

I.N.I.

Christmas Day  
Dec. 25, 2010  
Isaiah 52:7-10

In Christ Jesus, whose birth is the Good News we proclaim today, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Beautiful feet! That sounds like an awfully funny description for the messengers of God. But that is exactly what the Lord through Isaiah says: **HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF HIM WHO BRINGS GOOD NEWS.** Isaiah singles out the feet as an object of praise because it was by the means of their feet that messengers brought messages to the people.

The picture in our text is really quite exciting. The messenger hasn't gotten close enough to tell the Good News. He is still afar off, still on the mountains, but he can be seen, seen running toward the city. You can tell he is bringing good news by the way he is running. As you watch you too become excited, even before he actually arrives you sense the importance of the message. Your senses tingle, your eyes look intently as you gaze into the distance and your ears strain for the faintest sound. And then you hear it.

The messenger has been running. He's out of breath, yet he is so excited about the news he's coming to bring that he shouts it out even as he runs. He runs and shouts: **GOOD NEWS!** Then he runs a little further and shouts again: **PEACE!** He runs a little further, catches his breath, and shouts: **GOOD TIDINGS!** He runs even closer to the city walls and cries out: **SALVATION!** And finally as he enters the city itself he declares with a loud voice: **YOUR GOD REIGNS!**

The watchmen on the towers and the walls pick up the words of the messenger. They in turn lift up their voices and together from all parts of the city shout for joy. They too let the people of the city know that the God of Salvation and Peace is coming back to Zion.

But not only will the people hear this Good News, they will also see it. They will see their salvation; their peace; the Good Tidings; their God reigning. They will see it with their own eyes. Their God's grace and mercy and power will be so evident that they won't just have to hear about it; they will see it and know it is happening.

Let's read again vs. 7-8: **HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE FEET OF HIM WHO BRINGS GOOD NEWS, WHO PROCLAIMS PEACE, WHO BRINGS GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS, WHO PROCLAIMS SALVATION, WHO SAYS TO ZION, "YOUR GOD REIGNS!" YOUR WATCHMEN SHALL LIFT UP THEIR VOICES, WITH THEIR VOICES THEY SHALL SING TOGETHER; FOR THEY SHALL SEE EYE TO EYE WHEN THE LORD BRINGS BACK ZION.**

Do these words remind you of the words of our Christmas Gospel this morning. There we also heard of messengers. The word angel, means "messenger; one who proclaims a message." How beautiful indeed are the feet of those heavenly messengers who proclaimed to the shepherds and all the world: **DO NOT BE AFRAID, FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH WILL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR THERE IS BORN TO YOU THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD. ...GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOODWILL TOWARD MEN!"**

**Good News! Peace! Good Tidings! Salvation! Your God reigns!**

The watchmen from Israel that particular night were lowly shepherds keeping watch over their

flocks. They heard the message, heard the Good News with believing hearts and they ran to see God's grace in action; God's love in person in the form of a little baby boy named Jesus. And when they **HAD SEEN HIM, THEY MADE WIDELY KNOWN THE SAYING WHICH WAS TOLD THEM CONCERNING THIS CHILD.**

Isaiah draws for us another word picture. Even though it was 100 years before Jerusalem was destroyed when Isaiah wrote these words, he speaks of the city as if it were in ruins; and calls out to those ruins to sing songs of joy for the Lord has comforted His people. We read vs. 9: **BREAK FORTH INTO JOY, SING TOGETHER, YOU WASTE PLACES OF JERUSALEM! FOR THE LORD HAS COMFORTED HIS PEOPLE, HE HAS REDEEMED JERUSALEM.**

Because of their sins and unbelief the Israelites sold themselves into the slavery of Babylon. They were taken captive. But God, like the Old Testament Kinsman-Redeemer; bought them back from slavery; redeemed His people from their captivity.

Isaiah writes: **THE LORD HAS MADE BARE HIS HOLY ARM.** That is a term we still use today. God rolled up His sleeves, went to work and did something remarkable for His people **IN THE EYES OF ALL THE NATIONS.** He set them free and brought them back to the Promised Land.

Do these words also remind you of what we have been hearing this morning? We, all of God's creatures, sold our selves into the slavery of sin, death, Satan and hell. We were taken captive by the Devil and sin. But Jesus came into this world as our nearest relative; our Kinsman-Redeemer to buy us back. He came to redeem us out of the hands of the Devil. That is why He was born as a baby, as a human being like you and me; to be one of us to take our place and fight our battle for us.

Jesus rolled up His sleeves and went to work. He obeyed His Father's will perfectly in thought, word and deed. He purposefully set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross for He declared: **FOR THIS CAUSE I WAS BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD.** He went to the cross as our Substitute sacrifice to pay for our guilt and make restitution for our sins. The punishment we deserved was laid upon Him. And then He rose again conquering death, Satan and hell.

**Good News! Peace! Good tidings! Salvation! Our God reigns!**

Even though this took place far off, many miles away and many years ago; the messengers--starting with the angels and the shepherds---have made Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection known to the whole world and the Lord Christ has performed His mighty deliverance **IN THE EYES OF ALL THE NATIONS AND ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (HAVE SEEN) THE SALVATION OF OUR GOD.**

Last night in our Christmas Eve Service beautiful little feet came before us and our children's voices proclaimed: **Good News! Peace! Good tidings! Salvation! Our God reigns!**

Today as your messenger, as your watchman: **I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!** Good news for your ears! **FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD.** Good news for your eyes! **AND THIS SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU; YOU SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER.**

Good news for your mouth to share with others. You can be like the shepherds and tell others, "I have seen the Lord! I have seen the Christ! He is God in human flesh and blood, the Lord Jesus who has come to save me and you and all people from their sins and give to us everlasting life."

We too with swift beautiful feet will run and proclaim:

**Good News! Peace! Good tidings! Salvation! Our God reigns!**

Christmas demonstrates God's love and mercy, for what else would prompt God to send His Son into this earth to die for us but His underserved love. The message of Christmas is awesome! It is love-filled! It is a message to be proclaimed to all far and wide.

God has called me to run with this message and to proclaim it to you as your watchman; your shepherd and he has called you to listen to that message and then proclaim it to others as well—all of us sinful human beings have been purified and been declared righteous in Christ.

Our eyes have seen the Lord's salvation which He prepared before the face of all people. May the Lord let us depart in peace from this His House of worship this morning eager and zealous to spread this message as we run the race of life the Lord has laid before us.

Amen.