

Wednesday, September 11, 2024 • Read Isaiah 66:5–13

Questions from the Scripture text: What is the command in v5a? To whom (v5b)? About whom (v5c)? What had they done (v5d)? Whom had they claimed to serve? What had they said (v5e–g)? How would these respond to the suffering of those who fear Him (v6)? But what is this accomplishing, and how quickly (v7–8)? Why is this so assured and powerful (v9)? What group is now addressed in v10 (cp. v5)? What do they receive in v11a? In v11b? In v11c? What provides this nourishment, comfort, and joy (v11d)? Who does this (v12a–b)? How much shalom and glory does He give her (v12b–c)? To do what for those who love her (v12d–f)? Who comforts Zion's children (v13)?

How important is the church? Isaiah 66:5–13 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the church is God's beloved, to which and through which He gives life, joy, and comfort.**

God's true people—the tremblers at His Word (v5b)—will always have their haters from within the visible church (v5c). These scoff at believers' joy (v5d–e). But the scoffers shall be put to shame (v5f), when the Word at which they refused to tremble comes and destroys them (v6). True and lasting joy belongs to those who love Zion. They are not only her supporters, but her children by God's glorious power (v7–9). They love Zion (v10b), rejoice in her joys (v10a, b, c), and mourn in her griefs (v10d). They are not only born of Zion but nourished by her (v11a). God, Who brings life from within His church by His own almighty glory, also gives comfort (v11b) and joy (v11c) to Zion's nursing infants by that same glory (v11d). The shalom (blessedness and wholeness in every way, v12b) and glory (v12c) of Zion does not come as from a jar or even a cistern, but as from a river. God gives her children to be cared by her and with her (v12c–e), but it is God Himself Who gives her triple comfort (v13). God loves His church, and He loves those who love her. And He gives them life, joy, and comfort within her. This is what the King, the Servant, the Christ brings about.

How does trembling at God's Word appear in your own life? How does love for the church appear in how you spend your time? Your affections? Efforts? Wealth?

Sample prayer: O Lord, forgive us for how we have failed to tremble at Your Word. Truly, we have been in danger of being destroyed by it in the last day. And forgive us for how unmoved (and even self-righteous) we have been about the troubles of Your church. And forgive us for when, during the low-times of Your church, we have been forgetful of Your loving, saving intentions toward us. Forgive us. And grant that we would rejoice in Christ's reign over His church, intercession for her, and ultimate nourishing, gladdening, and comforting of her; we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP87 "The Lord's Foundation, O Hide Your Face" or TPH405 "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah. 66 verses 5-13. These are God's words. Hear the word of Yahweh you who tremble? At his word. Your Brethren, who hated you? Who cast you out for my name's sake and said, Let Yahweh be glorified that. We may see your joy. But they shall be ashamed. The sound of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of Yahweh who fully repays his enemies.

Before she was in labor, she gave birth before. Her pain came, she delivered a male child who has heard such thing, who has seen such things. Shall the Earth be made to give birth in one day or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.

Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery says Yahweh Shalai who caused delivery, shut up the wounds as your God. Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with. All you who love her. Rejoice for Joy with All you who mourn for her. That you may be that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom.

That you may drink deeply and be delighted. With the abundance of her glory. For thus, says, Yahweh behold, I will extend peace to her like a river and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed on her sides. You shall be carried and be dangled on her knees.

As one whom his mother Comforts. So I will comfort you And you shall be comforted. Jerusalem. So, for the reading of God's inspired,

At the time, that Isaiah wrote this and for much of the history of the church since then. There were those who were the tremblers at God's word. Who still rejoiced in the Lord and rejoiced in Hope of what the Lord would do. In the last day, but in the present time, They trembled at God's word to them because they were Sinners and the church was sinful.

And the church was under God's discipline for its sin. These are those to whom God pays his loving attention, because he's the one who's done the work in their hearts, to make them tremble at his word. This group is being renamed in verse five. If you look back up to verse two, you can see Things, my hand has made and all those things exist, says Yahweh.

Talking about those who Um play at religion as it were to tie into the Matthew, 11 passage that we had in morning sermon this week. Those who play it. Religion, who are not dealing genuinely with God. But want to have a quote unquote Christianity that is according to their own ideas, or their own Traditions, or their own desires Etc.

Those are not the ones upon whom God looks with favor. You remember from verse two, On him. But on this one I will look on him who is poor and of a contrite. you remember, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn? On him, who is poor and of a contrite spirit and who trembles at my word.

And so that was one of the big questions for us and last week's, Isaiah passage am I someone, who trembles at the word of God? Do I engage him genuinely. When I'm reading his word or meditating upon it or hearing it, preached and so forth. Well, now he comes and he addresses those who are that minority in the visible.

Church at that time, And this is often the case in many congregations and many times and places in the physical church that minority who trembles At the word of God, who are poor in spirit before him? Who are humbled? Before God, and yet grateful and joyful, and optimistic about God's salvation, which he has planned, which he shall fully bring about, and is sure to happen.

Well, now in verse 5, God addresses this minority and he refers to your Brethren. Who hated you who cast you out for my name's sake. So not only are the the genuinely saved often a minority in the church. Often those who attack them think that they are doing God's service.

They your Brethren, you know, other members of The Visible Church, other members of Israel here. Who hated you? Who cast you out from my name's sake. Said let Yahweh me be glorified that we may see your joy. And so they're mocking them. There's sarcasm, there's scoffing here. These tremblers at God's word are saying we are not glorifying the Lord but he will be glorified and we will Rejoice.

Then And those who hate them, actually cast them out. And and said, let Yahweh may be glorified so that we may see your joy, like what you're gonna do now. Now we cast you out in the name of Yahweh. They're saying. But God says, But they shall be ashamed.

And so do not be shaken. When there are in the church, those who are like the ones who listen to John the baptizer and said, he has a demon because he was way too serious about repentance, they thought, Or who are like those who listen to the Lord Jesus and they said clawton and a drunkert Friend of tax collectors and sinners.

Because of the free offer of the gospel, and Hope for all sorts of Sinners, who would repent and And belief. You know, those who Attack Tron and attack Christ. Don't be shaken. When people attack you and they feel justified in doing so because of their their false. Religion, their false Christianity, their wrong Doctrine, their false spirituality.

They are not just your enemies. They're God's enemies. you remember when Our offering of the Gospel to the Nations in Christ's name, was so offensive to the Jews and Paul. Overseeing the murder and maybe even carrying out the murder. Of those who preached Christ in the resurrection.

And Who said that? The Salvation that was coming. to the Nations have now come in Christ. he was in the lord's name. Attacking Christians. For which he later called himself. The chief of Sinners. And then on the way to Damascus, when the Lord Jesus appeared to him, What did the Lord Jesus?

Say said Saul Saul. Why are you persecuting me? And so when the Lord tells the tremblers at his word in verse 5, yes your brother your Brethren did this to you. And they marked your confidence, your hope in the Lord's glory and your future Jo. But they shall be ashamed.

And then he announces, he gives this vocal window. Into the day of the shame of the enemies in verse 6. The sound of the noise of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice. Which voice is it? It's kind of like in chapter 63 where there was the site as the as the king approached, the site of the approaching King became clear and who it is.

Well here's a sound and a noise and the voice and as the sound is becoming clear, we find out who it is. In this case, the voice of Yahweh Who fully repays his enemies. You who tremble at God's word and you trust in him. Do not be shaken by men.

What can they do to you? The Lord will fully repay all of his enemies. And his power, of course, is not only displayed and the repaying of his enemies that could have been done right away. But his power is displayed in bringing a Salvation. That is greater than we can imagine.

So on the one hand when the enemies seem strong and it seems like God will never act and how could any of this? How could this all turn out, right? And you don't And we just are unable to grasp and embrace the The infinite power of God to judge.

There's also this infinite power of God to save. That is beyond what we can imagine. And so, in verse 7 through 8, there's this Um,

Perplexity confusion. At the greatness of what is happening because the gospel, Um goes out to the world and God saves for himself. A Remnant that is a multitude and Zion in whom those who tremble. At his word was a minority is suddenly filled with These children who tremble at his word, from all the nations.

And how in the world could this happen? What is the explanation? For this in gathering of all these people. Before she was in labor, she gave birth before. Her pain came. She delivered a male child who has heard such a thing who has seen such things shall the Earth be made to give birth in one day or a nation be born at once.

As soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children. And so the, the picture of obviously. Physically a woman does not have you have her child before the labor, but you know, as women compare birth stories and, you know, sometimes there's horror stories and sometimes there's, you know, amazingly, easy birth stories and ones like the one with the horrible stories.

Like I was in transition for nine hours, and my total labor was like 22 hours. Are not real numbers. but it's like so Dreadful and the other one was like, Know I had. I had some Braxton Hicks for A few weeks, but then when it came time to actual labor, I labored for an hour and it wasn't so bad and then out, she came and it was so easy.

And then Zion comes and says Oh, really, I gave birth before the pain started. She before she was in labor. She gave birth before. Her pain came. She delivered a male child. In other words It wasn't by her labor, it wasn't by her pain. That God gave her children.

It was by God's power. That God gave her children. The the multitude that was added. This nation that nobody can count. That is. the people of the true Israel, or the Israel of God, from all the nations including the remnant, from the Jews. But the remnant, From all the nation, it did not come.

By the power or the effort. The church. Or particularly of Judah or Israel here. That came by the power and effort of God. Are we, are we called? To give an answer for the hope it was within us. And To love our neighbor as ourselves, especially to love them with the gospel and to Support and send those whom God calls and ordains as preachers of the gospel and bring as however we may unbelievers to come hear the gospel preached.

Yeah, we're called to a lot of service and effort but it is not by our effort. That God plants churches or God grows his church or saves people. It Is by his effort by his power. And so, This question that's asked in verses 7 through 8, 7 and 8, which is basically like What is this?

How can this happen? That is completely not the way it happens with man. The answer is what is impossible with man? Is it is possible with God, And when the Lord Jesus, Says that about the conversion at that point, particularly of a rich man. Praise God. It's possible for For one, who is wealthy to be saved because God is the one who doesn't even though it is a great obstacle, To Salvation.

To have much of the things of this world. And that's the answer that God gives in verse 9. It says, shall I bring to the time of birth? And not cause delivery. Says, you always? I am the one who has decided. Who and when and how I am going to say, if you didn't know, it was the time of birth because labor had not started and pain had not but it was It was the right time.

And so there's this word picture of God's Redemptive plan being pregnant in ways that we cannot tell. And God's saving and marvelous, and surprising ways and Gathering. People into himself, should encourage us when we're praying for conversions and we're praying for Revival. And it seems to us, like, A massive influx of God saving people or a great Revival.

Is. Is far away or unlikely to happen, what would we know? About how far away it is, or How likely it is to happen, as God, who has planned it. And as he is often done throughout history, he has done it. It is exactly the opposite time that people might have thought While he is the one who has planned.

The time of birth and he causes delivery. Says shallah who caused delivery. Shut up the womb. Says your God. His plan in history. Is not about. the Wrath in which he does rightly and justly, Give vessels. Wrath. Um who are prepared for Destruction over to their sin and he hardens them and he's right to do that.

But if that was what the plan of History was about. He would have condemned them immediately, he would have cast them into hell immediately. He says he endures them with much patience. Why? Well, to show the riches of his glory upon vessels prepared for Mercy. The whole of human history is especially about his quote unquote,

causing delivery, his giving birth giving life to those whom he is redeeming.

And it is absolutely impossible. That they should fail to be saved. And, Hope in God is not misplaced. Even if the scoffers Laugh at those who tremble at God's word because trembling God's word doesn't just mean taking what he has said about our sins. Seriously. It also means taking what he says about himself.

And his grace. And his salvation, and his Plan of Salvation, seriously. That we tremble, not only in grief over ourselves but we tremble in awe and joy at what he has planned to do. And he loves his church that he is. saving that he is going to give the things and the rest of this passage.

And if we tremble at his word, We should love his church. And we should. Be glad. And optimistic. About what God is going to do in gathering in all of his people. They may not turn out to be all the people that we expected It may not come in no way or according to the plan that we would have expected or thought or desired.

And yet, we tremble at his word and so we rejoice in Not only over our own salvation about which the scripture tells us much if we are clinging to Christ. But even over what he's doing in his church and what he will have done, When he's finished. There's no ground for discouragement.

For the one who trembles at God's word, there's much ground for grief. We grieve over the Lost. We grieve over the unfaithfulness of the But we're not thereby discouraged. Because we hope in God. And so he says Rejoice with the Jerusalem and be glad with her. All you, who love her Rejoice for Joy with her.

All you who mourn for her Actually mourn for her now but we Rejoice over, what God will ultimately do. Why that you may be feed and be satisfied with consolation of her bosom that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

Mixed as the visible church is, as it's often, as it's in every place more or less pure and often in the less pure category and many times and many places yet. The visible church, both Israel at that time. And the visible church now in Christ. At this time is the place where he has given his words and where he's given the preaching of the Gospel, where he's given Drawing Near to Christ in the worship or Drawing Near to God through Christ in the worship.

And so he says don't sell the church short. She is not yet what she ought to be. But she is the one through whom. The Lord feeds and gladdens his people on himself by the means of his grace. And how much more. Now when Jesus is the prophet and the priest and the King Now in Alaska church, that's embraced less.

And you get man-made rubbish in the theology. And you get man-made rubbish in the worship. And you get man-made rubbish in the, the morality or how to live. And to the extent that you do, you enjoy less of the expression of Christ's Christ being Prophet, when the theology has more rubbish in it, you get less of the expression of Christ being our priest, when the worship has more rubbish in it, you get less of the expression of Christ being Kink, When the morality is all messed up and you get Antonomianism or legalism, which Two sides of the same coin, that's true.

But Still the visible church. The way on Earth right now. Through which God through which Christ exercises, his office. As our prophet and priest and King. And as we look to him, Who is the? Who comforts? You know, as one whom his mother Comforts, I will comfort you He does it.

Through his. Not only verse 11 with the consolation of her bosom. that be satisfied, drink deeply and be delighted of the abundance of her glory. But as as the Lord's plan comes to its fulfillment. And he describes what he is ultimately doing for the church because the church corporately will be perfected.

The there is coming a day when the visible church and the invisible church will be the same. There won't be this distinction. Of course, it comes in the last day, that's the day on which it comes. And yet the Lord says, I will extend peace to her like a river.

His Shalom will have this never-ending You know, a river was not like a cistern. Um that would dry up. He says the glory of the Gentiles, the glory of the Nations like a flowing stream. And you shall feed on her sides, you shall be carried and be dangled on her knees.

There's, No room in biblical thinking, in christ-like thinking. For saying you love God and his word, you just aren't a big fan of the church. No. God loves his church Christ died for his. Christ, does his work in the earth exercises, his offices, especially Prophet priest and King in and through the And so we must love his church and we must grieve for her when she's less pure.

And yet Rejoice. Over her. As belonging to the Lord and rejoice over. What he shall ultimately. Do for her and has planned and will fulfill for her. So may the Lord give us to be tremblers at his word and not be scoffers. And may the Lord give us not not to be shaken.

Not to be shaken. By those who do scoff. At his church and then let's pray. Our Father in heaven. We thank you and praise you. For this portion of your word. Help us to love your church like you do. Help us to remember that. She, and Her children, Those whom you will gather in, from all the nations.

That all of all of this depends on you and your power. And your work. Not that of, man. Give us to be faithful and loving you, and loving your church and serving her for whom Christ died. But give us not to be discouraged in ourselves or to trust in ourselves.

But to be encouraged in you and to trust you. Which we ask the Christ. Amen.