

Are You Hearing God's Comforting Word?

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 51. Next is listen.

Isaiah 51.1. Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn.

Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah who gave you birth. When I called him, he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.

The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins. He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.

Joy and gladness will be found in her. Thanksgiving and the sound of singing. Listen to me, my people. Hear me, my nation.

[1:21] The law will go out from me. My justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily. My salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations.

The islands will look to me and wait and hope for my arm. Lift up your eyes to the heavens. Look at the earth beneath.

The heavens will vanish like smoke. The earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever.

My righteousness will never fail. Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts. Do not fear the reproach of men, or be terrified by their insults.

For the moth will eat them up like a garment. The worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever. My salvation through all generations. Awake!

[2:26] Awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the days gone by, as in generations of old. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through?

Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep? Who made a road in the depths of the sea, so that the redeemed might cross over? The ransom to the Lord will return.

They will enter Zion with singing. Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them. And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men? The sons of men who are but grass.

That you forget the Lord your maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. That you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction.

[3:32] For where is the wrath of the oppressor? The cowering prisoners will soon be set free.

They will not die in their dungeon, nor will they lack bread. For I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar.

The Lord Almighty is his name. I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand. I who set the heavens in place, who lay the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, you are my people.

Children, why do you have ears on the outside of your head? Ray Ortlund says it's because you were not meant to listen to yourselves.

Or they'd be inside your head. Is that not often the source of our troubles? That we listen to ourselves instead of listening to God. Now, we live every moment of our lives within our minds. Within that inner world of our thought life. We process all of life from within. So, all that we experience of life out there, we evaluate in here.

[4:49] We have thoughts, preconceived notions, feelings about everything that we meet with in life. The mind is always interpreting our outward world for us.

Well, these ears on the outside of our heads are meant to hear God's word. They're meant to be inlets into our inner world. To bring God's thoughts into the world of our thoughts.

Transforming the way that we live by the renewing of our minds. Three times in the first seven verses of Isaiah 51, we are told by God, listen to me, verse 1.

Listen to me, verse 4. Hear me, verse 7. Listen. And we hear that call throughout the scriptures. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

That's what they're for. And let him hear me. And then that God says, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. Speaking of the Christ.

[5:57] Listen to Him. Listen to Him. So God is speaking this morning to you in His word. Are you listening?

Are you listening? We're not meant to live a day without God's word penetrating our inner world and there controlling our thoughts, our attitudes, our emotions, our will, and our every action.

Isaiah 51 says, we especially need to be listening to God's word when we're discouraged and depressed. So God is speaking in this chapter.

Who is He talking to? Well, He's speaking to His faithful remnant within Judah. The church within the church. The righteous people of God. Notice how they're described in verse 1.

You who pursue righteousness. So these people are hungry and thirsty for righteousness. They're not satisfied with their lives. With their sins.

[7:02] And all the ways that they fall short of God's standard. And so they're actively hungry, seeking righteousness. Wanting the whole of their lives to be right with God.

They are those who are described as who seek the Lord. Because that's where righteousness is found. In the Lord. In the Lord. Only in Him are we counted righteous before God in the law books of heaven.

And only from Him do we receive strength to live a righteous life that is in conformity to His righteous laws. They're described in verse 4 as my people.

A people that really belong to the Lord. They're described in verse 7. You who know what is right. You people who have my law in your hearts. You not only know it.

But you know it with love. And intimacy that embraces it. With affection. It dwells in your hearts. So that's who he's writing to.

[8:06] Are you one of those who is seeking righteousness? Seeking the Lord. Well what was their situation? Well it's not a pretty sight.

It's not a pretty sight at all. It's you can read the book of Lamentations to get the report from the inside of the walls of Jerusalem. When they were under siege from Babylon.

And starvation and disease. And the dead piled in the streets. Mothers eating their own children.

And then finally the siege broke through the walls. And the temple was destroyed.

And the city was left in ruins. And many were slaughtered. And their brightest and best were hauled away into captivity along with their king. And the land became desolate and barren.

And this was the state of affairs that continued upwards to 70 years. Under the Babylonian rule. And though Isaiah did not live to see it.

[9:06] God gave him a word ahead of time. That would meet the people in their point of need precisely then. When they would be in this condition. And so what is the aim of this message from God to this people?

Comfort. Comfort my people says your God. And this is another one of those passages. To comfort the people. They were despairing. They were losing hope.

They were giving up. They saw the trial drag on year after year. 70 years is a long part of one's lifetime. And they were beginning to question God's love.

And care for them. And doubting God's promises. And it's in their depression that God sends a word of encouragement and comfort. But depressed people have a hard time hearing encouragement.

Depressed people have a hard time believing the good news. It sounds too good to them to be true. Too good to be true in their dark circumstances.

[10:16] You remember how Jesus' own disciples received the news that Jesus was alive. No, it can't be. You ladies must be out of your minds. They were depressed.

Sad. They could not believe the good news. That he had risen. Have you ever been so low? That you refused to be comforted?

When even words of encouragement seem to bounce off of you like water off a duck's back and left you no more encouraged than when you, before you heard them.

Just nothing but words. So many words leaving you unchanged under that stubborn darkness of depression. Sadness. Sadness. Well, this passage is especially for you.

It's meant to encourage those who are despairing. Those who are cast down. And oh, may the Lord bring it to your heart this morning in more than words. And bring you to taste the encouragement that is bound up in it.

[11:17] Now we understand why God keeps saying, listen to me. Why does he keep saying, listen to me? Listen to me. Discouraged, depressed child of God.

Listen to me. You need to hear in your discouragement these words of comfort. Now the first thing he tells us is that God is a difference maker in the most unpromising circumstances.

God is a difference maker in the most unpromising circumstances. He doesn't need promising situations in order to do his work. Verse one. Look to the rock from which you were cut.

Look to the quarry from which you were hewn. He's saying, consider your origins. Look where you came from. We say he's a chip off the old block. That's what he's saying.

Look back to your origins. Verse two. Look to Abraham. Look back to your father, Abraham, your father, and to Sarah who gave you birth.

[12:18] When I called him, he was but one. And I blessed him and made him many. Now what is a more unpromising beginning for a great nation, for nation building, than an old man as good as dead with a barren old wife whose womb was dead?

You know, there were more fruitful and younger couples for God to choose from. But he didn't. He didn't choose them. And it's as if he's wanting to make a point by not choosing them.

And I wonder if we've got the point. That our God delights to work in impossible situations to demonstrate his power and glory.

So it's not until Daniel is thrown into the very den of lions that he is saved. And his three Hebrew friends, it's not until they are cast right into the fiery furnace that they experience the salvation of God.

And it's not until Pharaoh's army is right upon them that God opens a way through the Red Sea for his people. And it's not until Gideon's army is hewn down to 300 before God gives them victory over the 135,000 Midianite hordes.

[13:43] So from this one man, Abraham, came many descendants, as many as the stars in heaven, the sands of the sea. What was it that took him from one to many?

Do you see it in the text? What made the difference? One thing. God's blessing. I blessed him and made him many.

Do you know that's all that's needed to make the difference in your situation? God's blessing. God conferring his goodness upon you.

So are you walking in darkness and have no light? He enjoys working in darkness, friend. That's his element. Do not despair. The night is the darkest just before dawn.

And God can move from midnight to noonday sun with one tick of his providence, with one blessing from his mouth. He commands the blessing, even life forevermore.

[14:45] So here are encouragements for the faithful in Judah as they're subject to the Babylonians and seeing these horrendous things going on in the land. Their hopeless circumstances matched their father Abraham's.

Their land was as barren as Sarah's womb. And though in ruins and though singing the blues, the Lord's going to change all that. He says in verse 3, The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins.

He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her. Thanksgiving in the sound of singing. My friends, there was no singing going on in the streets of Zion when these words were being spoken.

The only singing was a funeral dirge for the dead who were being drug out into the heap in the street. And yet, the Lord will change the whole situation.

What a difference maker is our God. He who took your father Abraham from one to many will take you from deserted ruins and wastelands into a garden as fruitful as the garden of Eden.

[15:55] And He'll change your sadness into gladness. What God did for Abraham and Judah, my friend, is not something unique to them. It's not like, well, sure, God did that for Abraham, one to

many.

Wasteland to garden for Judah. But I am me. And this is 21st century. The arm of the Lord is no shorter, no weaker.

And His character has not changed. What God did, He delights to do in His people. God delights in dead wombs.

God delights in human helplessness. And He'll make your barren wastelands like a well-watered garden. He'll make your gloom and sadness into joy and gladness.

That's true of all the children of Abraham who by faith have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's His blessing that makes the difference from your hell to His heaven.

[16:58] And He can make your most barren ground some of your most fertile ground. I've seen it over and over. Not just in my life, but in watching you. God can make some of your most barren ground in your life.

Some of the most productive ground. So that relationship that's all dried up and full of thorns and thistles, I've seen relationships made sweet and fruitful.

That heart that is so full of guilt and worry and bury, I've seen become a heart where the fruit of the Spirit of joy and peace and love is born to the praise of God.

And that very person or thing that is causing you sadness can become an instrument of the Lord to bring you gladness.

Your wastelands becoming a garden like Eden. That's a reversal of the curse, isn't it? And that's what God does for His people. So discouraged saints in hopeless situations, look back to see the one become the many in Abraham.

[18:10] Look back to see in Judah a wasteland bloom like a garden of Eden. And then look forward with hope as you wait on God's promised blessings in your life to work all things together for your good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Our God often does His best work in the worst of circumstances. The second lesson we see in our text is God's salvation is coming.

It will include the nations and it will last forever. Now the longer that their captivity would drag on in Babylon, the harder it becomes to hang on to the promises of God.

Clear back in chapter 2, you remember God promised that there was coming a day when Israel, Zion, would be elevated to the highest place among all the nations and God's law would go forth from Zion.

God would be speaking His law in such power that nations would be saying, come on, let's go up to Zion and let's hear the word of the Lord that we might walk with this God and walk in His ways.

[19:22] What a glorious vision of Israel's future. But that vision, that promise seemed to be out of reach now that they're in Babylon as captives.

Gentile nations streaming into us. Our king's not even here. Our best and brightest are gone. The land is barren and our capital is destroyed.

But God's not given up on His promise. And that's what He's saying to them here. And He repeats the promise. Verse 4, The law will go out from me.

My justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily. My salvation is on the way. And my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm.

Now, salvation from Babylon is on its way. And it will arrive even though you see no signs of it. But that was only a foretaste of the greater salvation that God would bring.

[20:30] A salvation that lasts forever. A salvation that would come from the seed of Abraham.

The Lord Jesus Christ who would save His people from their sins. And God means to encourage His people.

He's not forsaken His promise that through Abraham's seed blessing, salvation blessing should flow to all the nations of the earth. And that is happening in our day.

Christ has come. Here we are. We're not in Israel. We're in the United States of America. And we have looked in hope and trusted in the Savior and have experienced His salvation. And notice it's a salvation that outlasts the universe.

You might need to wait on God's final salvation when Christ returns in glory at the end. But that full and final salvation is more sure than the earth you walk on and the heavens that you live under.

Now what's more certain than the old terra firma, the ground we walk on? What is more certain than the heavens and the earth? They are not as certain as the fact of God's promise.

[21 : 37] Heaven and earth will pass away. The heavens, well, they're going to vanish like smoke.

The earth wear out like a garment. But the Word of the Lord endures forever. The promise I made to save you, my people, will last and my salvation will last forever.

My salvation will not be like the heavens and the earth that do not last. It will last. My righteousness will last forever and ever. So, suck that in for your encouragement.

Christian, when we've been there 10,000 years, bright, shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun. This salvation goes on forever and ever.

Do you possess that everlasting salvation? What do you have that will last forever? Have you done an inventory lately?

[22 : 42] It's tax time. What kind of investments do you have? Do you only have short-term investments? Investments that don't make it past your date of death? Or are you rich toward God?

What do you have that will last forever? Salvation in Christ will last forever. The third lesson in the passage is do not fear the opposition for they will not last.

You see, as you pursue righteousness, your righteousness will excite persecution. Yea, all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. It was true in the Old Testament as it is in the New.

And the more you pursue righteousness, the more your righteousness will grate others. And they will apply pressures and threats upon you to try to scare you out of the righteous way.

Do not fear, verse 7, the reproach of men. Do not be terrified by their insults. Why not? Because God will take care of them. For the moth will eat them up like a garment.

[23 : 49] The worm will devour them like wool. So there's King Herod. And oh, he's Mr. Powerful. And he wants to please the Jews so he takes James and he slaughters him.

And the Jews say what a wonderful man Herod is. So he takes Peter and he's going to slaughter him. But God had other plans for Peter. And so he's released from prison in the middle of the night by an angel.

He's out from the grip of Herod. And Herod goes and gives a famous speech to some people who were needing his help. And they say, oh, it's the voice of a God and not of a man.

And he sucked in the praise and he was eaten alive by worms. And Isaiah is saying just that, isn't he? Don't be afraid of those who oppose you.

They will not last. As easy as a moth eats a garment and as easy as a worm eats up its spoil, so God will. So God will dismiss of these who oppose Him and oppose His people.

[24 : 57] So I ask you, who or what is against you? It is God who is for you. So don't fear the opposition. They will not last. Your salvation will last forever, but your enemies and God's enemies will not.

The fourth lesson we find in a prayer. prayer. Because all this encouragement that God has been giving to His people has an effect upon His people. And the effect is to move them to pray.

They're stirred up with an urgent prayer. And that's what we have in verses 9-11. And the lesson is this, that God's promises and His past wonders stir up earnest prayers in the righteous.

Looking back to what God has promised and what God has done motivates the righteous to pray. And here's the prayer. Verse 9. Awake! Awake!

Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in days gone by, as in generations of old. Now you think about it. When the Babylonians first came to Jerusalem and started destroying all the cities around and built a siege work around Jerusalem, you can bet that the righteous cried out, God, have mercy upon us.

[26 : 09] And God did not remove the Babylonians. And they broke through the walls. And people were starving to death. And the sword took many more. And it seemed to them as if God were sleeping.

When someone's sleeping, kids, they can't hear you cry, can they? And that's how it felt to the people of God. God, help us! And there was no answer.

Oh, awake! Awake! Wake! They're saying to God. Wake up! Show your might and power. Just like those disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee. When they were in danger, they went and found Jesus asleep and cried out in such urgency.

Awake! Awake! So these are crying, Wake up, God! Put on strength like your clothing and act on our behalf. We're in trouble. We need you. Do something.

Just like you did in days gone by. Now that's an important thing. As you did in days gone by. Do you think about what God did in days gone by?

[27:14] They did. They looked back to God's greatest act of redemption at the Red Sea. The Exodus. When He destroyed the Egyptians and in order to set His people free, He dried up the Red Sea and made a road right through it so that the redeemed might cross over.

And they're saying, Oh Lord, was it not you who did that? Was it not you? We don't see you doing anything.

We just see Babylonian soldiers. We just see blood. We just see dead. We see barrenness. Oh Lord, that you would wake up and arouse yourself and put on your strength and come and act on our behalf.

Grant us a new Exodus. Not out of Egypt, but now out of Babylon. We're captive to Babylon. A new act of saving power. A new deliverance. And they quote an earlier promise made to them in Isaiah 35.10.

Lord, You said we're not going to rot down here in Babylon. The ransom to the Lord will return.

Verse 11. They will enter Zion with singing.

[28:31] Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them. And sorrow and sighing will flee away. Awake and do what you promised. And do again what you did in days gone by.

You see, God's past wonders, remembered, stir up fresh faith in God's promises. The proper response to the promises of God is to pray for God to fulfill them.

And discouraged, depressed saints need to make plenteous use of the promises of God. So, let me ask you, Christian, what promises did you plead at the throne of grace this week?

God, remember what you said. God, do as you have done. Now, they looked back to God's great redemption in Egypt.

Where do we look for God's great work of redemption? We look to the cross and the empty tomb, don't we? And I need to make better use of God's mighty work at Calvary where He put on the clothing of strength and power and destroyed sin and Satan and death where He made a way from hell to heaven so that the redeemed might cross over from death into life right through the Red Sea, right through hell into heaven at Calvary.

[30:08] And so, I need to look back to redemption at Calvary. Lord, your victory there defeated Satan in sin. Now, you're the same today as you were then.

Come in power and trample on this lust in my heart. This pride. This love of ease. This bitterness. This unforgiving spirit. This unbelief. This rebellion. Come in power and destroy these enemies beneath my feet. God's great work at Calvary should become another argument in our prayer to God.

A holy argument. God. God of Calvary. Power. Come and destroy sin in my life. Well, in answer to their prayer, the Lord reassures His people of His salvation.

You don't seek this God in vain. He reassures them of His salvation and He confronts their fear. He confronts their fear. Verse 12, I, even I, am He who comforts you.

[31:15] Do you know that your comforts are no better than your comforter? Somebody says, I'll comfort you. Well, how reliable and strong is your comforter? God is saying, I, even I, am He who comforts you.

That ought to be enough to answer all of your fears. It is I. And so God says, who are you? If it's I who comfort you, who are you that you fear men?

Mortal men. The sons of men who are but grass. Here one day and go on the next. Who are you that you should fear them and that you should forget the Lord your Maker who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?

That you should live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor who is bent on destruction, your destruction. They're afraid of these mighty and ruthless men and nations that are ever threatening them.

And the fifth lesson that we learn is that fear is what happens when we forget God. Fear is what happens when we forget God. When we live without a sense of who He is. When we fail to factor God into the equation.

[32:28] His power. His provision. His protection. His promises. So fear sees a big Goliath. faith. And faith sees a bigger God.

So when we fear man, we're making too much of man and we're making too little of God. John Calvin says, fear attributes more power to mortal man attacking than to Almighty God defending. That's what he's saying. I'm the one who comforts you, the Almighty says. Who are you that you would fear mortal man? You've made man big and God small in that little world of your thoughts. So are any of you here having fear problems? Now let me ask it a different way. Are any of you here not having fear problems?

Do you worry about anything? That's just another name for fear. And when we're fearing man, we're forgetting God.

[33 : 38] So fear is a call to remember. You might be fearing people. You might be fearing the future. Whatever it is, fear is a mark of forgetfulness of God.

So let your fears, let your worries, let those thoughts that keep going round and round your mind at night be a call to you. John, you're forgetting someone. You're forgetting me.

the one who's comforting you. Let it be a call to remember your comforter, your God. You see, they were listening to their own fears and to the threats of men, but they were not listening to the comforting words of God.

Listen to me. Listen to me. Don't forget me, God is saying to His people. And so a brief review of God is given to them. You're forgetting me, God says.

This is who I am. Your maker, the one who has made you His own. Your creator, who set the heavens in place and laid the foundations of the earth.

[34 : 46] How's that for greatness? The one who churns up the sea so that its waves roar. In other words, I'm powerfully involved in all my creation. I didn't just create it and wind it up and walk away.

I am the one who's stirring up the sea so that its waves roar. They still know my name and obey me. The Lord Almighty is His name. The Lord of all the armies.

The Lord, your God, who says of you, you are my people. The one who covers you with the shadow of His hand. Now those are just a passing review of the one who's their comforter.

That's a big God. God. A personal, powerful God committed to you, that's enough to drive out fear. And there's nothing more practical than knowing your God.

Walking with Him in His Word. Learning of Him. Talking to Him in prayer. Meditating upon Him. Nothing more practical. It strengthens your faith.

[35 : 49] It plants courage where fear would otherwise reign. so refuse to see your worries without God front and center. The God of the Bible, who is your God, dear child of God.

Listen to me, he says. I've got a question for you, he says. Where is this wrath of the oppressor that you're so scared of? Where is that wrath? He's no contest for me, the Lord of creation, your God. And that's why no enemy can possibly keep his people in bondage. And that's why you cowering prisoners will soon be set free. So God comforts us by confronting our fears in the light of who He is and the fact that He is for us.

That leads us to the last lesson. That the wrath of God is to be feared above all else. You say that's a funny way to comfort someone. Well, it's God's Word.

We didn't have time to read the whole chapter, but the rest of the chapter makes that very point.

The wrath of God is to be feared above all else. You're fearing the wrath of this oppressor over here. There's a greater wrath to fear.

[37 : 02] And it's this fear and this wrath, fear of this wrath that will drive out your fear of this wrath. Now, God's own people had asked God to awake. Now, God calls them to awake.

Verse 17. I'm not sleeping. You guys are the ones sleeping. You awake. Awake, awake. Rise up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord, the cup of His wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger.

You see, God was far from sleeping. They thought God was asleep, and while He slept, the Babylonians came in and wreaked havoc on them. God is saying, you don't have a clue.

I am not sleeping. I was the one who went down and got the Babylonians and said, come on, I've got work for you to do here in my rebellious nation.

Have at them. He's not sleeping. He's the one who took that cup of His wrath and made Judah drink it such that she staggered.

[38 : 11] Read Lamentations and see her staggering as she drinks the cup of God's wrath. It wasn't fate that raised up Babylon. God was doing it.

And that's why these double calamities have come upon you, He says, verse 19. Ruin and destruction, famine and sword. Who can comfort you? Who can console you? No one. Not your sons. No, none of them proved to be faithful guides to the nation. They've all been hauled off. They've fainted.

They lie at the head of every street like antelopes caught in a net. They too are filled with the wrath of the Lord and the rebuke of your God. Oh, but there is one who can comfort them.

I, even I, am he who comforts you. Therefore, he says, hear this, verse 21, you afflicted ones, you who are made drunk but not with wine.

[39 : 09] This is what your sovereign Lord says, your God who defends his people. See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger. From that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.

I will put it into the hands of your tormentors who said to you, full prostrate that we may walk over you. And you made your backs like the ground, like a street to be walked over.

We are in danger when we are fearing the wrath of men. when we are fearing what men can do to us. The cure is to fear God's wrath above all else.

So when the disciples were being threatened in their day by the Jewish leaders and the people that carried the sword, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 12, I tell you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.

No, I will show you whom you should fear. Fear him who after the killing of the body has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you fear him.

[40 : 24] That greater fear of God's wrath will help drive out your lesser threats of what men can do for you.

You see, the wrath of God is not just some bad mood that God gets into once in a while until he finally gets over it. That's not the wrath of God.

The wrath of God, as Professor Murray used to say, is the consistent inevitable reaction of his holy nature to sin wherever he finds it.

He cannot but recoil against it with the greatest vengeance. Your sin, my sin. sin. And if we got what we deserve from this holy God, we would be drinking from the cup of God's wrath forever and ever in hell.

Undiluted wrath. Without one drop of mercy added. The wrath of God, straight up, full, infinite, forever.

[41 : 29] We often hear men spout off about the so-called problem of hell. How can a God of love send people to an eternal hell?

It just shows they don't know God. Anybody who reads the Bible and reads of his wrath locate the problem somewhere else. The problem is not how can a holy God pour out his wrath on people forever in hell.

The problem is how can a holy God not pour out his wrath on all people forever in hell? That's the real problem. That's the problem the Bible is solving from beginning to end.

How can sinners ever live in the presence of a holy, holy God who by very nature hates, abhors, must strike down sin wherever he finds it?

And if that problem is never rung true to you and you've never seen I'm that sinner, how can I live with the holy God? You will not understand the gospel.

[42 : 37] How is it that this righteous God who burns with anger against sin can ever say to his people, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger and from that cup of my wrath you will never drink again.

How can he say that? Isaiah is going to make us wait two more chapters before he lays it all out very plainly for us.

And we will see that it's because the servant of the Lord has taken that cup in our place that he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed.

You see that's the cup that Jesus was looking into and staggered before in the garden of Gethsemane and cried Father, Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me.

[43 : 48] Nevertheless not my will but yours be done. And it was that cup that the very next day he drank on Calvary's cross to the bottom. he drank what we would have been drinking for all eternity.

That cup of wrath was taken out of your hand Christian and put into his. And he drank it to the bottom for his people that we might never again have to drink from it.

There is nothing left for us to drink. He drained it. All the wrath of God against us is gone. That's why Paul can say there is now therefore no wrath, no damnation, no condemnation for those who are in Christ because he bore the wrath.

He drank the cup. So here's good news for guilty sinners who come to Jesus Christ. No more wrath. Never again for all eternity.

Here's a comfort for the struggling saint fighting against sin and temptation against despair and fears and depression lift up your heads fearful Christians.

[45:01] This is your God. This is your Savior. The one who takes your very worst problem, the fact that you have got a cup of wrath to drink for eternity and he takes that cup in his hand and he drinks it dry for you.

Don't you see your greatest problem has been solved. This is why his salvation is everlasting salvation. This is why Christ has borne the wrath in your place.

He redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. My lost friend, that's what makes you eternally rich. To have all the wrath of God put on Jesus and born at the cross.

That leaves nothing left for those who are in Christ. Get into Christ today. Quit investing in such short term pleasures and treasures.

Find everlasting salvation yours today in Jesus Christ who died for sinners. Let's take our hymnals and sing of it from number eight in our grace hymns the power of the cross and drink in the eternal comfort that flows from the wounds of Jesus to all who will trust in him.

[46:25] Number eight let's stand as we sing to our Savior's praise. We'll see in two chapters that that's the greatest encouragement that could ever be spoken to Israelites of old and it's the greatest encouragement that can be spoken today.

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope comfort your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Let's pray. Thank you Lord that whatever is happening to us whatever is happening around us that would cause fear and would cause despair that there is in you and in your gospel everything to lift up our heads and to bring joy where sadness reigns and to bring fruitfulness where there's nothing but waste places in our lives.

So Lord we bring to you our sins and we bring to you our waste places and we ask you to come in mercy and in grace and to meet us at the foot of the cross with your love and your forgiveness and help us to go from this place glorying in Jesus Christ putting no confidence in the flesh but only in our Savior who's done so much for us we ask in his name Amen