

Praying for Revival in Times of Spiritual Decline (part 2)

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[0:00] Please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 63 and verse 15. Isaiah 63, 15.

And we'll be reading through chapter 64. Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy and glorious.

Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us. But you are our father.

Though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us, you, O Lord, are our father. Our redeemer from of old is your name. Why, O Lord, do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you?

Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance. For a little while your people possessed your holy place. But now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary.

[1:06] We are yours from of old. But you have not ruled over them. They have not been called by your name. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down.

That the mountains would tremble before you as when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil. Come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you.

For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down and the mountains trembled before you. Since ancient times, no one has heard.

No ear has perceived. No eye has seen any God besides you who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways.

But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean.

[2:09] And all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. We all shrivel up like a leaf. And like the wind, our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you.

For you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. Yet, oh Lord, you are our father. We are the clay.

You are the potter. We are all the work of your hand. Do not be angry beyond measure, oh Lord. Do not remember our sins forever.

Oh, look upon us, we pray. For we are all your people. Your sacred cities have become a desert. Even Zion is a desert.

Jerusalem, a desolation. Our holy and glorious temple, where our fathers praised you, has been burned with fire. And all that we treasured lies in ruins.

[3:10] After all this, oh Lord, will you hold yourself back? Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?

Well, as we have just been singing, there is enough in our God to keep us thrilled and glad for all of eternity. And yet, it's the sad experience that there are times in every Christian's life when we become aware that we have drifted from that nearness to God.

When a spiritual dullness sets in like a fog and there's a numbing influence of the world that takes the edge off of a sense, a felt sense of God's presence and of his love for us.

When God himself seems distant and far off. And there seems to be no evidence of his mighty power and glory, working wonders among us.

Worse still, we grow accustomed. We can grow accustomed to living at a distance from him to where we even stop panting after him. Now, when that happens to a whole congregation of God's people, the deadening effect is far worse.

[4:34] Because God's intention is that when one of us is down, the others might lift us up. And yet, when we all are in declension, the situation is indeed far worse.

Such was it in Israel of old. And when the majority of churches in any nation are in decline, the need is indeed critical. Now, God's strategy for the church at such a time is to pray.

It's foolishness to the world, but it's God's strategy. Not greater organization, not different programs, but pray.

God's strategy is for watchmen to give themselves no rest and to give him no rest until he comes and revives his people and makes them to be the praise of the earth. Now, here in Isaiah 64, God's people are in a critical condition spiritually.

And Isaiah is praying. And if we are listening, he's teaching us how to pray for revival in times of spiritual decline. Whether that's true of you today, maybe this isn't a time of spiritual decline.

[5:55] If it is, here's a prayer for you to pray. But as we look upon the church of Jesus Christ in America, we must confess we are in a time of spiritual decline. Let's learn to use the very prayer that God has given us just for such times that his church finds themselves in.

Now, there's four petitions that run throughout this prayer. It's not like you see them and then they're done and it goes on to them. There's something of progression to them, but they're woven throughout the prayer.

Four petitions. We remember you. We miss you. We want you. We need you. Now, we saw the first two last week.

We'll look at the last two this week. It is by remembering God's great works that he accomplished in the past. That we're made to realize that something is missing in our day.

When we look back and see what God did when he revived his church, we say something's missing. And the something is God himself. His presence and power visibly manifested in the church and world today.

[7:09] His mighty deeds and wonders. Now, there's a difference between the presence of God. He's always everywhere present. But the manifest presence of God, where he shows himself present in power and in love to his people.

You see, he can be present and yet be hiding his face. And such was the day in which Isaiah was preaching. So, we remember you.

We remember what you did in the past. Becomes the cry, we miss you. We are not seeing you do the wonders you once did for your church.

And it's to be feared that the American church has grown accustomed to God's absence. So much that we don't even miss him. We've easily filled the void with other things.

The services of the church are so well oiled and organized and programmed and entertaining. That everything goes on usual. As usual. And everyone goes home satisfied.

[8:15] Whether or not God comes within a thousand miles of the place. No. Isaiah could not be satisfied with human substitutes for God's real presence manifested among them.

Nothing can really fill the void of his absence. No amount of empty human fillers. Isaiah wants more. I believe you do too, don't you?

Amen. You want to meet with God when you come here. You want to feel his love and presence.

You want to see something of his power and his glory that will cause you to stand in awe and wonder.

You want to have your heart melted by his love. You want to see his saving people. His sanctifying his people.

[9:19] And so we miss you becomes we want you. We want you. See if you can hear it in verse 1 of chapter 64. Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down.

That the mountains would tremble before you. Now the most telling word in this sentence is the first word. Did you hear it? Oh.

Oh. It's more of a groan than a word, isn't it? It's a longing desire. It's a yearning for God. It's a. It's the. It's the.

Growling of the spiritual stomach that's hungry for God. Oh. That you would come down. Isaiah is not just saying his prayers.

It's not just bowing his head before he runs out the door for the day. Lord bless me today. Isaiah. Has a sense that something's missing. God is missing.

[10:19] And he wants more of God in his life. And in the life and experience of the people of God. Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down. He says. So Isaiah sees the heavens as if they were a heavy.

A thick curtain that holds God in. We're not seeing anything from God. We're not hearing answers to our prayers. We're not seeing him come and shake the nations.

It's as if he's behind this thick curtain. Oh that you would just rip it open. And come down. Is what he prays. Three times.

Tear the heavens open and come down. Come down. Come down. Because he knows that when God comes to church. And when God comes down.

Awesome things happen. The mountains tremble before you. What's more unmovable than the mountains? Yet all it takes is the presence of God.

[11:25] And they start shaking. Now that's exactly what happened on Mount Sinai. When God came down to meet with his people. The mount started to shake.

Literally. Literally. Physically. It trembled. It trembled as when fire sets twigs ablaze. And causes water to boil.

Kids what happens when you put a pan of water. Over a hot fire. Well. After a while. That water that. Was calm and still.

Begins to move. It begins to shake around in the pan. As it boils. Under the heat. And that's exactly. What happens.

And what happened at Mount Sinai. When God came down. And that's what mountains do. In God's presence. When he comes down.

[12:19] And that becomes an object lesson. Carrying spiritual meaning to us. That things as unmovable. As mountains begin to move. In his presence.

Now this is not some unwarranted. Spiritualizing of the text. This is what Isaiah himself does. As you see. In verse 2.

Mountains trembling. In verse 1. Become enemies. And nations. Shaking. In verse 2. Oh that you would come down. That the mountains might tremble.

That you might come down. That the. That your enemies. And that the nations. Might shake. So when God comes down in power. Unmoved obstacles.

And enemies. Opposing God's kingdom. Standing in the way of God's kingdom on earth. They move. Stubborn mountains. Of pride. And unbelief.

[13:15] Of complacency. And indifference. And self-righteousness. They remain unmoved in the heart. Until God comes down. And suddenly they're shaken. They're changed.

The whole moral landscape. Is altered. Before him. When God comes down. Awesome things happen. That means things that inspire.

Aw. Things that make your heart say. Wow. That's. What happens. When God comes down.

The icy coldness of heart. Melts into fervent love for God. The spiritual dullness. Is replaced by a vibrant spiritual life. God's presence in worship.

Becomes real and awesome. God's word comes alive. And is at work within us. A worldly spirit. Is replaced by seeking first.

[14:10] The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. Besetting sins are confessed. And forsaken. Christians counted a privilege. To deny themselves. Take up their cross. And to follow Jesus anywhere.

Unconverted people. Are wondrously changed. By the power of the gospel. It bears abundant. And lasting fruits. The body of Christ. Grows in number. And in holiness.

And in love for the lost. In a word. When God comes down. The church is revived. And the world is shaken. For the glory of God. God. And Isaiah says.

I want that. Do you want that? Isaiah wants God to come down. And revive his people. But he also noticed verse 2.

He wants God to come down. And make his name known. To his enemies. His name. Who he is. Do you realize this world. Does not have a clue.

[15:10] Who God is. All you have to do. Is listen to the world. Talk about God. To see their ignorance. About God. All kinds of.

Notions. And ideas. About what he is. Life. Distortions. Abounding. He's this God of all love. He would never send somebody.

To hell. He's a pushover. He's this. He's that. I like to think of God as. And you fill in the blank. It shows that the world. Does not know God. And that's not right. And Isaiah is saying. Oh. That you'd come down. And make your name known. Show the nations. Show your enemies. Who you really are. Now Isaiah's longings. Are not pipe dreams. They're stirred by his remembrance. Of what God has already done. In the past. He's done these very things. He's just asking God. Come and do them again. Hence the value of church history.

[16:08] The value of our old testaments. The value of reading. What God has done in the past. To stir our hearts. To want to see. Him do them again. And we see that in verse 3.

For when you did. Past tense. Awesome deeds. That we did not expect. You came down. And the mountains trembled. Before you. We've seen that.

We've experienced that. As your people in the past. Now here's encouragement. To pray. In times of spiritual decline. The God we pray to.

Acts in surprising ways. For his people. That's what he's like. He's a God of surprises. So that at any time. However dark and unpromising.

The times are. He can do awesome things. That we do not expect. He did it before. He can do it again. That's the reasoning. Of Isaiah.

[17:07] As he's praying. He's encouraged to pray. Because he has a God. Who does things. That we did not expect. So there's. That enemy. Of Israel. Pharaoh.

Of Egypt. And he's holding. The Israelites as slaves. And the message to him. From the Lord. The God of Israel. Is let my people go. And Pharaoh says. Who is the Lord?

That I should obey him. And let Israel go. I do not know. The Lord. And I will not. Let Israel go. The world does not know him. So why should they obey him?

So the Lord came down. And introduced himself. To Pharaoh. In ten plagues. And he showed him. His name. He showed him. Who he was.

And Mount Pharaoh. Trembled. Before him. And when Pharaoh's army. Pursued the Israelites. To the Red Sea. Trapping them in.

[18:05] With no way out. God came down. And did an awesome thing. That no one expected. He made the sea divide.

He made water. Stand up. In attention. While his people. Marched through. On dry land. And then. It swallowed up. Their enemies. Who would have thought of it?

When they were hungry. There was manna. From heaven. When they were thirsty. There was water. Out of a rock. And then. To shelter them. From the heat.

There was this. Hovering cloud. That just. Was over their heads. Wherever they went. In the desert. Unexpected things. Whoever expected.

The massive stone walls. Of Jericho. To start trembling. And then. Just fall down. So the Israelites. Could come in. And occupy. And destroy.

[19:02] The city. And yet. That's what happened. God came down. And the walls. Trembled. At his presence. And fell before him.

The Philistine enemies. Of God. Did not know God. Did they? Just listen to that. Taunt of. The blaspheming. Goliath. And you see.

He doesn't have a clue. Who God. The God of Israel is. Whoever expected. That a stone. From a mere boy. Would fall him. And Mount Goliath.

Trembles. When God comes down. And he. Falls. To his death. Why? So that the whole world. Might know. That there is a God. In Israel.

And what he's like. God came down. And made his name. Known to his enemies. And when this world. Was full of darkness. Under the power of Satan. Whoever expected.

[19:56] A virgin. To conceive. And to bear. A son. Who would be. The divine savior. Of the world. God came down.

Emmanuel. God. God. With us. Doing awesome things. That we did not expect. And Satan and his demons. Trembled. And their kingdom fell. And whoever expected.

That he would save us. By dying on the cross. And that once dead and buried. He would rise again. For our everlasting life. Whoever expected.

That 50 days later. In the very city. That crucified him. 3,000 Jews. Would repent of their sins. And be baptized. In the name of Jesus. And that in a matter of 30 years.

The whole known world. Would be filled with his gospel. God came down. And did awesome things. That we did not expect. Whoever expected.

[20 : 55] That Saul of Tarsus. That hater of Christ. And persecutor of his church. Would himself be converted. And preach the very faith. That he labored. To destroy.

God came down. On the road to Damascus. And this mountain of a man. Saul trembled. And fell at his feet. Year and a half ago.

Whoever thought. Our brother Kevin. Would be found. A worshiper of Jesus Christ. After spending 60 years. Without him. Whoever thought.

A self-loving. Sin-loving man. Like me. Or you. Would be found. Condemning ourselves. And singing the praises of Jesus. And wanting to live no more.

For ourselves. But for him. God comes down. And does. Awesome things. That we did not. Expect. Whoever thought. 60 years ago.

[21 : 52] When you counted up. The Christians in China. Atheistic. Communistic. China. And you came up. With maybe a million. That 60 years later. They would number. 80 to 100 million.

God comes down. And makes his name known. He shakes the nations. This is our God. What an encouragement. To know.

That at any time. He can do that. He can come. And manifest his power. And his glory on the earth. This is the God we pray to. For revival. A God who has done these things.

He's the only living God. He's the only one there is. And he's our God. And we can talk to him.

Verse 4. Since ancient times. No one has heard. No ear has perceived.

No eye has seen. Any God. Besides you. Who acts on behalf. Of those who wait for him. He alone is God. And unlike the idols. He answers prayer.

[22 : 48] He's involved in his people's lives. He acts on behalf of those. Who wait for him. Oh that you would come down. And revive your people.

And make your name known. In our day. Can I ask you how much. Oh. There is in your praying. For revival. How much.

We want you. Lord. How badly do you want him. To come in reviving power. To lift you. To love him as you ought.

To serve him as you ought. Can you say. Oh I want you Lord. Lord. If not. Can you at least say. This morning. Oh.

I want to want you Lord. I'm just that helpless. Come. And make me to want you Lord. And then attack everything. In your life.

[23 : 42] That causes you to be content. Without more of God. In your life. Now there's a problem. That comes up. Right at this point.

As Isaiah is praying. Do you ever have problems. Come up in your prayers. When you're really praying. And suddenly. Oh. But. This is a huge obstacle. To the answer.

To my prayer. And this problem. That comes up. As Isaiah is praying. Is not a small one. He's thinking about this. Only God. Who acts on behalf. Of his people. And he's remembering.

The kind of God. He is. And the kind of people. We are. He's holy. We're not. He's the holy one. Of Israel. And God's holiness. Plus our sins.

Equals God's anger. That's the math. That he comes to. As he's. As he's praying. So how can we be saved.

[24 : 35] When all we ever do. Is provoke the anger. Of a holy God. That's the problem. That presents itself. As he's praying. There are conditions.

That this holy God. Puts on his help. And on those he helps. Isaiah mentions two of them. He says in verse two. You act on behalf of who? Of those who wait for you.

That's those that. That wait with faith. And patience. On the Lord. They don't run ahead of him.

They don't push their own agenda. They believe God will act.

And they're willing to wait his time. They wait on the Lord. God. And then verse five says. Who does he come to the help of? Those who gladly do right. Who remember your ways.

They don't go their own ways. They don't. Turn their backs on God's way. They go God's way. And they do right. Even when it's the hard right. And they do it. With gladness.

[25 : 31] Now do you see the problem Isaiah has? Israel was not waiting on God. In faith and patience.

They were not gladly doing right. They weren't going God's ways. Rather as Isaiah goes on to say in verse five. We continue to sin against your ways. And when we did.

You were angry. That's the problem. This was no occasional stumble into sin. It's rather the long standing habits of sin. We continue to sin.

It's the stubborn continuance. In our own ways. Provoking God's anger. Because God's holiness plus our sins. Equal God's anger. And yet even God's anger.

Was not enough to move them to repent. So the problem is then verbalized to God in prayer. And Isaiah says. Oh. Then how can we be saved?

[26 : 30] I've been asking you to save us. But now I'm realizing. How can that be? When we do nothing but provoke your anger all day long.

Do you see their problem? Has it ever become your problem? Have you ever seen it as your problem? That we sinners simply do not qualify for God's help.

But his anger. Well then how can we be saved? Now I want you to notice that what Isaiah does in response to this tension.

Is not try to put a good spin on the people's behavior. He does not try to convince God that at heart these are really good people after all. They really mean well Lord. They're not that bad.

Couldn't you save them? That'll get you nowhere with a holy God. Notice what Isaiah does. He pleads not their worthiness. But their neediness.

[27 : 31] Not their deservingness. But their sinfulness. Now that's different isn't it? To come to this holy God. And to make as a reason for him to answer you.

Because you're so sinful. That's strange. Isn't it? That's what happens. It's what David often cried. God hear me.

Why? Because I'm poor and needy. He brings his neediness to the Lord. As an argument for God to answer. And what follows is a brutally honest confession. Of Israel's sinfulness and need.

And all throughout. What Isaiah is saying now. Is God we need you. We need you. If you don't intervene. We're goners. And until we see how sinful we are.

And how desperately need him. Will not desperately cry for him to come and save us. So verses 6 and 7. Are a scathing confession of their sinfulness.

[28 : 32] And not just of a few. But as he says. All of us. All of us. This is why we need you so badly. First of all. He says. We are all highly contagious.

Unclean. Spiritual. Lepers. Verse 6. All of us have become like one who is unclean. You can read in Leviticus 13.

Of those who had this infectious skin disease. Perhaps leprosy. And leprosy. Made them unfit. For the presence of God.

They couldn't go into the temple. The tabernacle. And it made them unfit for society in Israel. They had to live outside the city. Quarantine from the rest of the people. That's God's picture of our sinfulness.

We're spiritual lepers. And we're contagious. It's our own sinful nature within. That makes us dirty. We're both defiled.

[29 : 34] And defiling. Of others. Now whenever someone came near. The leopard had to cry out.

You can read of it in Leviticus 13. 45. He had to cry out. Unclean. Unclean. It was to warn people. Don't come near me. I'm contagious. With leprosy.

And so as one writer suggests. If we rightly understand. Our sinfulness. What God is saying. Is that we could warn everyone we meet. Hello.

I'm John Heaney. I'm highly contagious. With sin. You better keep your distance. You better keep your distance. Or I could ruin your life. I'm contagious.

I'm defiled. And I am defiling of others. All of us. Have become like one who is unclean. Unfit for God and man.

[30 : 30] How then can we be saved? Secondly. The very best we can do. Is as offensive to God. Is filthy rags. For all our righteous acts.

Are like filthy rags. Now. The people pitied these lepers. Some of them. Were related to them. And so outside of the towns of Israel.

They would hang a rag on a post. That lepers passing by. Might wipe their oozing sores with it. It didn't take many lepers. Before that rag.

Became a filthy rag. And there were other. Filthy rags in Israel. That God used. To make this very point.

Those filthy rags. Picture. How God views. Our righteous. Deeds. Those. Righteous.

[31 : 29] Things. That we do. Done without. Faith in Christ. Without love. To Christ. And without. Desire. For his glory. Are regarded. As filthy. Rags. He's not talking.

Now. About our rebellious acts. Where. Where we see God's command. And we say. I don't care. It says. You shall not lie. I'm going to lie. And we just trample. That's filthy rags. Sure enough. He's not talking about that now. No. He's talking about. Our very best efforts. At being a good boy. Or a good girl. Or at worshiping God.

Apart from Christ. They're filthy rags. Putrid. Disgusting. Highly offensive. To God. God. You see. The problem. The problem. Was that. Israel. Was living. For themselves. They were casting. God's commandments. Off. And yet. They kept up. Their religious. Acts.

[32 : 27] They kept bringing. Their sacrifices. To God. And far. From being. Pleased with them. God is put off. By them. God is offended. These are. Disgusting. Things.

He says. To them. That they should. Think me. No more holy. Than that I could. Be bought off. With some religious. Deeds. When their hearts. Are far. From me.

So picture it. Here's a man. And he's standing. Before the judgment. Seat of Christ. It's his time. To make a case. As to why. He should be allowed. Into heaven.

He said. Oh just a minute. Let me show you. Something that I've. I've done. And he brings out. His most righteous. Acts. And as he brings them out.

He sees what they are. They are filthy. Rags. With the oozing. Puss. Of a leper. That's what he thinks.

[33 : 23] To offer. For acceptance. Into heaven. It's offensive. To God. That's how God.

Views. Our very best. Our most righteous. Acts. Outside of Christ. It's not just. That our law.

Breaking. Stinks. It's that our law. Keeping. Stinks. As it proceeds.

From sinful. Self. And pride. It only provokes. Further. God's anger. How then. Can we be saved? Thirdly.

We cannot. Stop sinning. We all. Shriveled. Like a leaf. Verse 6 says. And like the wind. Our sins.

Sweep us. Away. Here's a picture. Of our utter helplessness.

In the grip. And power. Of sin. So the green leaves. Out on the trees. Kids. They won't be green.

Much longer. They'll turn red. And yellow. And different colors. And pretty soon.

[34 : 18] They'll fall. And as they fall. To the ground. They're cut off. From their nourishment. And all the moisture. Will go out of them. And they'll dry. And they'll get crispy. Shriveled up. And then.

The fall winds. Will come. And blow. Upon those leaves. What do you think. The chance is. Of that shriveled leaf. Holding its ground.

Energizing itself. To stand against that wind. Unmoved. Absolutely. Zero. The shriveled leaf. Is powerless. Before the wind. That comes.

And sweeps it away. In the same way. We. Are utterly helpless. We have no power. Before our own sins. To keep them. From sweeping us away.

Into destruction. We cannot stop sinning. Sin will always take you further. Than you want to go. We do not have power. To stop sinning.

[35 : 18] To repent. Of our sins. And save ourselves. From sin's reign. How then. Can we be saved. And as if that were not enough.

Verse 7. Goes on to confess. That the only one. Who could help us. Is it. Is being ignored. No one's praying. No one calls. On your name. Or strives.

To lay hold of you. We see here. That sin makes us. Forget God. God. It leaves us. Too lethargic.

To pray. And yes. God's mighty. To save.

But. No one's rousing. Themselves. To lay hold of him. In prayer. And ask him. To save. Like Jacob did.

When he just laid hold of God. I am not going to let you go. Till you bless me. There are some answers to prayer. That just fall off the plant.

[36 : 11] Like picking blueberries. They're very ripe. And just a little movement of the hand. And you have them in your hand. How many of you have seen a blueberry. Machine.

Picking machine. It comes in after we're all done picking. And it lays hold of that plant. And just violently shakes it. Until those berries fall into the tray.

And Isaiah is saying. Nobody's laying hold of you God. Nobody's laying hold of you. Nobody's stirring themselves. To say. We need God.

We need to lay hold of him. In prayer. And not let him go. Until he blesses us. Sin makes us forget God. It makes us too lethargic.

To pray. And the very reason. They don't pray. Because you Lord. Have hidden your face from us. And made us to waste away. Because of our sin.

[37:07] You see. In his anger. He had turned his face away. And turned us over. To our beloved sins. Allowing them to have their way with us. When the church.

Is full of contentment. And. Satisfaction. When. When they are not hungering. And thirsting for God. He just may well hide his face from her.

Remember in Revelation 3. 20. Jesus is outside of that church. What kind of church was it? Well it's a church that says. We're doing fine.

We've got everything we need. I'm satisfied. I'm content with where we're at. But. Such a church. As a savior. Who's on the outside. Unsought.

Unwanted. How then can we. Be saved. If we're not seeking. The only one. Who can save.

[38:07] So Isaiah has confessed to God. The pitiful state. They were in. This is just how bad off. We are God. That unless you. You intervene. We're done. We're unworthy.

We're disqualified. We're obnoxious to your wrath. We need you. We want you. We need you. We have no plan B.

But you. You're it. You're the only hope we have. Now. Verse 8. Is a huge shift in the prayer. Yet. It's the word yet.

Or but. And here's the good news. Yet unworthy ones. Confessing their sin and need. Can find mercy with the Lord. And here we see. The old covenant people of God.

God had chosen them. And made them. They're his people. In the Old Testament. And he had. He had promised them. Certain blessings. Not all of. We're not talking now. That they were saved.

[39:03] As we are saved. Some of them were. Some of them weren't. But we find. These covenant people. Pleading. Their relationship to God. You're our father.

You see that in verse 3. Yet. As bad as we are. Oh Lord. Even though Abraham. Doesn't know us. Or Jacob. Want even to associate with us. Yet. You are our father.

We are the clay. You are the potter. We're all the work of your hand. He's saying. God. Your fatherly love. Is as much an attribute of you. As your righteous anger is. We're rightly receiving your anger. We're rightly having you. Turn your face away. And withhold your compassion. And mercy. From us. But Lord. You have compassion. And mercy. So be a father to us.

Don't fathers. Go after. Their wayward sons. And welcome them home. You are our father. And you are our potter. And does not the potter.

[40:01] Have the power to remake the clay. And as helpless clay. We cry. What we are not. Make us. Have your own way Lord. You are the potter.

I am the clay. Mold me. Make me. Remake me. Shape me. After your will. See the only hope we have. As sinners. Is to turn to the very one.

Who is angry with us. There's no hope. There's no help anywhere. But in him. The one who's hiding his face.

The one who's withholding his compassion. Because of our sins. Our only hope is to turn to him. And to cry for mercy. And that's what. Isaiah does. Verse nine.

Do not be angry. Beyond measure. Oh Lord. Do not remember our sins forever. Do we understand what he's praying? Stop your anger.

[40:57] And forget our sins. That's bold praying. Who would dare to ask God. Stop your anger. Forget our sins.

Remember them no more. In 1864. General William Sherman. Led his Union troops.

On a march to the sea. During the. Civil war. Here in America. From Atlanta. Down to Savannah. 35 days. Burning the crops. Killing the livestock.

Destroying everything. In its way. In his way. Leaving behind. A trail. Of devastation. And ruin. It was called.

The scorched earth. Policy. Now the Babylonian invasion of Judah. Would be no kinder. They would turn. The promised land. Into scorched earth.

[41 : 52] And that's what we have here. In verses. 10 through 12. Your sacred cities have become a desert. Even Zion's a desert. Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and glorious temple. Where our fathers praise you.

It's been burned with fire. All that we treasure. Lies and ruins. These are the painful consequences of our sin. Sin leaves us in misery and ruin. And then the final cry for mercy.

After all this. Oh Lord. Will you still hold yourself back? That tenderness and compassion. Chapter 63. 15.

You still going to hold back. Your love. For us. This is who you are. You're full of compassion and grace.

Even for undeserving sinners. Let it loose. We need it. Hold back yourself. No longer. Now what gives Isaiah confidence to pray like this?

[42 : 50] He's just faced the problem. Head on. God is holy. We're not. Therefore. We have his anger. How can he pray. That nonetheless. God would show them mercy.

Well can you remember back to our first sermon. Over two years ago. In chapter 6. When God first called Isaiah. He stood. Before. The holy one.

And he trembled. And he said some important words. I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell among a people.

Of unclean lips. And if our lips are unclean. It means everything about us is unclean. Because what comes out of the mouth. Is what we are. He's confessing. I look at your holiness.

And my cry is. Woe is me. I am an unclean man. I am defiled. And defiling. I am contagious. I am doomed.

[43 : 47] Under your anger. Do you remember. That wasn't the end of chapter 6. Do you remember. That he found mercy. With the Lord. An unclean man.

Found mercy. With the Lord. And now he pleads. For God. To have mercy. On these unclean people. In which he dwells. But he also knows.

That sinners can be saved. Because of what the suffering. Servant of the Lord. Has done. When he came down. He did awesome things. That we did not expect. And already Isaiah.

Has spoken of him. In chapter 53. Who would have thought. That God's anger. Against us. Could be stopped. By his own son. Suffering it. Instead of us.

So he can pray. God. Stop being angry. With us. For one reason. Because. The Messiah. Is coming. And he will take. God's anger. That we deserved.

[44 : 49] Who would have thought. That he would be cursed. And damned. On the cross. That our sins. Might be remembered. No more. Yes. He can pray. Stop being angry.

Please. Please. Forget our sins. Because. Jesus. Is coming. And he will take. The anger. And. So work.

That our sins. Might be. Remembered. No more. And the perfect. Righteousness. That we needed. To enter heaven. But we could not. Work up. Ourselves. And never. Could achieve.

Is to be given. To everyone. Who believes. In Jesus. The free gift. Of perfect. Righteousness. Christ. Righteousness. Given. To those.

Who believe. And that he would give. His Holy Spirit. To make. Our hearts. New. So that we. Indeed. Would gladly. Do right. And remember.

[45 : 42] To walk. In his ways. You see. This is the God. Of salvation. When he came down. He did. Awesome things.

That we did not expect. Therefore. We cry. Oh Lord. Have mercy. So are you lost. And still living. Under the anger. Of a holy God. Don't miss the point. There is saving.

Mercy in him. Not for those. Who recite. How good they are. Who bring their filthy. Rags. As reasons. To have mercy. But rather. He has saving.

Mercy on those. Who confess. How bad they are. How much. They need him. You see. The invitation. Is to bring your neediness. To God. Why you need him. Bring it to him.

Receive from him. That righteousness. That only Jesus. Can give. This potter. Can save you. He can remake. The ruins. Of your life. Plead. For his mercy.

[46 : 37] For Jesus sake. You believer. Are you tired. Of the distance. And coolness. Between you. And your savior. Is God stirring.

Your heart. To want. Something more. Of his power. And glory. To be unleashed. In your life. Of a greater sense. Of his presence. And love. Come to Christ.

Confessing your sins. Confessing your need. Your utter helplessness. To do anything about it. I want you Lord. I need you Lord. I have no power.
 On my own. Come to change the way. I am. Have mercy upon me. Oh that you would come down. And move my heart. To tremble. With awe.
 To love you. To obey you. To serve you. As I ought. Who here will take hold of God. And give yourself no rest. And give him no rest.
 [47 : 33] And just. Take this prayer. It's given to us. You know God answers this prayer. After all. He's the one that gave it to us. Gave it to us.
 For this very reason. Oh let us. Lay hold of that mercy. That is ours in Jesus Christ. Pray that he would come. And revive. His people.
 And make his name great. In our hearts. In this church. And among the nations. Let's turn in our hymnals. A response to worship.
 Revive thy work oh Lord. It's number 297. And let's sing it. With a cry to the Lord. To come and revive his work. In our day.
 And to start with us ourselves. Let's stand as we sing. 297. We'll sing it to the more familiar tune. That Kelly will play. Oh most holy one. That is our cry to you.
 [48 : 32] That you would look on us. And see us. In our need. And have mercy. For Jesus sake. You would not leave us to ourselves. Or surely our hearts will grow harder and colder.
 More worldly. And distant from you. That you would come. And you would. Dispel the darkness. And cool the icy coldness.
 And. Create soul thirst in our hearts for you. Make us hungry for more. Enable us to lay hold of you in prayer. To not let you go until you bless us.
 Surely there is more glory to be brought to your name. If I was more Christ like man. If we were a more Christ like people. If we were more amazed that you have loved us.
 In Jesus Christ. So come and make a name for yourself here. And do it in every church. Even this day. Come and revive your people.
 [49 : 34] Wherever they are. And come and make your name great among the nations. Shake the lost. Shake the mountains of pride and unbelief. And self-righteousness. And bring men humbly.
 To cry for mercy. And to look to a savior who has righteousness to give. We ask it in his name. And ask that he alone be praised. Amen.