

In The Valley

By Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam

John the Baptist declared in one of his many sermons to the people of his day saying:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way for the LORD;

Make His paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled

And every mountain and hill brought low;

The crooked place shall be made straight

And the rough ways smooth;

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Luke 3:4-6

His text was taken from the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3-5). These words of Isaiah spoke of the glory of God or the salvation of God upon all flesh. John was the forerunner and he was declaring that the prophecy was about to be fulfilled. Jesus, the Messiah, was coming and He would bring salvation to the people and they would see the glory of God. But sad to say, Jesus had come and gone and they still had not recognised Him nor believed in Him. We can learn from history and from the mistakes that they made. Why do we need to do so? Because Jesus is coming back again. And when He does, we should be prepared for His Second Coming and not miss Him.

Let me establish a couple of things here about the Second Coming of Jesus. Firstly, we do not know the exact day and time of His coming. The Bible says, “Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning” (Mark 13:35). Secondly, we need to be prepared for His coming for Matthew says, “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Mark 24:44). Also Hosea says, “Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fellow ground. For it is time to seek the Lord, till He comes and reign righteousness on you” (Hosea 10:12). Regardless of who you are for where you are, God wants to reveal His power in your toughest situations. He wants to bring rain as a refreshing to your desert or dry parched ground. He wants to put the spirit of life back into your life. But He cannot do this until you prepare the way for Him to work in your life.

John, using Isaiah’s prophecy, points out four areas or hindrances that keep the Lord from helping you experiences the salvation or the glory of the Lord.

1. Valleys

“...every valley shall be filled” (Luke 3:5)

These are two thought with regards to valleys. Firstly, valleys speak of a low place, therefore it speaks of humility. It is the humble that will be exalted. It is those who know how to be humble and live in humility that will be raised. Jesus came as a humble Messiah born in a stable and Israel did not recognise Him. They were looking for a Messiah who would be born in a palace. They were offended by Jesus’ humility. They did not want a carpenter’s son to be their Messiah. How many are offended because you are called to live a humble life? Do not despise the way of humility. Do not be offended by humble circumstances. God’s glory will come upon those in the valleys, and those who have the spirit of humility, He will cause them to rise up. The Bible says, “and whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

Secondly, valleys are difficult places and situation. We call them valley experiences. It also speaks of low self-esteem. How many suffer from this? “I am not intelligent, I am not talented, I am not educated, I am not healthy, I am not wealthy and the list goes on.” Moses is a good example of low self-esteem. He said to the Lord, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue” (Exodus 4:10). God’s glory will be seen by all flesh, He wants to lift you up from your valley of low self-esteem. Another is Gideon, he was hiding behind the winepress, feeling so scared and suffering such low self-esteem, “the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12). God wants you to know, you can be somebody. You can rise up from all kinds of inferiority complexes. You can be victorious; you can rise up and walk out of your valleys. Jesus can come into your life if you will recognise your need and welcome Him by accepting Him as your Saviour and Lord.

2. Mountain and Hill

“...every mountain and hill brought low” (Luke 3:5)

These are two thoughts with regard to mountains. Firstly, a mountain speaks of pride which is the opposite of humility. Being boastful, self-sufficient and confident, conceited and arrogant. Thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to. The mountain can be a hindrance in your life. Pride was man’s downfall in the Garden of Eden. It was also the downfall of Satan. Secondly, the mountain also speaks of the devil’s schemes. Satan will put a mountain before you or send a Goliath into your life, or put Red Sea or wall to hinder you. But Jesus says, “if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20). Have faith in what God says and it will bring you victory and you will see the salvation or glory of God. It was so with David and it will also be so with you.

3. Crooked Places

“... shall be made straight” (Luke 3:5)

Crooked speaks of lying, deceiving and living a double lifestyle. Sinners are crooked. There was a man in the Bible who was crooked in his dealings; his name was Zaachaeus. He met Jesus in an unusual way and after meeting with Jesus, salvation came to him and his household, he was transformed and he said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor, and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

Salvation can come to you if you confess and repent before God, no matter how crooked your lifestyle may be, you can be delivered from your sinful life. Do not live a life of a fornicator or an adulterer both physically and spiritually. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. Jesus can deliver you and you can be ready for His Second Coming.

4. Rough Ways

“... made smooth” (Luke 3:5)

This speaks of your attitudes, disposition and bad habits. Jesus is coming back again, how can you be ready? How can you see the salvation of God? Give him your valleys, your mountains, your crooked places and your rough ways. He can change you! James and John, the two disciples of Jesus were called “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). It was because they were both quick and hot tempered. How many have that problem? These are rough ways that cause relationships and friendships to be broken.

Before John died, he was called the Apostle of Lord. What had happened? The salvation of God came to him and he lived a life that declared the glory of God. Admit your rough ways. Repent and be filled with the Holy Spirit and you will see the salvation of the Lord.

Take heed to the prophetic words of Isaiah brought to us again by John the Baptist declaring how to prepare the way the way of the Lord into your life. And I am confident that when Jesus comes the second time, we will be ready to meet Him any day at any time.

(All the above quotes are from New King James)