious, to be hypocritical, to be lazy, to be lazy spiritually. These are the things that are the roots of sins.

It's not just those visible things that you need to confess, you need to deal with those most intimate secret sins of yours that are invisible to human eyes. It means taking out your dirty washing and hanging it on the line. If you don't do it here, God will do it for you on the last day, on judgment day.

He'll do it for you before heaven and earth and what a fool you'll be. Have you dealt with the things down in the depths of the valleys, that which is covered up in the mire and the muck down there? Have you lifted up those deep places? Maybe a deep seated hatred, which is invisible on the outward, you show that there's nothing that you hold against that person, you're nice, you act nicely towards them, but deep down there's hatred. The Bible says, if you do not love your brother, you are a murderer.

In German it has... It has a meaning. Being a slayer of people, one who hits out and you destroy other people's lives. On the outward, being nice and not a thing is visible, but there's that deep down rubbish of the heart, of animal filth and human filth that is soaked down into the depths of the valley.

And it says, the mountains and hills, let them be brought down low. The high places and the hills, pride, haughtiness, seeing yourself better than others. The attitude of, Lord I thank you that I'm much better than that person there at the back, that tax collector, that publican, I'm so much better than him.

Self-righteous, self-justification. That high place must be brought down low. You'll never find forgiveness and reconciliation with God, for he has said and declared in his word, he resists the proud.

No one finds grace outside of humility. The one who is proud, even the trace of pride, from Adam, for every single person that there ever will be, you cannot find grace before the Lord with pride. Now I'm just going through the points quickly, I'm just touching on some of the points, but you be prayerful and seek the Lord, calling on him, Lord speak to my heart, touch me.

You might be haughty saying, I'm clever, I'm so much more intelligent. Look at Nebuchadnezzar, when he lifted up his heart in pride and said, I have made all of this, all this Babylon, I have created, how did God respond? It was with a hard hand. A hit.

And by the way, I criticize and I say that we are against any government who says the banning of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment in homes that parents are not allowed to, for God has said that the parent who does not chastise his son hates his son. I don't mean a beating of an insane rage, but I mean a proper disciplining with the understanding of God.

Nebuchadnezzar went insane. He went out where the animals, the wild animals of every type were, where hair grew over his body, he had no clothes on. God said, you lift yourself up, I will humble you.

And says, and the crooked places shall be made straight. Making level the crooked and rough places. What is that? Complaining.

Strife. Like little children have an argument and they fight. Now let those rough places be made smooth, all that lack of harmony, that disunity, where you have no peace between, where there is no unity and complete harmony.

Or you are striving to show that you are right. I am right about this, no other opinion matters. Jesus says, if you fight with your brother, calling him a fool, you are worthy of hell.

Jesus said, if your brother has ought against you, quickly go and be reconciled to him. Your brother. Jesus didn't went to the Pharisees and Sadducees and Scribes and make peace with them.

Oh no, he speaks about your brothers, those aren't your brothers. God makes that man who isn't born again and doesn't walk with God, your brother. He isn't your brother.

He is a child of the devil. He is a child of the devil. He is not your brother.

Make it straight, smooth and be especially concerned if that person is a child of God. He is a child of God. Jesus said, if you fight with your brother, calling him a fool, you are worthy of hell.

Jesus said, if your brother has ought against you, quickly go and be reconciled to him. Oh no, he speaks about your brothers, those aren't your brothers. He is a child of God.

When the Jewish Sanhedrin council was busy fighting against Peter and them, one of the converted Pharisees stood up and said, brothers you leave because I want to say this now to the council, that if you fight against that, Gamaliel, if you fight against these men, if it is of God, you fight against God himself. And the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. If you are walking along and there is a pothole in front of you on the rough place and you can't see, you can fall and stumble.

And slip and fall. Doubt. To be in doubt or to be one who is neither here or there.

To be in doubt or to be one who is neither here or there. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. Do you see for yourself now that if you want the glory of the Lord to shine in your life, this is what you ought to do.

No person in this world will ever get revival. Nobody in the past and nobody in the future will get it unless he has heard God's call and if he is disobedient to what he has been told. And this is true repentance.

Obedience to what God says. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed in your life. For the mouth of God has spoken it.

This is the mouth of God speaking to you. Not Elo, not John the Baptist. God is speaking to you.

And if you don't obey and do what God has told you, you are disobedient to God. And don't tell me you are a child of the Lord and you saved. I say you are a child of the devil.

You take after your father. He is a liar and you can lie just like him. The mouth of God has spoken it.

Not Elo, not John the Baptist. God is speaking to you. And if you don't obey and do what God has told you, you are disobedient to God.

This is true repentance. The mouth of God has spoken it. The mouth of God has spoken it.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, is it John the Baptist? Not at all. It's no other voice than God himself. It is his mouth which has spoken.

And if you don't heed and obey his voice, you will still see what will happen to you. Maybe you will still be eaten by worms before you get to the grave. The mouth of God has spoken.

The mouth of God is still speaking. Do you hear what he says? You who have got homosexual inclinations. You who are a lesbian.

You see where you belong. You are a child of hell. And fire and brimstone will come down.

And you will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. Nothing less. The sycamore trees are on fire, there is bad blood on the streets, All those who are turning away from God.

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