

Isaiah and the Mission of the Church

How do you feel about the suggestion that you can't have hope without grief?

Thinking about loss in broad terms, what in your life needs to be grieved?

Read Exodus 32v1

Isaiah 46 begins with Isaiah mocking the Babylonian gods by suggesting that the very gods in which people have put their trust are powerless. What powerless gods do you see in our 21st Century world that people put their trust in?

Read Exodus 14v11-12, Exodus 16v2-3, Exodus 17v3, Numbers 11v4-6, and Numbers 14v1-4

Many writers have suggested that it was much easier to get Israel out of Egypt than it was to get Egypt out of Israel. Having read these texts, what aspects of the Egyptian empire do the Israelites seem to be holding onto?

The words of the Israelites in the passages above seem to communicate that they didn't feel they had been "rescued from slavery to freedom" but instead "rescued from abundance to scarcity". As a result, the Israelites insist on keeping their trust in Pharaoh despite God's faithfulness. What have you been trusting that makes trusting God difficult?

The word "empire" is a loaded word, with the potential to be very polarizing. If God called his people to leave the "empire", what do you think that means for us, in our world?

Jesus attracted a diverse group of followers: Jews and Gentiles, Zealots, and even Romans. These were people with very different understandings of what empire was, and yet they had unity which caused Christianity to explode in the Ancient Near East. How can followers of Jesus today practice that same unity as we discuss leaving the empire?

Read Genesis 12v1-4 and Ephesians 2v11-22

While God does indeed call Israel out of the Egyptian empire, he is also calling them to be in the world in an entirely new and life-giving way that "blesses all the peoples of the earth". As God calls you out of the empire, how is he also calling you into the bringing of his kingdom here and now?