

What God Will Do For His Own Sake

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[0:00] Isaiah chapter 48. I foretold the former things long ago.

My mouth announced them and I made them known. Then suddenly I acted and they came to pass. For I knew how stubborn you were. The sinews of your neck were iron.

Your forehead was bronze. Therefore, I told you these things long ago. Before they happened, I announced them to you so that you could not say my idols did them.

My wooden image and metal God ordained them. You have heard these things. Look at them all. Will you not admit them? From now on, I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you.

They are created now and not long ago. You have not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, yes, I knew of them. You have neither heard nor understood.

[1:22] From of old, your ear has not been open. Well, do I know how treacherous you are. You were called a rebel from birth. For my own namesake, I delay my wrath.

For the sake of my praise, I hold it back from you so as not to cut you off. See, I have refined you, though not as silver. I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called.

I am he. I am the first and I am the last. My own hand laid the foundations of the earth and my right hand spread out the heavens. When I summon them, they all stand up together.

Come together, all of you, and listen. Which of the idols has foretold these things? The Lord's chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon. His arm will be against the Babylonians.

[2:31] I, even I, have spoken. Yes, I have called him. I will bring him and he will succeed in his mission. Come near me and listen to this. From the first announcement, I have not spoken in secret.

At the time it happens, I am there. And now the sovereign Lord has sent me with his spirit. This is what the Lord says. Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river.

Your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand.

Your children like its numberless grains. Their name would never be cut off, nor destroyed from before me.

Leave Babylon. Flee from the Babylonians. Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth. Say, the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.

[3:33] They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts. He made water flow for them from the rock. He split the rock and water gushed out. There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked.

It's because truth is unchanged that we can turn to a document that was written 2,700 years ago and find profit for us this morning, living exactly where we are in the homes and jobs and country and relationships that we have.

The preacher said to his congregation, I have only two words to say in every sermon. Sin and grace.

And Isaiah is much the same. In chapter 48, we hear those same two words. Israel's sin and God's grace.

We start with Israel's diagnosis. Sin. Like a doctor who does a thorough exam and then doesn't beat around the bush, but tells it like it is.

[4:53] So in verses 1 to 8, Isaiah looks the patient over Israel. Israel. And then he tells what's wrong with her.

You see, without an awareness of what is wrong with us, we will despise God's remedy. So here's what's wrong with Israel. And if we're listening, we'll see what's wrong with us.

First of all, they were two-faced. Oh, outwardly, Israel kept up their religion as always. They still maintained the name of Israel.

They still took their oaths in the name of the Lord. They didn't swear by idols. They swore by the Lord's name. They called themselves citizens of the holy city.

They professed to rely on God. But the great defect in all their religion is pointed out in that it says, but not in truth or righteousness.

[5:53] But not in truth or righteousness. They had all the outward form of godliness, but they denied the power of godliness. It wasn't real.

It wasn't true. It wasn't righteous. It wasn't right in the eyes of God. It was a two-faced, hypocritical act. With one foot in the world and one foot in the church.

Claiming to be one thing. Showing by their life that it was a lie. Living one way in the church and another way in the world. They were two-faced hypocrites.

And Isaiah calls them out on it. Much as the Lord had done back in chapter 29 and verse 13. When he said, These people come near to me with their mouths.

And they honor me with their lips. But their hearts are far from me. You see the two-facedness of this people? Professing to be God's people.

[6:50] But in their hearts far from God. So far that they had forfeited the right to rightly call themselves the people of God.

It was a farce. Now we live in a time when 8 out of 10 Americans claim to be Christians. But where is the power of godliness that would prove the reality of their claim?

Two-faced was the first item on the diagnosis. Secondly, they had plugged ears. Listen. It's the first word in the chapter.

And it's repeated. Some form of that word is repeated up to 10 times in this chapter. Listen. Listen. Listen. What God has to say is important.

Because the truth sets you free. It sets you free from lies. From bondage. But the fact was that though God was speaking, Israel was not listening.

[7:53] Hence the need to keep calling them to listen, to pay attention. God's prophets brought his word to Israel. They were warning them.

They were calling them to repent. But Israel was not paying attention. They were called to turn from their sins. To follow God's ways. But they did not pay attention or change their ways.

Verse 8 says, you have neither heard nor understood from of old. Your ear has not been open. They had their fingers in their ears, kids.

That's why their ears weren't open. They didn't want to hear. And no one is so deaf as those who don't want to hear. They didn't want to hear God's voice.

They didn't want to repent. And they've been that way for a long time. He says, from of old. You've never had an ear to God. And so today, I must tell you, God is speaking.

[8:55] Are you listening? We just sang it. Speak, O Lord. Those aren't just words. God speaks today. And I don't mean with an outer voice. That you hear audibly.

Nor do I mean an inner voice in your head. I mean that God is speaking to us in his word. He's speaking here to us.

Are you listening? Less than 4 out of 10 Christians. Professing Christians. Read their Bibles with any regularity. In other words, they're not listening.

Oh, God is speaking. But they're not listening. That's the way it was with Israel. Oh, I'm a Christian. I just don't listen to Christ when he speaks.

And Jesus says, when his disciples said, your brother and mother are here to see you. He says, my mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.

[10:01] Those are the family of God. Those are the ones that really know me. So, what place does this book have in your life?

Wanting to do what it says? Wanting to be taught? Do you treasure it more than your daily food? Do you meditate on it day and night?

Do you hunger and thirst for it? Do you let it dwell in you richly? Is it affecting the way you live?

What you do and don't do? Or are you bored with the word of God? Do you? So that you can hardly stay awake when it's being read and preached.

But just let a friend text you. And you're all ears. And all alert. To what they're saying. It was a mark of Israel.

[10:59] That they had plugged ears toward God. Isaiah's diagnosis continues. They're two-faced. They're plugged. They have plugged ears. And thirdly, they are stiff-necked and hard-headed.

Look at verse 4. For I knew how stubborn you were. The sinews of your neck were iron. Your forehead was bronzed. Now, this is vivid imagery of what it means to be stubborn.

The muscles of your neck are reinforced with iron bars. It won't turn. It's unbent.

It's unyielding. Unwilling to submit to God's will and commandments. They were like an ox that was unwilling to put their neck under the yoke of God.

An ox that, when presented with the yoke, stiffens against it. Or when being pulled by the reins to turn, stiffens against the directives.

[12:04] Or like a baby who's stubborn and shows it by stiffening its neck. Even before it can speak, it can stiffen its neck and its little back arches.

That's the stubbornness of Israel. And it's not a disease unique to Israel. But all of us come into the world with this stiff neck.

That will not turn God's way. That will not humble ourselves and put it into God's yoke. Romans 8, 7 says, The sinful mind is hostile toward God.

It does not submit to God's law, nor indeed can it. And so we have this resistance, this stubborn commitment to our own way.

That leaves us incapable of bowing in submission to God's commands. And God says to Israel, Your stubbornness is so great that it's one of the reasons why I gave you predictive prophecies.

[13:03] Your stubbornness is so great that that's why I told you in far in advance of events that were going to happen. I did that so that you could not say my idols did them.

My wooden image and metal God ordained them. No, it was I. It was I, the Lord, who did them, as is seen by my announcing them long before they happened.

So here is man's stubborn propensity to give God's praise to idols. To say of what God does and what God makes. Oh, my idol did that.

My idol is to be praised for that. It's attributing God's works to anything but him. So consider what man has done to God's great work of creation.

Of creating all things out of nothing. Does man acknowledge God as creator and give him the glory and thank him for creation? No.

[14:08] That's precisely what he will not do. He's stubborn. He's stiff-knit. He will not give God the glory of his creation. Rather, he would then rather than give God the praise they would attribute creation to their esteemed idol of evolution.

To the genius of time and chance, anything but God. That's man's stubborn refusal to give God his praise that is due for his works.

So with every single blessing in our life. It's the work of our kind God. It's him doing us good. And so we are to see him everywhere and behind every good gift that we have.

And we are to praise God from whom these blessings flow. We are to say, apart from you, oh Lord, I have no good thing. It's to acknowledge that the good things being done to us are his work, not the work of idols.

But instead, Israel and man stubbornly refuses to glorify God as the source of our blessings. And instead bows at the shrine of self and praises our own hard work.

[15:26] Our own goodness. Kids, you remember in the sound of music. Maria and Captain are finally together and giddy in love.

They're going to get married and they're singing. They're so happy that they've now found each other. And the way is clear for them to be married. And they attribute the kind gift of a spouse, not to God's kindness and goodness, but that somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good.

So the song goes. And that's just a picture of man's propensity to to receive, receive, receive gifts from God.

But rather than give God the praise for them to say, no, it was due to my idol of some good. I did when I was a child or somewhere in my life.

I've done good. And hence, I deserve this. This good turn in life. And every day men are receiving a multitude of God's gifts and thanking their idols for them.

[16 : 32] That was Israel. Verse six, God says, you've heard these things. These blessings. I foretold that they would come to you.

I told in advance that that I would come and and bring you out of Egypt. And it happened just that way. Won't you recognize I'm the one who blessed you? You've heard these things. Look at them. Will you not admit them? You see, Israel is so stubborn that they won't admit the truth even when the facts are plain before them. That's man's mulish unwillingness to give God the praise. So from now on, I will tell you of new things, God says. OK, former things I told you about and brought them to pass. Now, from now on, I'll tell you of new things. Verse six be of hidden things unknown to you.

They were created now and not long ago. You've not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, oh, yeah, I knew about it. I knew about this. You know, people like that.

[17 : 33] You can't teach them anything. I know. I know. That was Israel. I'm going to do something new for you. I'm going to bring you out of Babylon.

That's still over 140 years in the future. You can't say, I know. I know. But that's just how stubborn these people are, how they were arrogant. Know it all.

So God will now tell them new things, surprising things that they couldn't possibly foresee. So we've seen the diagnosis.

They're two face. They have plugged ears. They're stiff necked. And they're hard headed. And then lastly, is there rebellious will? Verse eight finishes with this statement.

How well, how well do I know how treacherous you are? You were called a rebel from birth. A rebel is someone who knows the authority over them and still turns their back upon it and goes their own way.

[18 : 35] And Israel refused to listen and obey God. And God says that unwillingness to change your ways, that's nothing new with you. This is something so deeply ingrained in your nature.

It dates back to your birth. It goes right back to your beginning. It's always been this way. If I say do, you say you can't make me.

And if I say don't, you say just watch me. You have been a rebel from birth. So all God's appeals of mercy and warnings of judgment have been in vain.

They remain two faced, plugged ears, stiff necked, hard headed rebels from birth. That's the diagnosis that Dr. Isaiah gives of Israel.

But unless we see ourselves in that diagnosis, we've missed the point of why this chapter is in our Bibles and why it is profitable for us today.

[19 : 39] They have forfeited God's grace and are now obnoxious to God's wrath. And yet it's here that we see a turn in the chapter and we see the second word.

We've seen sin, Israel sin. And now we see God's grace. What is the response of God to these people, these rebels? Well, it's grace.

And he shows us this grace and goodwill in several ways. First of all, by sparing them from being totally destroyed under his wrath.

Verse 9 and 10. For my own namesake, I delay my wrath. For the sake of my praise, I hold it back from you so as not to cut you off. See, I have refined you, though not a silver.

I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. So Israel clearly deserved to be cut off by God's wrath, destroyed completely. Even as God in wrath destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and left no survivors.

[20 : 47] So he, Israel, deserved to be completely destroyed. The wages of sin is death and it's death under God's wrath. What is God's wrath?

He speaks of it here as something he delayed, something he held back. Well, it's his inevitable response to sin. Because sin is a contradiction of his holy character.

So wherever God sees sin, he has this inner revulsion toward it that would strike out and destroy it. Strike out and destroy the sinner.

Now that's God's wrath. And it's a powerful wrath. His wrath is as great as the fear that is due him, Psalm 90 says. But what must be the power of grace to be able to hold back the wrath of God?

If the wrath of God is like the billows of fire that came out of heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, what must be the strength to hold back God's wrath?

[21:56] And yet that is exactly what Isaiah says. That God is saying, for my own name's sake, I delay my wrath. For the sake of my praise, I hold it back from you so as not to cut you off.

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. That's grace. That God has anything good to say to us sinners is grace. And that's what we hear for the rest of the chapter. We're hearing this grace of God that holds back the wrath of God.

Lost person. He delays his wrath for you. You ought to be in hell immediately because of your offensiveness to God as a sinner. Your stubbornness, your refusal to hear him.

Your stiff neckness, your rebellion. But God delays his wrath. He holds back his wrath. And dear Christians, if our sins got what they deserve, we would be under God's wrath forever.

[23:07] Oh, God is full of grace. So here's the message to Israel. Because of their stubborn rebellion, Babylon will come.

They will come and they will slaughter many of your people and destroy your land and your temple and your capital and take your king and your best and you away into captivity.

Because of your sin. Yes, Babylon will come. And take you into exile. But the fires of exile will be limited, held back.

Only allowed to refine them, not to destroy them. Rather than leaving them in Babylon forever to be totally cut off, which is what they deserve. He says, I will bring you out of Babylon.

And that is grace. A whole back what you deserve. So by sparing them from being totally destroyed, God showed his grace. Secondly, by putting them into the furnace of affliction.

[24:09] God showed them his grace. Because that was less than what they deserved. I'll not make Babylon your fiery grave.

But I'll make it a refiner's fire to purify you. Not like silver in a furnace of fire, but in a furnace of affliction. Just as a furnace of fire purifies silver by removing the dross of lesser metals.

So Babylon is God's chosen furnace of affliction. Not to destroy Israel. But to purge out the scum of their sin.

Their refusal to listen to God. Their stiff-necked unwillingness to obey God. Their rebellion. All of this.

Scum of sin. So Babylon will not cut you off completely. It will rather refine you. Now.

[25:14] You say. This is part of God's grace. Sending. His people into the furnace of affliction. It's hot in here. It's uncomfortable in a furnace.

It's hurtful. It's painful. Doesn't feel like grace. Oh, but it is. It is grace. They deserve to be cut off and destroyed.

By the fire completely. But God will only use it. To purify them. Jesus says to his church in Revelation 3. Those whom I love. I rebuke.

And discipline. Therefore be earnest and repent. Oh, it's an act of love of the Savior. To send his stubborn people. Into the furnace of affliction.

Do you know there are. There's a stubbornness in God's people. That is so great. That only the furnace. Can bring them to repentance. And God knows when that is.

[26:12] And just how much heat is needed. In the furnace. God may prove thee. Thence to bring thee forth more bright. But can never cease to love thee. Thou art precious in his sight.

We sing of it. I only design. Thy dross to consume. And thy gold to refine. David spent some time. In the furnace of affliction. And he says in Psalm 119.

Verse 67. Before I was afflicted. I went astray. But now. I obey your word. You see how. God.

Refines. Us in the furnace. David says. It was good for me to be afflicted. So that I might learn. Your decrees. I know Lord. That your laws are righteous.

And in faithfulness. You have afflicted me. And so David can say. Yes. God's afflicting furnace. Is a gracious thing. For his people. It was a great grace.

[27:11] For Israel. Because they deserve far worse. But also. It's a great grace. Because the furnace. Corrects us. And brings us back. To God himself.

Our glory. And our joy. We're being disciplined. By the Lord. That we might not be condemned. With the world. Paul says. In 1 Corinthians 11. So where wrath is expected.

And deserved. Israel found grace. And goodwill. And forbearance. Now why is this? Why? Why does God hold back his wrath?

For some who deserve it. Why does he do that? Well it's not because they must have done something good. God is making a point of getting that across to Israel.

No it's in spite of you. Not because of something you've done. And he tells them four times in these three verses. Why he spares them. Verse 9. For my own namesake.

[28:12] For the sake of my praise. And then twice more in verse 11. For my own sake. For my own sake. He repeats himself. I do this.

How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. You see his point. Since sinful men will not give him the glory that he's due. He himself. Will go fetching glory to himself.

God is the most God centered being in the universe. Everything he does. He does for his name's sake. Out of concern for his name.

For his reputation. To bring men to hallow his name. To think highly of him. All that he does.

He does so as to bring himself praise. To promote his glory. And to spread his fame. You see God is jealous for the praise. And glory of his name.

[29:12] He won't share it with another. He will not let his name be defamed. And that's the bottom line with God. That's the ultimate motivation for what God does. He's committed to glorify his own name.

And those he had made his people. Are the beneficiaries. Of his commitment to his own glory.

They benefit. From having a God. Who says. I'm not going to let my name be defamed. Doesn't.

Doesn't mean. Oh no. We've got this God. Who. Who's so concerned for his own name.

I guess we'll get squished. No. It's just the opposite. God has connected his glory. To the salvation of his people. And that was meant to comfort them.

I have delayed my wrath. I have held it back. For my own sake. My own name. That's why I haven't cut you off. And if God's name is on the line.

[30:14] Then you can rest assured. He's not going to cut you off. Has he begun a good work in you? Well then. His honor is on the line. Isn't it? Can he get it done?

Can he finish the work? Has he chosen you? Has he called you to be saved? Well the question is. Is he able to get you all the way home to heaven? His name is on the line.

And here's the good news. For God's people. He is committed. To the glory of his own name.

Therefore. You will not perish.

He will. See you safely home. I will. Not. Cut you off. For my own. Name's sake. You see if God destroyed Israel.

What would have happened to. All those promises that he made. About. Raising up a savior from Israel. A redeemer. Well that wouldn't have happened.

[31:16] And God would have been unfaithful. And untrue. If God. Let them be completely destroyed. Under his wrath. Then.

Where would the promise be fulfilled. About. Israel being saved. And the Lord. Lord. It wouldn't have happened. You remember. Moses knew this about God.

That he's so committed to his glory. And when God threatened to destroy. The Israelites in the desert. Moses pleaded. But Lord. What will the nation say. That you were able to bring them out.

But you weren't able to get them into the promised land. So you destroyed them in the desert. God says. Oh no. Not going to do that. He was very jealous for his glory.

For his name. Samuel knew it. He says. The Lord will not forsake his people. For his great namesake. God is committed to himself.

[32:11] And to his glory. And that's good news for his people. It's good news for us. Jesus says. I shall lose none of all of those. That the father has given me. But I will raise them up at the last day.

Wonderful comfort. That God has connected. The salvation of his people. With his own glory. So rest in that. Saints. His commitment to his own name.

And guarantees. Your salvation. So in spite of Israel's stubborn rebellion. God will not destroy them. But rather he's going to free them from Babylon. Oh many would perish and go to hell.

But not all. Because God had promised to save a remnant. From Israel. And from them to bring forth a redeemer. Who would bring salvation blessings. To the ends of the earth.

To every nation. And hence here we are. The fruit of those promises. Because God will. Get glory to himself. By being true to his word.

[33:12] That's the reason why God didn't completely destroy them. But held back his wrath. And that's the reason that he put them in the furnace. And that's the reason God puts us in the furnace.

That he might. Purify us for his own namesake. You see his name is attached to his people. And he doesn't want that name being drug through the mud and defamed.

And when his people grow stubborn and not listening to him. He says how can I let myself be defamed. And into the furnace of affliction. He teaches us and refines us. And makes us willing. To put our necks under his yoke. A holy God will have a holy people. That will be a praise to his name. What will God not do for his own namesake?

I even I am he who blots out your transgressions. For my own namesake. He leads us in paths of righteousness. For his namesake.

[34 : 11] He withholds his wrath. For his namesake. Puts us into the furnace of affliction. To purify us. For his namesake. Well that's the grace of God.

And. The rest of the chapter. He tells how. He's going to spare them from total destruction. How's that going to happen? I mean. When the Babylonians came.

It looked like it was the end of Israel. How's. How's this. Salvation. Going to come. How are we going to be less than. Extinguished completely. By Babylon.

Well. He tells them. I'm going to. I'm going to bring. An ally. He calls him. Cyrus. The Persian. Verse 14. The Lord's chosen ally.

Will carry out his purpose against Babylon. His arm will be against the Babylonians. Verse 15. I. Even I have spoken. Yes. I have called him. That's Cyrus. And I will bring him.

[35 : 11] And he will succeed in his mission. I announced it. And when it happens. I am there. Bringing it to pass. And that's the reason. God's promise is so powerful.

Because he is there. Presently. To preside over the situation. And to bring it to pass. And so God says. I'm going to raise up. A savior.

In. In Cyrus. And he's going to deal with. Babylon. For my sake. And because I am with him. He will succeed. And you will go free. That's how.

He's going to bring it about. That's why. They'll not be completely cut off. And when it happens. You will. Know that I have done it. And you owe it all.

To my grace. None. To your idols. None. To any goodness. In you. So God shows. His. Grace. By.

[36 : 07] Holding back. His wrath. From destroying them completely. And thirdly. He. He shows his grace. By giving them his commands. Verse. 17.

This is what the Lord says. Your redeemer. The holy one of Israel. I'm the Lord. Your God. Who teaches you. What is best for you. Who directs you. In the way you should go. This is one of the most.

Denied teachings. In the Bible. Every time we sin. We deny it. In one way or another. We think there's a better way. For us. Than. Than his way. And in all.

God's commands. He is teaching us. What is best for us. He's teaching us. What is for our profit. For our advantage. For our benefit. Indeed. Second.

Timothy. 316. Says. All scripture. Is God breathed. And is what. It's profitable. That's the same word here. It's. It's to our profit. To our advantage. To our benefit. It's best for us.

[37 : 02] So true happiness. Comes from walking with God. In the light of his word. That's the way. That's best for us. And at the bottom. Of all rebellion. And stubbornness.

And refusal. To listen. To God. Is a doubt. It's this doubt. This doubt. About God's. Intentions. For us. It's a doubt. About his goodwill. And grace. In his commands.

The goodness of God. And his laws. Have been slandered. Ever since. Genesis 3. When. Satan told Eve. Eve. Oh as God said. You can't eat from that tree. It's because God is withholding.

Something good from you. It's not best for you. If you want what's best for you. Eve. You better start listening to me. And not this God. Who forbids you to eat from.

That tree. No. If you want what's best for you. You should eat that. From that tree. Eve. He got her to doubt.

[38 : 01] God's good intention. In his design. And his design. In his commands. But what was God doing. When he said. Do not eat from this tree. He was protecting Eve. From misery.

From a life of misery. He was saying. Don't eat from that tree. That's what's best for you. Eve. Not to eat from that tree. But Eve doubted.

And ate. And ever since. Our flesh. Has agreed with the devil. That God's commands. Are not really. What's good for us. And the whole world.

Which is corporate flesh. Is telling us. That's not what's good for you. Here's what's good for you. To go contrary to God's commands. Is what's good for you. God's the killjoy.

He doesn't want you to enjoy. Yourself. So. So don't. Think his commands are good. But God takes on this slander. Here in verse 17.

[38:57] By claiming that what he's teaching us. Is the very best for us. It profits us. He who made us. Think of it. The one who made us. And who made all things.

Knows the very best way. For us to live in his world. And he's revealed it. In a book. And that's what he was teaching Israel. He even summarized it in 10 words.

Did you know that the cover of the 10 commandments. That God gives it. Is 10 ways to enjoy the best life. You shall have no other gods besides me.

You shouldn't. You shouldn't worship me. Through idols. You shouldn't misuse my name. Take it lightly on your lips. And you should remember the Sabbath day. By keeping it set apart unto me. And kids. You should honor your father and mother. If you really want to know what blessing is. And what's best for you. And you should not take the life of another.

[39:56] Not even hating the life of another. And you shouldn't take the wife of another. And not even lust after another. You shouldn't take what doesn't belong to you. That wouldn't be best for you.

You shouldn't lie. And you shouldn't covet. I'm just teaching you the way that's best for you. This is the goodness. The grace of God.

In giving us his commandments. They're holy, righteous, and good. Romans 7.12 says. And in the keeping of them. There's a great reward. So who will you believe?

The lawgiver. The liar. Or the liar. The one who says. I know you. And the world I've put you in. And here's the way that's best for you. Or the devil who says.

God's a killjoy. And doesn't want you to know what's best for you. You looking for direction? Here I am. I'm directing you in the way that you should go.

[40:55] In the way that's best for you. So that's God's grace. Giving them his commands. Giving us his commands. And then. Fourthly by his longing to do them good.

It's not that God is saying. Well. Well here's my word. And I'm setting before you. Life and death. And you guys can do whatever you want with it. It doesn't. Matter to me at all. Which you choose. If you choose to follow me. And trust in me. It'll go well with you. But if you don't. You'll. You'll suffer for it. And don't care a bit about what you do. That's not the picture we get in the Bible.

About God. Is it? Notice. See if you can hear his heart. In verse 18 and 19. If only you had paid attention to my commands.

Your peace would have been like a river. Your righteousness would have been like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand. Your children like its numberless grains.

[41:54] Their names. Their name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before me. You see his heart in this. If only you'd listen to me.

Then I could have just kept on blessing you. Then your peace. Your shalom. Your prosperity. Your well-being. Your total advantage.

Could have been continuous. Just like a river. So you're standing by the river. And you're watching the water. And it just keeps coming. Doesn't it? You're standing by the Niagara Falls.

And you see all that water coming through that river. And it just keeps coming. There's more somewhere behind it. And it just keeps flowing. And God says. That's the way my peace and prosperity would have been.

My blessing upon you. Would have been like a river. Or like the waves of the sea. And you stand by the shore. And you watch the waves. And they crash on the shore. They just keep coming at you.

[42:48] And they never end. God says. If only you'd obeyed me. And paid attention to my commands. Then your peace. And your righteousness. Your salvation. Your blessing. Would have just kept coming.

And your seed. Your children. Would have increased. And the numbers of them. Would have been like the grains of the sand. But you didn't pay attention.

And so. I didn't go on blessing. You didn't want my blessings. And so you got my cursings. And so now.

You've got to receive the. Furnace of affliction of Babylon. And you've got to know the sword. That will decrease the number of your children. And you've got to know warfare.

And hard service. Not peace. But that wasn't my heart for you. If only you'd paid attention. Kids. This. This is. Like daddy.

[43:50] Talking to his naughty son. Just before he spans him. And he says to his son. Son. If only you'd paid attention. We could have had a great time.

Together. But. But you didn't pay attention. So I've got to spank you. I've got to bring pain into your life. And we're meant to see the heart of God.

Do you see his grace? Do you see his goodness in this? If only. He says to his rebellious. People. I don't have any pleasure in spanking you.

I don't have any pleasure in putting you to grief. If you'd only paid attention. I wouldn't have to do this. I wanted to bless you. You didn't want to be blessed. What.

Grace is found in God. Lamentations 333. He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. Ezekiel 33. I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

[44:52] But rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn. Turn from your evil ways. Why will you die? Oh house of Israel. I'd much rather you live. I'd much rather you live under my peace and blessing.

If only. If only. You'd have repented and believed the gospel. My peace would have been unending forever. It's this Jesus who weeps over Jerusalem.

That is doomed for destruction. If only. If only. You'd have come and taken refuge in my wings. I would have saved you.

I would have blessed you. But now there's nothing left for you but judgment. You see the heart of God. Towards sinners. Rebellious sinners.

Gracious heart. And then lastly we see his graciousness. By his call to flee from Babylon. Verse 20. Leave Babylon. Flee from the Babylonians.

[45:50] Announce this with joy. With shouts of joy. And proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth. Say the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob. Now this is the new thing that is coming.

This is the new thing that he's announced. Freedom. Redemption. From Babylonian captivity. And just as he had redeemed them from captivity of Egypt.

And then provided for them all the way to the promised land. So that they didn't thirst when he led them through the deserts. He made water flow for them from the rock. Verse 21. He split the rock and water gushed out.

God. I'm going to bring you out of Babylon. And I'm going to provide for you all the way home. What will God not do for his people?

He will even make water and blood flow from a smitten rock. Jesus Christ. To bring life to his people.

[46:48] You see God. God. Delayed his wrath. But somewhere along the line. Wrath must fall for sin.

Because God is righteous. He delayed his wrath. He didn't completely cut off. Israel. But at the cross. He did not.

Hold back his wrath. He poured out his wrath. Upon Jesus Christ. He cut him off. That we might have life.

And so. God is announcing this redemption. From Babylon. This is worth shouting for joy about. I'm going to set you free.

I'm not going to destroy you. I'm going to deliver you from Babylon. And this is to be made known to the ends of the earth. But do you see what it's pointing to? This. This redemption of Israel.

[47:46] From Egypt. And now. From Babylon. Is a type. And it's pointing us to a greater redemption. Not by a servant. Of the Lord Cyrus.

But now by the servant of the Lord Jesus. And the redemption is not just redeeming his people. From Babylon. Some. Powerful nation. But he redeems his people from their sins.

From the wrath. That is to come. And he redeems them by taking that wrath. For himself. That they deserved. And you see.

We're at the end of another section. In Isaiah's prophecy. We begin next week. Another. New section in his prophecy.

And it begins with the servant of the Lord. The Messiah. Introducing himself to us. And it keeps going right to chapter 53. Where we see God's wrath.

[48:41] Falling. Full fledge upon his son. Instead of his people. That's coming. That's where we're going. And here. We're at the last. Chapter of this segment.

That is to be. Announced to the ends of the earth. With shouts of joy. That's why we go into every nation. And that's why we preach the gospel.

To every creature. We have heard the joyful sound. Jesus saves. Jesus saves. Spread the tidings all around. Bear the news to every land.

Climb the steepes. And cross the waves. Onward. Tis our Lord's command. Jesus saves. Jesus delivers. From sin. The greatest bondage of all. So that's where Isaiah is going.

And now he ends. With this. Call to decision. Leave Babylon. Flee from the Babylonians. Babylon. Babylon is a symbol.

[50:37] Of this present. Godless world system. That's an enemy of God. And his Christ. And his church. And the call is to leave Babylon. Revelation 18.

1 Corinthians 6. 17. Says. Therefore come out from among them. And be separate. Says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing. And I will receive you. And I will be a father to you. And you will be my sons and daughters. Says the Lord Almighty. Since we. We New Testament Christians. Just as those in Corinth. Since. Therefore. Since we have these promises. Dear friends. It's about us. These are our promises. Therefore. Let us purify ourselves. From everything that contaminates body and spirit. [51:32] Perfecting holiness. Out of reverence for God. We must come out of the world. Believers. A world that pays no attention to God's laws.

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No peace now in this life? It's a false peace. No peace in the day of judgment? No peace for all eternity. Can you see God's grace in that?

Telling us ahead of time what's coming for those who don't answer the call? No peace. Forever and ever.

Restless. His wrath will not be delayed forever. He delayed His wrath, but then He poured it out at Calvary for all who heed the call.

[54:01] But if you don't heed the gospel call, He will pour it out upon you for all eternity. He's delaying His wrath. He's holding it back. When He comes again, the wrath will fall, either at Calvary on your substitute or upon your own head for all eternity.

And He's saying, Why will you die? Why will you not rather turn and live? Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

What a Savior! What a heart! If only you would come! And dear friend, if you don't come and you pass out of this life, will you not be saying, If only for all eternity, if only that day, October the 7th, if only I had paid attention and answered the call, God would have saved me.

Come to Him then and rejoice and shout for joy in a Savior who saves us from the coming wrath. Yes, God provided for His people in the wilderness by striking the rock and out came water. And He provides salvation for every believing sinner in the same way by striking the rock, Christ Jesus and out flows blood and water to cleanse us from sin.

[55:20] We sing of that in number one in our grace hymns. Rock of ages, cleft for me. Would you say that this morning? Would you put your trust in this Savior who was smitten for sinners?

Then you can sing with us. Yes, He was smitten for me, for my forgiveness, for the cleansing of my sins. Number one in our grace hymns.

Let's stand as we sing it about our Savior. Let's pray. Our God, we thank You that the word about our sin is not the last word from You. We thank You that there is the word of the gospel of Your grace.

We thank You that Your grace is greater than all our sin. We thank You that there is such a provision in the Lord Jesus that the worst, the vilest sinner, can wash and be cleansed.

And we thank You that You delight to save sinners in a way that makes You big and us small, in a way that makes You to receive all the praise. And I pray that You would prepare sinners here this morning to be willing to be nothing, that You might be all, to receive salvation completely as a gift, undeserved, but merited by the work of Jesus for us.

[56:43] And O send us on our way then with shouts of joy for this greater redemption that is ours. Help us to take it to the nations. Help us to take it to our neighbors. and help us to show that this God is our God.

And His laws are good and right and best for us. And His grace is rich and free. And so to commend our Savior to all around us, we ask for Jesus' eternal praise and for our good.

Amen. Amen.