

Isaiah 52:7-10

7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" 8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. 9 Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. ... and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas! In our perfect little Christmas worlds we want everything to be peaceful and beautiful: soft falling snow, a manger, joyful Christmas music. Do you know something I don't want to think about on Christmas? Toenail fungus and calluses. Yuck!

Isaiah too is concerned with appearances, and so, as we consider his prophetic words, we will consider beautiful feet that bring good news, open ears that hear it, and blessed eyes that see the salvation of our God.

When most of us think of beautiful feet, we think about size, proportion, grooming and maybe toenail painting. Isaiah could care less about any of that. The feet in our text are beautiful because of what they bring:

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news."

St. Paul cites these words in Romans (10:13-15):

"'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Beautiful feet are feet that bring this good news of Jesus Christ. On Christmas Day we celebrate that this good news is something spoken by the angels, reported by the shepherds and proclaimed to the entire world. The message of the birth of the Savior moves from mouth to ear, creating, strengthening, and preserving faith. What is the good news? Isaiah uses words like *peace*, *good tidings*, and *salvation* to describe it. He writes,

"The LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem."

The question is: having done what sinners do, do we deserve good news? Today we joined with the angels in their great Christmas hymn of praise to the King of all angels, who traded heaven for hay and the company of angels for the company of sinful men and women. *Glory to God in the highest!* But what does our world know about glory? What is it that we fallen creatures glory in besides sin? We are surrounded by beauty, by the wonders of God's creation, by so many blessings, including family and God-pleasing relationships, by an abundance of daily bread, most importantly, by the presence of God himself among us when

we worship in a divine service and in our daily lives, yet how often don't we take these blessings for granted?

When we consider other blessings that God has given us, we've also corrupted so many of them by using them in ways He never intended. How have we used God's gifts of wealth, knowledge, music, art and so much more? So often we've turned His glory into our shame.

Glory to God in the highest? Maybe in the angels praise God in the highest, but how is God's name used at your house? Is it used in prayer and praise, or uselessly or even sacrilegiously? The truth is that we don't deserve the good news; yet, beautiful feet bring good news to open ears, and that good news has nothing to do with what we deserve.

Isaiah says, "*Listen!*" Open your ears for those beautiful feet. They proclaim *peace*. The peace proclaimed here is the forgiveness of sins. Sin is what prevented our peace with God and the removal of sin is what restored it. They bring *good tidings*. This is not the shame and embarrassment of guilt that the law brings, but the relief, the comfort and the joy of hearing of God's grace. These *beautiful feet* proclaim *salvation*. That is the name the angel told Joseph to give the Child of Mary,

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matt 1:21)

These beautiful feet declare, "*The LORD has comforted His people.*" The LORD comforts the "*broken and contrite heart*" (Psalm 51:17). He comforts the repentant, that is, those who have turned their minds from the sins that once controlled us to the grace that now consoles us. We are comforted, assured of God's forgiveness for Christ's sake, and promised help in the struggle against the temptations that still plague us.

These beautiful feet declare that God "*has redeemed Jerusalem.*" Redeem means to buy back. Christ came to buy His people back. By giving His own Son, Jesus, God has bought us back to be His own dear children. He bought us with His holy and precious blood, poured out on Calvary. Open your ears and hear this good news, because open ears make blessed eyes.

Beautiful feet - do you know them? Open ears - do you have them? Blessed eyes - can you see just how good your God is to you? Look to the manger, and yes, you do.

Amen.

Please stand and join in reading, Isaiah 52:7-10

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