

Good Morning,

May 31, 2015

In today's message we are going to go back several weeks to continue a message series that we started just before Mother's Day. Our message that day was the one where we presented the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch and his encounter with Philip on a desert road. Thinking back we remember that Philip was lead by God to go search for the Ethiopian until he found him. We also remember that when Philip found him on the road, the Holy Spirit told Philip to cross the road and go over to the Ethiopian. As Philip was approaching the Ethiopian's chariot he heard the Ethiopian reading the Book of Isaiah. Philip then asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading and the Ethiopian responded, ***"How can I, unless some one guides me?"*** Then Philip discovered that the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53, which states, ***"Like a sheep he was led to slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."*** Then the Ethiopian asked Philip who was it that the Prophet Isaiah was writing about. Philip then told the Ethiopian that the Prophet Isaiah was prophesizing about the arrival of the long awaited Messiah, Jesus Christ. Philip and the Ethiopian's story continue on but I would like to leave our summary at this point and ask a question that will help us set the stage for today's message. Our question is "Why is Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of the Messiah so important?" Isaiah's prophecies are important because his prophecies actually describe the coming Messiah. Sort of like a job description that we might find in the "want ad" section of our newspapers. ***Wanted – Healing and Forgiveness Specialist. We are looking for a person who's Mother was a virgin at His birth. This person should have the reputation of being the Son of God. This person will be able to perform miracles of healing, raising the dead, transforming wine and forgiving sins. A person who performs baptisms should have foretold this person's coming. Experiences in this person's life should include abuse, suffering, rejection death, and resurrection within a rich's person's tomb. Please submit 12 references from associates who have experienced your teaching abilities. Resumes along with applications are to be submitted no later than Ascension Sunday.*** So what if I told you that it took hundreds of years to find a qualified applicant for the position of the Messiah? You see this "want ad" was actually sort of written by the Prophet Isaiah 700 years before the life and death of Jesus. So who was this Prophet Isaiah? The Prophet Isaiah lived back in a time where the Israelites lived in a world that is very similar to today's world. You see, Isaiah's time was during a period of great

prosperity in the land of Judah. Judah's King Uzziah reigned for about 50 years and during his reign Judah's society went from good times to bad times. Because of their great prosperity, Judah's people began to experience a separation of classes between the rich and the poor. This widening of the gap between the classes back then is similar to what we may be finding in our country today. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. In fact it was getting so bad that a revolt was about to happen. But the strong leadership and power of King Uzziah kept the situation in check. However, internal strife was not the only problem as the Assyrians were advancing on northern Israel, which brought about the real possibility of future invasion into Judah. The people of Judah had confidence in their King Uzziah's power to keep them safe from the advancing Assyrians. But then King Uzziah fell ill to leprosy and left Jerusalem to enter a Leper colony. King Uzziah's son was next in line to become King but he was not like his father as he was a weak leader. The people began to lose confidence in his rule as well as Jewish law and started to worship idols again. And it was during this time that Isaiah, through a dream discovered his call from God to become a prophet. And God's prophetic purpose for Isaiah was to bring the nation of Judah back into faith by condemning their actions and bringing hope back into their lives by telling them of a coming messiah. And we know that 700 years later Isaiah's prophecies were fulfilled in the birth, life, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So what were the prophecies of Isaiah that foretold of the coming of the Messiah and how accurate were they? I would like to leave the answer of this question in your minds as I bring to our message this morning a list of Isaiah's prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. We begin our list with ***Isaiah 7: 14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and a bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."*** Next we have ***Isaiah 9: 6, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*** Now from ***Isaiah 40:3, "A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare a way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*** Now from ***Isaiah 50: 6, "I gave back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting."*** And now I saved the best for last, Isaiah 53. I would like to recommend that some time this coming week that you find a quiet place and read and reflect on this chapter from the Book of Isaiah. And since this chapter is too long to read word for word in our message today I have elected to showcase some of the verses that indicate to us that Isaiah's prophecy of the

coming of the Messiah. ***“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground... He is despised and rejected by men...Surely he bore our grief and carried our sorrows... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities...and by His stripes we are healed... He was oppressed and He was afflicted...He was led as a lamb to the slaughter... and He was taken from prison and from judgment...for the transgressions of My people He was stricken... and they made His grave with the wicked – but with the rich at His death...and He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”*** So what thoughts were happening in your mind as I was reading some of the verses from Isaiah 53? Were you possibly thinking that these verses were really describing the parts of Jesus’ life on this earth? I know for my thoughts it was difficult not to think of Jesus as I was reading them. Ok, now for the really big question of our message today, “Can you tell me what Chapter in the Book of Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading from when Phillip came upon him? The Ethiopian was reading from the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 53. So now that we’re a bit more familiar with this chapter and it’s message, we can relate to the question that Phillip asked of the Ethiopian in ***Acts 8, Verse 30 “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”*** And it’s been my hope this morning that we too, that just like the Ethiopian Eunuch, have also arrived at a better understanding of Isaiah’s prophecy of a coming Messiah. But all who read Isaiah’s prophecies are not in agreement that the Messiah that Isaiah is speaking of is the Jesus Christ. Take for example the Jews in our world today. Some of their thoughts about Isaiah’s prophecy of the Messiah is that he was describing the plight of the Jewish people and their relationship with God. But for me I find myself simply looking at Isaiah’s prophecies as messages from God for the Jewish people to help maintain their faith in God promises by looking forward the coming of Jesus. As I was preparing for our message today I came across a term that struck a note in my thinking about how can we know that it was Jesus that Isaiah was talking about. And this term was “Tailor-Made”. I also began to think of other terms such as “made to fit” or “made to order” as a way to begin to think about how we can tell if it was Jesus who was “Tailor-made” to be the one to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy. Did you know that the definition of “Tailor-made” even fits perfectly in describing the gift that God gave in having Jesus as our Savior? Well here goes! One part of the definition of “Tailor-made” goes like this, “being made or fitted to a particular use or purpose”. And if we could apply that definition to anyone who walked this earth, Jesus would have certainly led the list. Jesus came

to earth with a purpose, a purpose to save our spiritual lives, a purpose to teach us about the Kingdom of God, a purpose to set an example of the right way to live with each other, and a purpose to forgive our sins. Wow, now that's a lot of purposes for one man to accomplish. But we know that Jesus did accomplish these things and He is still accomplishing them in our lives today. And the best part of our message today is that Isaiah knew that it was Jesus who would fulfill this purpose hundred's of years before he was even born in a manger. You know I really like the term "tailor made" because it not only describes Jesus' life and actions, in this world, but it also describes our purpose that God has set before us. In the 1st Chapter of 2nd Timothy we find Paul writing to Timothy as saying, ***"who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher"***. You see Paul is explaining to Timothy in a similar message, what it is that we are learning from our message today. And what it is that we are learning? We are learning that in each one of us we too, have a holy calling in our hearts just like God's holy call that was placed on Timothy and Paul's hearts. But there is one major difference between God's call to our hearts and God's call to Timothy and Paul's hearts and that major difference is that God is still working on us. So if we look back to Paul and Timothy's life it would be easy for us to see that they were "Taylor-made" to fulfill the purpose that God had set before them. So, when we look into our lives it may not be so easy to see the purpose that God has set before us. But there is one thing we know for sure, that God is in the process of tailoring us, so we too can accomplish our part of God's purpose here on earth. So the next time you see a clothing tag on your shirt or blouse take a moment and read it, who knows it might just say, "Tailor-Made by a Loving God". Amen

May 31, 2015 Worship Service Readings

First Lesson - Matthew 1:20-23

“As he considered this, he fell asleep, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. ‘Joseph, son of David,’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ All of this happened to fulfill the Lord’s message through His prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and He will be called Immanuel (meaning, God is with us).’”

Please stand as we sing together Glory Be To The Father #70

Gospel Reading - 2 Timothy 1: 9-11

“who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher”

Please join together as we sing Hymn No. _____
