

# Fear Not

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Date: 31 March 2019

Preacher: Mark Prater

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Right, Taylor? Okay, that works. Good morning. Thank you for your warm welcome. It is so good to be with you.

[ 2 : 1 2 ]     You can open your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 41. And just a couple of things before we look at this text. When Sean invited me to come to Trinity Cambridge and teach on the Get to Prophecy, which we did yesterday, and with me are Dan Welch, who's over here.

Dan, raise your hand. And Rick Orlando right here, who you heard from Rick earlier. These men have traveled with me to serve you. I was eager to accept Sean's invitation, mainly so that I could come here and personally thank you for being a part of our denomination, to be a part of our family of churches known as Sovereign Grace.

And I'm grateful for you in many ways. This is not just a general appreciation. I want to communicate to you, the people of Trinity Cambridge, of why you are so valuable to our partnership and the contribution that you're making.

You're actually strengthening our denomination. And here's how, just some of the ways that I see you doing that. Your gospel presence right here in East Cambridge and beyond, a church that is faithful to preach the gospel and to reach out to the gospel and share the gospel with the lost, that strengthens us.

Because that's really what we're about. We're just a small family of churches advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what he's called us to do. And you're doing that here with 70 plus other churches that are doing that together, so that we can reach every tribe and tongue and nation with the good news of Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 5 4 ]     So thank you for your gospel faithfulness. There's been several prophetic words throughout the weekend about this church being a base from which other missions is going to happen globally, and other church plants, maybe in Massachusetts and throughout the globe.

And I believe the Lord's going to do that here. Because you are a church that loves Jesus and wants to see the gospel spread. That strengthens us as a family of churches.

And just one other thing I want to mention, many of you may not know this, but Sean, while he is planting a church, serves on a national committee, a standing committee in sovereign grace known as the theology committee.

Now, to be on this committee, you need to be really smart. We put our bright... That's why I'm not on it. The brightest and the best are on that theology committee, and they have done an incredible amount of work.

And Sean, I want to thank you publicly in front of your church for the amount of work you have put into, especially updating our statement of faith. There's nothing new in it. It's just being strengthened in so many ways.

- [ 5 : 01 ] And that statement of faith hopefully will be approved sometime late this year, early in 2020. And I can't wait for you to read it. Because as I read it, I just want to worship God.
- It's just such good theology that it directs you to God, and you just want to worship Him. So, Sean, thank you for doing that. But Sean couldn't do that without just the strength of a local church behind him.
- So, thank you. Those are just some of the ways that you are strengthening sovereign grace. So, thank you. That's why I wanted to come. Let me mention one other thing. This is more spontaneous, but I was hearing this, I believe, from the Lord during the wonderful singing to Him.
- Let me just give you a verse that He brought to mind, and a word that I kept hearing repeated again as I was worshiping the Lord. And it's the word favor.
- I just believe there's a unique God-given favor upon this church's life. And it's God's choosing. It's God's doing.
- [ 6 : 07 ] It's God's choosing. It's God's choosing. But it's a wonderful thing. And because of the favor upon this church, you're going to have favor with others. That favor is going to open doors for you, not only here in the Boston area, but I believe throughout the world, so that God will use Trinity Cambridge in exactly the way He wants to use you.
- And I believe the Lord wants you to be aware of that. The verse that He brought to mind was Psalm 84, verse 11. For the Lord God is a sun and shield.
- The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
- And I believe that's a description of you. People who are following Christ, not perfectly, but uprightly. And the Lord has chosen to bestow favor upon you.
- And He wants you to delight in that. He wants you to have joy in that. Because He's going to use that for His purposes and for His plans. Okay, Isaiah chapter 41, verses 1 through 20.
- [ 7 : 21 ] In these first 20 verses in this chapter, we encounter some of the most fear-conquering, hope-giving, faith-building truth that I believe is found in all of Scripture.
- And so if you're here this morning and you are a person who is fearful right now, you're anxious about many things, maybe you're weary and hopeless, these divinely inspired words are going to be used not only to comfort you, but to embolden you.
- This is essentially what we're going to learn from this text this morning. God's activity and presence emboldens the fearful. Title of my message is Fear Not.
- And we're going to read the first 20 verses of Isaiah 41. Listen to me in silence, O coastlands. Let the peoples renew their strength.
- Let them approach, let them speak, let us together draw near for judgment. Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step?
- [ 8 : 31 ] He gives up nations before Him so that He tramples kings underfoot. He makes them like dust with His sword, like driven stubble with His bow.
- He pursues them and passes on safely by paths His feet have not trod. Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning?
- I, the Lord, the first and with the last, I am He. The coastlands have seen and are afraid. The ends of the earth tremble.
- They've drawn near and come. Everyone helps his neighbor and says to his brother, Be strong. The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith. He who smooths with the hammer, him who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, It is good.

And they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved. But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend, you whom I took from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corner, saying to you, You are my servant.

[ 9 : 47 ] I have chosen you and not cast you off. Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Behold, all who are in sense against you shall be put to shame and confounded.

Those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them.

Those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand. It is I who say to you, Fear not.

I am the one who helps you. Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel. I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord, your Redeemer.

[ 10 : 50 ] Fear is the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I make you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth. You shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff.

You shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in the Lord. In the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I, the Lord, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

I will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry springs of, and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress and plain and the pine together that they may see and know.

[ 11 : 52 ] May consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this. The Holy One of Israel has created it.

May God bless the preaching of His Word. John Adams, who would become the second president of our nation, had gained a reputation of being an effective attorney right here in the city of Boston in the mid-1700s.

And it was in December of 1770 that Adams made a risky decision to defend the British soldiers who had fired their rifles into a crowd of Boston citizens and was in killing five of them in what's become known as the Boston Massacre.

The British soldiers were charged with murder and John Adams in his effective closing argument that did lead to the acquittal of the soldiers.

He said this in a tense courtroom right here in this city. This is what he said. Facts are stubborn things.

[ 13 : 07 ] And whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

I share that quote from a courtroom scene because the context of Isaiah chapter 41 is that of a courtroom. We know that from verse 1 where God Himself has summoned all the nations of the world to come and to listen to Him in silence.

And the language there tells us that it is a courtroom. When it says, let them approach, like approaching a bench in a courtroom, and let them speak and let us together draw near for judgment.

It tells us that that language tells us that God has gathered the nations into His courtroom where God will present His evidence to all the nations and ask them to make a decision about Him based on the evidence He presents.

And we are told in verse 1 that the reason that God has gathered all the nations into His courtroom is this, so that the peoples can renew their strength.

[ 14 : 20 ] That's the purpose of this courtroom scene. And that language is very similar to what you find at the end of Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31 where Isaiah writes, the peoples, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

So one way to renew your strength is to wait upon the Lord, but here in Isaiah chapter 41 verse 1 it is those who hear God's evidence and make a decision about the facts that He presents, it is by that means that people can have their strength renewed.

But the question is why? Why? Why did the peoples need to have their strength renewed? Well, even though all of the nations are being gathered into God's courtroom, including the Jews and the Gentiles, including all Jews and Gentiles, we know from the text here that the bulk of the evidence that is presented in this chapter is for God's people.

It is for the nation of Israel. You see, at this point, the nation of Israel is living in exile in Babylon. And as their years of exile, as they lingered on and drew on, they became fearful and anxious and weary and hopeless.

And so God knew what they needed. God knew that they needed to hear the facts that, as John Adams said, are stubborn things that are immovable and necessary in our lives, especially when we are being ruled by the dictates of our emotions, as Adam says, which in this case, contextually, is that of fear and anxiety.

[ 16 : 10 ] And maybe that's you. Maybe you're here this morning and you would say, Mark, I arrive here this morning as one that needs to have my strength renewed. Because the troubling situation that you're facing at work or in your extended family or even the uncertainty you presently have about your future, it is creating fear and anxiety in your life.

And so God has brought you here today. He's calling you into His courtroom to hear His evidence that's found in this chapter to make a decision about Him and how He works in your life for the purpose of not only comforting you and renewing your strength, but to embolden you if you are fearful.

And the evidence that you are about to hear in this courtroom scene is God-centered and God-saturated evidence. Because in these 20 verses, the personal pronoun I is used 20 times where God refers to Himself.

So the phrase is, I am. I the Lord. I who. I the God of Israel. They're used approximately eight times that reveal the presence of God in our lives.

And then phrases like, I took, I will, I make, are used approximately ten times referring to God's activity in our lives. So this God-saturated text is intended to renew our strength by presenting stubborn facts, evidence about the activity and presence of God that emboldens the fearful.

[ 17 : 50 ] So, four fear-conquering truths that we see here in this text. Number one, God's sovereign activity. God's sovereign activity. Now note, after verse one, after He gathers all the nations into His courtroom, note how God begins presenting the evidence that He has by asking all of the nations gathered a question.

Look at that in verse two. Here's this question. Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step.

Now, even though He's not specifically identified in this chapter, we know historically the one that God stirs up from the east is Cyrus, the emperor of Persia.

The text gives us even more clues that this is Cyrus because Cyrus was known for his complete destruction of his enemies, which is why it's described, his victories are described as he tramples kings underfoot and he makes them like dust in verse two.

Cyrus was also known as an emperor and his army that moved very swiftly when they defeated their enemies, which is why verse three says, who passes on safely by paths his feet have not trod, which literally means that Cyrus and his army moved so fast it's as if their feet never touched the ground.

[ 19 : 17 ] The answer to God's question is significant because Isaiah, again, remember, is writing to the Jews who were in exile in Babylon in the 6th century B.C.

And as the decades wore on, they became fearful and discouraged and weary and hopeless. However, we know historically that Cyrus did ride swiftly and triumphantly from the east with his Persian army and he conquered Babylon in the year 539 B.C.

And when he does that, he liberates all the people, including the Jews, and he allows them to return to their home. In other words, in these verses, God announces through the prophet Isaiah, decades before it would happen, that he would stir up one from the east who would come and defeat the Babylonian oppressors and he would set his exiled people free.

Did you note that Cyrus is not even mentioned by name in this chapter? In fact, Cyrus' name won't be mentioned until Isaiah 44, verse 28, because Isaiah, because God wants us all to see that this is God's activity, that this is God's doing.

And that point of God's activity is emphasized when God asks another question in verse 4 and then he answers it with ringing clarity. Look at verse 4 again.

[ 20 : 56 ] Who has performed and done this? Meaning, who is going to set the people free, right? Who has performed and done this calling the generations from the beginning? Answer, I, the Lord, the first and with the last, I am He.

It reveals to us that it is God who sovereignly rules over all of the world and He activates who He wants to activate, when He wants to activate them to accomplish His good purposes in setting His fearful people free.

Do you see how God's sovereign activity and presence emboldens the fearful? You see, God's sovereignty is not just this theological concept, it is a stubborn truth for our lives that tells you that the things that are happening in your life right now that are causing you fear and anxiety and uncertainty.

Those things are not random at all, but they are a part of God's sovereign plan, the sovereign God who rules over all of history in your life. They're part of a plan as He works out His good purposes and will in your life.

One of the things I have a joy doing as a pastor at Covenant Fellowship Church is I lead a faith and work group Bible and book study. It's for men and women in our church that work in different vocations.

[ 22 : 29 ] We meet on Friday mornings and we study God's Word together and we read good books together. And there was a man, there is a man in my faith and work group Bible and book study, his name is John Musum and he knew that I was working on this sermon and he sent me this email and this is what John said.

Mark, I prayed for your sermon prep this morning. I prayed that God would help you to remember that folks like me need encouragement in the things He has called us to do and to walk through in a 9-5 work world that often seems intent on destruction.

That God would protect us from fear and strengthen, help and support us in the trials that a good God sends our way.

John gets it, doesn't he? He recognizes that the trials that he is currently facing at work are not random in his life but they are being sent by a good God who will sovereignly work in his life and accomplish his good plans and it's that stubborn truth of God's activity that will renew John's strength as he walks back into a difficult work situation tomorrow morning.

Now, if you are still uncertain that God's sovereign activity can actually conquer your fear, note how God describes himself in verse 4.

[ 24 : 00 ] Can't miss that. Second part of verse 4, the Lord says, I the Lord, the first and with the last, I am He.

This is one of many verses in our Bibles that reveals the self-existence of God. Meaning that He had no beginning and He has no end because He always has and always will exist.

That theological truth of the self-existence of God, it has many implications for our lives. Let me just give you one. God's self-existence means that He is not dependent upon anyone or anything.

That's what it means. Michael Horton makes this observation. Precisely because God is not dependent on anyone or anything He has created, we are assured that nothing will keep Him from fulfilling His promises and being there for us.

So when the trials you're facing at work are being caused by a difficult boss or a co-worker, you can be assured that those people will not keep God from being with you and accomplishing His good purposes and plans for your life.

[ 25 : 16 ] Or maybe even when you are suffering unjustly, when those who are opposing you are using unrighteous or maybe even evil means, you can be assured that your self-existent God will not be stopped by those things, rather He will fight for you.

Again, Michael Horton, evil powers never have the last word. God remains qualitatively distinct from creation and this is good news for those to whom the future seems destined to be controlled by oppressors.

The people of Israel thought their future was destined to be controlled by these Babylonian oppressors and yet God, distinct from creation, acted when He wanted to act to stir up Cyrus and He quickly conquered the Babylonians and God set His people free.

You see, that same God that acted then can act in your life right now in whatever unjust, unrighteous, unsafe, or even oppressive situation that you find yourself in.

Do you see how God's sovereign activity and presence, do you see how it emboldens the fearful? Now, did you know in this courtroom how the other nations responded to the evidence that was being presented?

[ 26 : 48 ] We see that in verses 5-7. Look at those again. the coastlands have seen and are afraid. The ends of the earth tremble.

They have drawn near and come. Everyone helps his neighbor and says to his brother, Be strong. The craftsman strengthens the goldsmith and he who smooths with the hammer, him who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, It is good.

And they strengthen it with nails so that it cannot be moved. So that the other nations, they hear what God is about to do in stirring up Cyrus and the text tells us they are fearful.

They are afraid and they deal with their fear not by running to the self-existent God who can alleviate their fear but they run to false gods whose very existence depends upon the work of human hands.

And then they foolishly seek to reassure themselves that their man-made idols, their man-made gods, small g, are good and strong enough to protect them from the Persian army.

[ 27 : 59 ] The irony here is unmistakable, isn't it? The irony here, these texts drip with irony in fear. These people turn to the gods who can't relieve their fear and they turn away from the God who says to them, Fear not!

It's illogical, isn't it? But here's the reality. We are all prone to make illogical decisions and to do illogical things when we are driven by fear.

That's the reality. And it's in those moments I need and you need stubborn truth. We need the stubborn truth of God's sovereign activity who speaks to our fears.

The stubborn truth that points us to God and whatever is causing anxiety and fear in your life, God says to you, Fear not! I've got this!

And God's sovereign activity can embolden you. So let me ask you, where are you turning when you are fearful and anxious?

[ 29 : 16 ] Turn to the God that Scripture consistently reveals as the one who sovereignly not only rules over all of history but rules over your life and whose self-existence can assure you that nothing at all will stop His good purposes and plans from occurring in your life.

Second fear, conquering truth. Number two, God's powerful presence. God's powerful presence. In verse 8, God now speaks only to Israel who He has said that He's chosen, who He calls a friend and twice in verses 8 and 9 calls them His servants.

And then He says to them in verse 10, Fear not, for I am with you. I mean, that truth alone, knowing that God is with us, God's presence emboldens the fearful because we know that He is with us.

And this fear-conquering truth, it not only comforts His people, He goes on to say how He's going to act through His presence on their behalf. Did you notice that in verses 10-12?

Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

[ 30 : 43 ] How is He going to do that? Behold, verse 11, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded. Those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish.

You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them. And those who war against you shall be as nothing at all.

These verses speak of God's powerful presence where He acts, as it says in verse 10, by upholding us with His righteous right hand.

What that literally means is that God is doing the right thing in dealing with our enemies. That's what those verses mean. And as God powerfully acts, note the reversal theme as God does deal with the enemies of Israel.

Contextually, remember, Israel is in exile. They are the ones who are dismayed in their exile. And yet, God powerfully acts in sending Cyrus so much so that those who are incensed against him, the Babylonians, will be the ones who are dismayed and the ones who are confounded.

[ 32 : 07 ] There's reversal there, isn't there? Those who strive against and contend with Israel in such a dominant way that they hold them in exile, God says, shall be as nothing at all in verse 12.

There's reversal there, isn't there? Why this powerful reversal? Why does it happen? Then, verse 13, answers the question.

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand. It is I who say to you, fear not.

I, the God of the universe, am the one who helps you. That word for that connects his activity to his powerful presence there in verse 13 tells us that his powerful presence, the one where he upholds us with his righteous right hand and deals with our enemies in a way that he takes dismayed and fearful servants and he turns them into faith-filled, courageous people.

That's the reversal that you see in those verses. Now, these reverses, they remind us of something. they remind us that when we are fearful, we have this tendency to make our enemies bigger than what they really are.

[ 33 : 29 ] That's what these verses remind us of. They remind us that if we don't live with an awareness of God's presence, our enemies are giants.

But when we live with an awareness of God's presence and a knowledge that it is he who upholds us with his righteous right hand and that he will deliver us, what happens is that your enemies, they shrink down to their right proportionality.

This past October, I had the joy of leading the Sovereign Grace Pastors Conference and a part of my experience there is we had three pastors travel from the nation of India representing churches who are interested in forming a partnership with Sovereign Grace.

And two of the men, they brought their wives with them and I shared lunch with them for a little over two hours during the conference. These men live in a region in the southeast part of India and in this particular part of India there is the persecution of Christians by Hindu extremists.

They all told stories that quite frankly humbled me. in the way that they face persecution all the time in sharing the gospel. One of those pastors, his name is Shiraj and this is just one of the stories from that lunch.

[ 34 : 51 ] He was in his city and on that day he went to sort of the town center and he just publicly was preaching and sharing the gospel. Just trying to reach people for Christ and he got done sharing the gospel and he went home alone and he went down the street that he thought was vacant and as he walked he heard this noise behind him and there was this crowd of men that ran after him and they caught him and they just began to beat him mercilessly.

And in that moment there was just no one around and so Shiraj he just prayed he cried out aloud Lord come and help me. There is no one here.

Come and take these men off of me. Send your help. And he said Mark you're not going to believe it. Out of nowhere these other men showed up. They pulled these other men off of me and they chased them away.

And he said I'm not I've had experiences like that where the Lord worked on my behalf. And I'm not afraid to share the gospel anymore. Even though I will face persecution even though I may be attacked again I don't fear that any longer because I know that my God is with me and that he fights for me.

See I tell you that story because Shiraj's God is your God. He's your God too and whatever difficult situation whatever situation in your life that is causing anxiety and fear he will act on your behalf upholding you with his righteous right hand.

[ 36 : 24 ] And when he does so your enemies shrink down to their right proportionality. So let me ask you a question. In light of that stubborn truth in light of God's powerful presence in your life do you see your enemies in their right proportionality?

One other fear conquering picture that we see in these verses that's found there in verses 10 and 13. In verse 10 God says I uphold you with my righteous right hand.

In other words he has weapons of righteousness to do what is right in dealing with our enemies. And then in verse 13 he says for I the Lord your God hold your right hand.



In other words it's a picture of God who in his right hand holds these righteous these righteous weapons to fight off your enemies and in his left hand he holds your hand.

And if you're a Christian he holds your hand as a son or as a daughter that he dearly loves.

[ 37 : 36 ] And with fatherly instinct he fights for you. Do you see how God's activity and powerful loving presence do you see how it emboldens the fearful?

Third fear conquering truth. Number three God's transforming help. God's transforming help. Now note as we begin to read verse 14 how God then addresses his people.

Verse 14 Fear not you worm. Jacob? Wait a minute I thought we were friends right? What happened to verses 8 and 9?

I thought we were friends you chose us and serve us. Worms? Fear not you worm. Jacob? Jacob? You men of Israel? I am the one who helps you declares the Lord.

Your redeemer is the holy one of Israel. Now God is not being critical. God is calling them worms to make them aware of their limitations and weakness and also to awaken their need for their redeemer.

[ 38 : 49 ] the holy one of Israel. And that language your redeemer is the holy one of Israel would have conjured up memories of the Jews who were in exile when they read those words of God's past saving acts throughout history.

The exodus from Egypt where he delivered them. They would have thought about that. His deliverance of their enemies at the Red Sea as he parted it and set them free and then defeated their enemies.

See in their time of exile God is saying to them to the people who are in exile I'm not only your past redeemer I am also your present redeemer the holy one of Israel and therefore fear not.

Now note the nature of God's help. He says he's helping them. Note the nature of God's help in verses 15 and 16. Behold I make of you a threshing sledge new sharp and having teeth you shall thresh the mountains and crush them you shall make the hills like chaff you shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away and the tempest shall scatter them and you shall rejoice in the Lord in the holy one of Israel you shall glory.

In other words God transforms weak people which is why he calls them worms and makes them a powerful threshing sledge that is able to thresh mountains and crush hills and winnow their enemies away like a strong wind.

[ 40 : 23 ] All of that is imagery intended to convey this that whatever obstacles face God's people whether enemies or false accusations or oppressors or even our own sin that does that does contend with us those obstacles will be swept away because God's transforming help he helps the weak and he makes them strong.

J. Alec Montier says this in his commentary whatever barriers may confront the Lord's people they are not to be measured in proportion to the people's inherent weakness but in proportion to the Lord's promise to transform.

And certainly the transforming work that God does for his people as their redeemer the Holy One of Israel seen in this text not only points back to his past saving acts but also points forward to the saving work of Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross as our redeemer the Holy One of Israel.

You see as we read these verses on this side of the cross brothers and sisters we must remember that our biggest obstacle was our sin. It was our sin that was our biggest obstacle.

Our sin as Romans talks about held us in captivity under the dominion of sin like Israel was being held in exile as we awaited the coming judgment and eternal condemnation.

[ 41 : 59 ] But at the appointed time God the Father he stirs up like he stirred up Cyrus he stirs up his son and he sends his son Jesus Christ who steps into our dark fallen world and he comes as our redeemer shedding his blood on the cross for my sin and for your sin taking it captive so that we are no longer slaves to the dominion of sin but like Israel we have been set free from the dominion of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

See it is the cross that symbol of weakness that we see the most transforming work of God that history will ever know in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

It is the cross where our redeemer transforms sinners and makes them saints and he calls us friends. It is the cross that transforms the vile and makes them clean.

It is the cross where our redeemer transforms the fear of death into hope of eternal life with him. And by the way if you are here this morning and you are not a Christian and you do fear death that is a right fear to have.

You should fear death. There will be an eternal judgment that every person will face for the sins that we all have committed. And today you've been brought here to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

[ 43 : 32 ] And if you will turn from your sin and if you will place your faith in Christ and what he has done for you upon the cross he will save you from that eternal judgment.

The Bible says call upon his name today and you will be saved. See our redeemer Jesus Christ is the only one that can transform us once who were his enemies into people who are now his friends knowing that we have eternal life with him.

There's nothing like that transforming help that we will ever know in the gospel. So here is my point. Whatever obstacle that you are facing in your life right now that is causing fear and anxiety the gospel tells you that you have hope because if God removed the biggest obstacle which was judgment for your sin he certainly has the power to remove the obstacles and the challenges you are facing at their sovereignly appointed time.

See God is saying to you today through this text your redeemer is not only your past redeemer he is your present redeemer and he fights for you. Fourth fear conquering truth that we see in this text.

Number four God's timely provision. God's timely provision. So in the courtroom remember we're in the courtroom God presents evidence of his sovereign rule over all of history.

[ 45 : 01 ] He presents evidence of his powerful presence and of his transforming health. And now he begins to present evidence of his timely provision that only he can provide as the creator of the universe.

We see that in verses 17 through 20. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none and their tongue is parched with thirst I the Lord will answer them.

I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open up rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia the myrtle and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress the plain and the pine together that they may see and know may consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this.

The Holy One of Israel has created it. the imagery there is clear in this text that the wilderness and the desert probably which Israel would pass after exile as they headed back home where they would have encountered dryness and a lack of shade where there's no easy access to water where there's no trees to sit under to rest yourself it is there that the Lord will provide rivers and fountains and pools of water to quench our thirst and did you note seven different kinds of trees that you can stop and rest under in the shade.

[ 46 : 49 ] See the point of the text is that only God can refresh the poor and needy especially when they are fearful and anxious by providing for us in only ways that He can provide.

You see we've got to remember we've got to keep in mind verse 1 we've got to remember the purpose of this courtroom scene it's so that the peoples can renew their strength.

God is speaking to His people who are in Babylonian exile they've been there for decades it's a long time they were fearful they were anxious they were hopeless and as a result they were weary they'd had it they were exhausted and yet God speaks right into their need as the Creator the Holy One of Israel and He says I'm going to bring you timely provision that will strengthen you.

Many of you can relate to that maybe you're walking through a prolonged trial right now maybe you've walked through prolonged trials and challenges they create a fear and anxiety in our lives that are physically and mentally and emotionally exhausting.

Trials and challenges they tap us like nothing else do. Maybe that's you you're here this morning you're saying Mark my soul feels like that that desert that's being described there.

[ 48 : 21 ] It's just dry. And if that's you don't miss what you're supposed to do. The text says when the poor and needy seek water you've got to seek it I the Lord will answer them.

Verse 17 That language is very similar to what Jesus spoke to those who were exhausted and of dry soul when He says to them in John chapter 7 verses 37 and 37 and 38 If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water today if your soul is dry if it's like a desert if life has drained you seek Jesus come to Jesus with your need and let His living water through the work of the Spirit refresh you to the tired and exhausted Jesus also says in Matthew chapter 11 verse 28 come to me He invites you to come all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest today if you are burdened and if you are weary seek Him come near to Jesus and He will give you rest Do you know why we as Christians are to do that when we are in need?

verse 20 answers the question that they may see and know may consider and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this the Holy One of Israel has created it you see as Christians we are not to be these perfect specimens who walk through life never fearful because that's not true we are fearful and anxious at times we are not to be people who walk through the trials of this fallen world pretending that we aren't hopeless and exhausted at times because if we were honest with one another we are hopeless and exhausted at times rather we're to be what this text tells us to be we're to be servants and friends of God and worms yes worms those who at times are poor and needy but also people who have stood in God's courtroom today we've stood in God's courtroom and we've seen the evidence that he's presented and based on the stubborn truth that we have heard we are people who fear no evil we fear no evil because God is with us we fear no evil because he's powerfully working on our behalf we fear no evil because even when we are exhausted by our trials we know that he has us by his hand and he will never let us go so that as we walk through trials and challenges with peace and with hope and with a lack of fear people around us may see and know that this is God's doing in our lives and therefore he alone receives all the glory let's pray but we thank you for your word and its clarity and for its present help

I pray for anyone here truth believe in 1 comes Hy it's 25 www and what I