

## Rooted: How Can I Make The Most Of My Life?

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### INTRODUCTION

- A. We are in the middle of a 10-week spiritual journey called, “Rooted.” And this week, we are asking and answering the question: “How can I make the most of my life?”
- B. Our focus verses for today are Isaiah 40:21-31. 700 years before Jesus, the book of Isaiah was written to God’s people, the Israelites, who had stopped listening to God and had turned their backs on Him.

I wasn’t going to read them all at once, but it is such a powerful passage of scripture that I didn’t want you to not hear and feel the full impact of it’s words. And I made the decision to read all of it yesterday, so the words won’t be on the screen.

**21** Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

**22** He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

**23** He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

**24** No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

**25** “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

**26** Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

**27** Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, “My way is hidden

- from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God”?
- 28** Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.
- 29** He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.
- 30** Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;
- 31** but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

- C. You know...you were made for something great. You were created to make a difference. And honestly, God wants you to make the most of your life.

Jesus said in John 10:10, “I have come that you might have life...life to the fullest.”

- D. But what keeps us from making the most of our life? What keeps us from thriving?

## **BODY**

### **I. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY WE AREN'T ABLE TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF OUR LIFE.**

- A. One of the reasons is ignoring or rejecting the truth.

1. Isaiah 40:21 says, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

2. To be on our church staff we joke that you have to be fluent in sarcasm. It's actually our love language. So it's easy to recognize sarcasm when you hear it.

3. Isaiah is sarcastic: *Have you not been paying attention? Haven't you been listening? Haven't you heard all of this before? You know all theses things, you're just choosing to ignore the truth.*
4. There aren't any secrets to a more fulfilling, satisfying life. God's Word has been telling us the secrets to life for thousands of years – since the beginning of time; since the earth was formed.

B. Or maybe we think **the world is against us.**

1. *Life isn't fair. Life is too hard.*
2. *I would be able to make the most of my life, but other things got in my way. Work. Parenting. Health issues.*
3. *Or, I would make a difference if I were smarter or if I were more popular.*
4. *The world is just against me.*

C. We may believe that we aren't able to make the most of our lives because **the government is getting in our way.**

1. *The government is infringing on my rights... on my happiness. The government is taking too much of my money. The government is getting in the way and making me do what I don't want to do. If the government would just leave me alone I would be able to make the most of my life.*
2. Or, maybe we believe that the government needs to be doing more. Or, the government needs to be taking more money from the rich and giving it to the poor. Then people can have equal opportunities to make the most of their life.

D. We may even believe that we aren't able to make the most of our lives because **God isn't helping us enough; He doesn't seem to care.**

1. *Doesn't God see what I'm trying to do here? Why isn't He helping?*
2. *How can I make the most of my life if God isn't going to listen to me or do what I want Him to do?*
3. *How can I make the most of my life if God keeps giving me all these problems?*
4. *I'm not able to live my best life because of God.*

E. It's been said, **"Some people spend their entire lives indefinitely preparing to live."**

Transition: If you aren't making the most of your life, what's your excuse?

## II. GOD'S WORD SOMETIMES COMFORTS, BUT GOD'S WORD ALSO SOMETIME CONVICTS OUR THINKING.

- A. Maybe we've not turned our backs on God like the Israelites had done, but like a parent uses their words to soothe the fears of a child and correct a child's way of thinking; God's Word sometimes comforts and at other times challenges and tries to correct our thinking. We should never ignore God's Word.
- B. When Isaiah sarcastically addressed our desire to ignore or reject the truth, he reminds us of the Solution in the very next word.
1. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?"
  2. And the very next word is "He..."
  3. If you want to have a fulfilling life, lived to the max, where you are making a difference, you can't do that without HIM.
  4. No matter what we think the problem is, HE isn't the problem.
- C. We think the world is against us?
1. Verse 22, "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth. Its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in." \_Isaiah 40:22
  2. God is Sovereign over the world.
  3. That verse isn't saying that bad things don't happen. That verse isn't saying that we won't have things get in our way.
  4. What it does say is that God is the ruler overall of creation. And even when bad things happen, He's still in charge. All things are eventually going to work out exactly as He has planned.
  5. To say the "world is against me" is like saying that "God is against me," or "God isn't in control."
  6. The truth is that, with God, even when it seems bad, it can be used for good.
  7. I'm in a men's group and 3 or 4 weeks ago, Dane Peachee, who

coaches his son's soccer team and said, "Please pray for my goalie. He got kicked in the head and suffered a concussion."

The next week he came in and said, "Thank God that my goalie got kicked in the head. At the hospital, they did a brain scan and found a mass on his brain. His parents are a mess. But they caught it early on."

8. The truth is that, with God, what can seem bad can be good.
9. And to prove that you can trust Him, what did this verse say? "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth." In this verse, God's Word, written centuries before Columbus claimed the earth was round, proclaimed that God sits above the circle of the earth. How would Isaiah have known unless God revealed it to Him? God is the Sovereign Creator of the Universe. Nothing is a mystery or secret or too big for Him to handle.

C. We think people get in our way? We think the government gets in the way?

1. Verses 23-25: "He brings princes to naught\_ Isaiah 40:23-25"
2. Back, shortly after Obama became President in 2009, I was invited by a friend to attend the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. I wore a tight suit for a couple of days and met senators and congressmen. Heath Schuler, former QB at Tennessee was one of the chairs of the event. One of the highlights was meeting KY congressmen Hal Rogers in his office and being able to pray for him. I heard former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Obama speak. It was a great event.

But I'm not naïve. I heard one congressman say that the week of the National Prayer Breakfast was his favorite week, because for that one week only, Democrats and Republicans seemed to get along. But that was 12 years ago.

But I left Washington with this thought, some of our politicians really do get it. I know it's been over a decade. But some politicians aren't trying to *get* in God's way, they are trying to get *into* God's way. They realize their power is limited and temporary; and ultimately, it's God's purposes that will prevail.

3. That's why God wants us to be praying for our leaders. You might be a Republican. Be praying for the President. You might be a Democrat. Be praying for our Governor.
4. Ultimately, God's plans will prevail. And we don't want our nation to turn it's back on God.

Transition: So, if God is Sovereign over an unbelievably vast and complex Universe and if God is Sovereign over even the most powerful of rulers...

### III. WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO MAKE THE MOST OF OUR LIFE? HERE ARE FOUR CHALLENGES...

- A. Isaiah 40:26 says, "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens..."
1. Do you enjoy walking? Hiking? Have you ever noticed that when you walk the easiest thing to do is keep your head down and watch where you are walking? To watch where you place your steps? To make sure that you don't stumble?
  2. Whenever I'm walking, I have to tell myself, "Lift up your head. Look around and see what God has created. Look at the sky. Look at the sunrise. Look at what God has done."
  3. If you are only walking through life with your head down, watching as you put one foot in front of the other, Isaiah says, "Lift up your eyes! Look and see what God has done."
  4. Last fall, I took my daughter to Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. We flew in and out of Bozeman, MT. And the airport is right next to this impressive mountain and all the windows in the Bozeman airport face that mountain view. When we were returning home, we went through security and got to our gate. And here is the scene, there is this breathtaking sight out the windows and out of the 20 people sitting at the gate, 18 of them (I counted) had their heads down looking at their phones.
  5. Too many people are going through life with their heads down and they are missing all of the wonderful things around them.
  6. LIFT UP YOUR EYES! Look around. Look and see what God is doing. See where God is leading. And live!
  7. Look at the stars at night! Isaiah writes...
  8. "Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."
  9. God knows the trillions of stars by name. He knows your name. He sees you. In His eyes, you are not invisible. Lift up your eyes!

- B. **Second, let's stop complaining about God!**
1. Isaiah 40:27 says, "Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God'?" \_Isaiah 40:27
  2. *Am I really complaining that God isn't doing causes?*
  3. Our ways and our causes may be two things keeping us from making the most of our life.
  4. What about God's ways and God's causes?
  5. Later on Isaiah quotes God who says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," \_Isaiah 55:8
  6. God's Ways > My Ways
  7. God's Causes > My Causes
- C. **Prayer is about alignment.** In prayer, I'm aligning my ways with God's ways; my causes with His causes.
1. Elmer Towns tells about a member of a motorcycle gang who became a Christian and the first Sunday he did the only thing he knew he should do – he got up and went to church. Nobody in the church knew him and he walked down to the second aisle and sat in that seat. And the people stared because he looked the part; big burly, bearded, long hair, black jacket, tattoos.
 

It came announcement time and the minister got up and made an appeal for nursery workers. He said, "We need someone to work in the nursery." But no one would volunteer. He asked a second time, "We really need someone to go be with our kids." But no one would volunteer.

And the biker prayed, "Lord, I want to do what you want me to do and if you want me to go work in nursery, just have the preacher ask a third time."

And a third time the preacher said, "Please we need someone to work in the nursery." So the biker raised his hand, nodded his head and started toward the nursery.

Immediately, 50 mothers volunteered to work in the nursery.
  2. Prayer is about alignment.
  3. On the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed, "Lord, not my will, but yours be done."
  4. What did Jesus tell us to pray in the model prayer, "Our Father in

heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done..." \_Matthew 6:9

5. Jesus was aligning his ways and thoughts with His Heavenly Father's ways and thoughts.
6. Prayer is about aligning my ways with God's ways and my causes with God's causes.

D. **Third, be encouraged.**

1. Life *is* hard. Sometimes we are only able to fight to survive. Sometimes it doesn't seem as if we will make it. We're tired. We're weary. We're weak. If that describes you, I want you to hear to what God's Word says to you...

2. **Do you not know? Have you not heard?**

The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.

**29** He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

**30** Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

**31** but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint. \_Isaiah 40:28-31

D. **And fourth, if you want to make the most of your life, start serving others.**

1. If you are in a group and if you are doing the daily *Rooted* study, over the next week the focus is going to be on serving others. You're going to look at what God has done for us. We are going to be challenged to give up some of our time and talents to make a difference in the lives of others. We are going to be challenged to serve here at church and beyond our walls.

2. There is a quote on Day 5 that says, "When



Christ-followers use their different gifts

together as a community, amazing things

happen.”

3. Roni McKernan, our NextGen Ministry Assistant, was telling me about a scene she watched unfold during second service a couple of weeks ago. Dane Beanblossom, one of our residents, was doing the communion meditation and his mom was here visiting, sitting in the crowd. But before he was done on the platform, a couple of girls from the high school group got up from their seats and went to sit beside her. And then, after Dane was finished speaking, he went and sat down by his mom and the girls. But come to find out, the girls didn't know it was Dane's mom. They got up and went and sat down beside her because they didn't want her to have to sit alone.
4. Listen, we've got lots of space and lots of people and those two girls are only in one of the services. But wouldn't it be great if everyone thought, "How can I make a difference, how can I serve, how can I be Jesus, to THAT person?"
5. Galatians 5:13 says, "Serve one another in love."

## **CLOSING**

- A. You were made for something great. You were Created to make a difference. God wants you to make the most of your life.
- B. Let's watch this...  
(Video from SermonSpice: "Made for Something Great" by James Grocho)
- C. In just a moment, we are going to sing a song of decision. If we are willing to allow God to make the most of our lives, it should begin by making Jesus Savior (Forgiver) and Lord (Leader)...
- D. Prayer