

Sermon Title: "God's Hand"
Sermon Series: "2011: The Year You Make Contact"
Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of January 16, 2011

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker: Which of these situations have you experienced?

1. Being called to the principal's office;
2. Getting called in by your employer;
3. Being pulled over by the police;

What was/would be your initial response? Did the encounter turn out as you had anticipated?

Big Idea: Our heavenly Father is not out to get us but to save us. In fact, he desires our very best. History shows that God wants to develop a close and growing relationship with each of us.

Sermon Text: Isaiah 62:1-5 (New International Version)

1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. **2** The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. **3** You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. **4** No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah (which means *my delight is in her*), and your land Beulah (which means *married*); for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. **5** As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Learning more about the lesson

Isaiah 62 paints a picture of what God is like and how he feels about us. This week's passage offers a good example of the kind of relationship God wants to have with each of us.

I. He wants to call you by a new name

Reread Isaiah 62:2, 4

1. Have you ever desired a fresh start, a second chance, or even a new name? What led to that desire and did you get your wish?
2. How could having a new name, a completely fresh start, impact your relationships with others?
3. Imagine yourself standing face to face with God. By what name do you hear him calling you?

II. He wants to hold you in his hand

Reread Isaiah 62:3

1. When you read or hear this verse, what images come to mind?
2. Brainstorm as many figures of speech and idioms about the hand as you can with the group.

Activity

Match the following Bible verses with their basic message:

___ "Whatever you find to do with your hands, do it with all your might" (Eccl. 9:10)

___ Hear my plea for mercy when I cry out to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your holy temple! (Psalm 28:2)

___ So I want the men to pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger or dispute. (1 Timothy 2:8)

___ *“Open your hand to your fellow Israelites who are the poor and needy” (Deut. 15:11)*

___ *“The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky displays his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1)*

a) *Indicates helpfulness towards others.*

b) *Uplifted hands are a gesture of prayer.*

c) *God’s strength and power are shown through his creation of the world.*

d) *Your work ethic should be purposeful, motivated by loyalty to God (implied by audience).*

e) *Worship God with a clean heart.*

The New Testament confirms this image as true to God’s desire.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” (John 10:27-29)

3. Consider that you are held securely in the Lord’s all-powerful hand. What difference does that make to you?

III. He wants to delight in you

This section finishes with the image of God as the bridegroom rejoicing over the restored Jerusalem, his beautiful bride. The days of estrangement were over; all nations would perceive God’s complete adoration of his people. Jerusalem would become a source of encouragement for God’s people who had been lacking hope.

Reread Isaiah 62:4-5

1. What does this figure of speech in these verses mean for Christians?

2. What is it about being in love or being loved that can be so intoxicating?

For more Scripture texts featuring biblical wedding imagery, refer to SBSG Additional Resources section at northwestbaptist.com.

Taking it Home :

1. What adjectives describe God’s impression of these people?
2. Can you believe that God sees you in this way?
3. God wants to relate to you by: calling you by a new name, holding you in his hand, and delighting in you. Do you believe this? With which of these is it hardest for you to relate, to believe?
4. What impact did God’s promise have on the people of Jerusalem? How can this promise as applied to Christians, encourage you and bring hope to the world around you?
5. For more on the power of messages like this check out <http://truefaced.com>.

Prayer Requests and Praises: