

1. Understanding Isaiah—1:12-17 (As you have discovered Isaiah is not a light read—It can be tough sledding—being so far removed from his day yet trying to understand Isaiah’s context, language and flow of the book. Oversimplified Isaiah presents a narrative of judgment and hope—judgment for Israel, Judah, and a whole host of countries/people due to the brazen disregard for God and his will. This was especially true for Israel and Judah—God’s own nations. After years of their digression and transgression—God had enough. Isaiah was called to proclaim God’s coming judgment upon them in the form of first, Assyria and then, Babylon. To catch a glimpse of why God was fed up—**listen to this excerpt from 1:12-17**. His people had forgotten his way of righteousness and justice and God was about to hold them accountable. But in the midst of judgment, God also offered hope—a way through the judgment back to him—first in the remnant promise and then in the coming Messiah along with the kingdom he would establish. The latter is what I want us to focus in on now)
2. And a little child shall lead—Isaiah 11:6 (first, there are several ways to approach this chapter in terms of exactly when this prophecy of Isaiah is to occur. I am confident we will not solve that this morning. Instead of getting lost in that—I want us to see this marvelous text for what it is—an incredible promise of God of hope and a glimpse into what his ultimate community for us will be like—whether we call it kingdom or heaven or new Jerusalem—Isaiah offers us a preview and it is amazing. Contextually this chapter flows from 10 where the image is of God in judgment chopping down the trees of Assyria—but within that there are some survivors—the remnant of Israel—God’s people blessed to realize the promised hope. From this “stump of Jesse” a shoot/branch will emerge—God’s Spirit will rest upon him—empower him to embody the perfect will of God—his knowledge, righteousness, justice and faithfulness. This, of course, is a reference to Christ---the little child; the innocent Lamb of God; who will lead in resurrecting hope from hopelessness and creating—maybe better said—recreating the community of God. What a text! What a picture it paints! What hope it offers—a hope that we share with Isaiah first readers. The same injustice, the same disregard for the will and righteousness of God, the same greed, idolatry, and corruption define our generation—just as it did Isaiah’s. We must be careful not to let it corrupt us, but instead always let that little child lead! Here is where he will take us—a place where)
 - a. Justice will be based on the righteousness of God (in other words—there God will make all things right based upon his character tempered by grace)
 - b. Violence will end and enemies will be reconciled (wolf will live with the lamb—etc)
 - c. God and his way will be honored above all (a place full of the knowledge of God with relationship reflecting that)
 - d. Tribalism will end (and with it all of the mistrust, suspicion, jealousies, warfare, etc. God truly is no respecter of people and the little child will finally and fully lead us to that place also)
3. (This is God’s ultimate will for us—all that he does in his goodness and yes, in his sternness—is about the little child leading us here. Isaiah in his time and context was messaging exactly this. And what should be our reaction? Look no further than) Isaiah 12 (**READ**—now let’s take a little lesson from history and not remake Israel and Judah’s mistakes—let allow that little child to lead us right here, right now—to get a head start on really being that community of God—to our time and place. How about it church?)