

# Isaiah

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Speaking the Lord's help and your very prayerful attention, I would direct your thoughts this evening to the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 63 and the verse 9.
- The 9th verse in the 63rd of Isaiah. In all their affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his presence saved them.
- In his love and in his pity he redeemed them and he bare them and carried them all the days of old.
- These words are a gracious recollection and remembrance of the prophets of what God had been to his people in times past.
- He was looking, as it were, upon the yesterday of what God is and has been to his church.
- [ 1 : 1 9 ]     And it is a very gracious and profitable exercise for us to look back and to trace out God's goodness to his dear people in a time that is past.
- And Isaiah found great profit in so doing so. He said, I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us.
- But the blessing of our text this evening hour is this, that Jesus is immutably the same.
- What he was to Israel in those days that Isaiah mentions here, he is today and will be the same forever.
- Jesus is immutably the same. Something very sweet, is there not in that precious doctrine? Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.
- [ 2 : 3 7 ]     And it was that doctrine that constrained Isaiah in his exercise, in his prayer, that the Lord would come again.
- That he who had not changed, he who had not in any way altered, would come again and would bless his dear people with the same blessings.
- Now friends, this evening hour, we stand here, we humbly hope as the people of God. It is not a different God to which Isaiah has spoke of.
- We are not a different God to that that led the children of Israel, those long journeys through the wilderness. We have, if indeed we know anything of real religion, the same God.
- And thus, what a mercy it is if we in our little way can look back and trace out the same recollection, our own life, and our own experience of what Isaiah saw here.
- [ 3 : 5 4 ]     In all their affliction, he was afflicted. And the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity, he redeemed them.
- And he bare them and carried them for the days of our Lord. Well, let us, as the Lord may help, examine this word and see, firstly, what character it portrays our gracious God in.
- And secondly, what blessings there are for those who are encompassed by such a word as this.
- Firstly, what does it speak to us of our God? Well, pre-eminently, it displays to us here a feeling, sympathetic, compassionate High Priest.

One who understands, one who knows, one who cares, one who feels, one who knows all about his people, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

[ 5 : 13 ] There is a very wonderful doctrine that lies at the very foundation of this truth. The doctrine is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ has a church.

And that church is his body. And my dear friends, he feels as if every member of that body. He knows every member of that body. And thus, my dear friends, in all our afflictions, one said, the head feels the pain.

He knows. He feels. In all their affliction, he was afflicted. Now, there are wonderful demonstrations of this wonderful truth throughout the word of God.

From the very earliest times, there are precious probes of God being this, of this gracious character.

Let me take you to one of the earliest scenes that we read of in the book of Genesis. And there, after our first parents had been cast out of the Garden of Eden on account of that dreadful sin that had ruined all Adam's future race.

[ 6 : 35 ] It was not long before sin soon became manifest in the family that Adam and Eve were given. And you know how Cain arises and slays Abel.

And there lies Abel, dead upon the ground. Now, my friends, Abel was one of God's people. Abel was one of those in our text.

And what do we read? The Lord said to Cain, Thy brother's blood cry out from the ground.

The Lord heard it. The Lord had a view of it. He saw. He felt. He knew. And my friends, Cain had to suffer very gravely because he had touched one of God's people.

And this precious truth you can trace throughout the Old Testament. And indeed throughout the Word of God. How the Lord has in view his dear people.

[ 7 : 43 ] Let me give you another example. Dear Jacob, there he was, returning from those long years of exile in the land with Laban.

And there is a great obstacle before him. There is Esau coming with 400 men. And there is Jacob, a fearful man.

Fearful, helpless, weak. And it seemed almost the end. Now, friends, the Lord saw him. The Lord knew how he felt.

The Lord was not unaware of his frame. He knoweth our frame. He remembered that we are dust. And so he sends an angel. And that angel at first wrestles with Jacob.

And Jacob wrestles with the angel. I will not let thee go except thou bless thee. And look at the blessing God gave to Jacob. It was a blessing exactly suited to his need.

[ 8 : 48 ] It was a blessing that was exactly calculated to bring him through the trial. In all their affliction, he was afflicted.

You see? And how the Lord enters the very path of his dear people. Comes just where they are. He does not lead them to walk through it on their own.

He does not lead them to stagger through the fires. And through the deep waters. And through the wilderness journey. Unguided.

Uncared. No, my dear friends. He holds them with his mighty hand. In all their affliction. He was afflicted.

Now, as we come more particularly to these words. Let us consider their affliction. What is it that so often afflicts God's dear people?

[ 9 : 44 ] From where do their troubles come? And while there are many things that the Lord's people have in common with their fellow creatures here below.

For man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Yet the troubles of the Lord's dear people have a different dimension. They have a spiritual dimension to them.

That the world knows nothing about. You read through the Psalms of David. And you will see and you will notice many of the providential troubles he had.

There was Absalom. There was Saul. There was Ahithophel. There were a thousand troubles he had in Providence. But, as you read through his Psalms time and time and time again.

What do we read? My soul. And that was where he felt the affliction the most. It was there that the trouble is the most acute.

[ 10 : 45 ] It was there it came the closest. And it was there, my dear friends, he needed the most help. My soul. And so we must begin when we consider the afflictions of God's dear people with that which affects the soul.

It's not always easy to separate Providence from grace. Indeed, it's not always need. We should do so because the Lord sends Providence sometimes as a hand of sanctification to do his people good in their souls.

As he did to Hezekiah. He sends an affliction outwardly to Hezekiah that his soul might be blessed in the sanctifying work of God in it.

But, what are these afflictions that come so close to the soul? Firstly and foremostly it must be this. Sin.

What a small word sin is. And yet, how vast, how deep, how great are its consequences.

[ 11 : 54 ] And friends, if you have an atom of life in your soul this evening hour, you will confess that therein lies your greatest affliction.

It was with the apostle Paul. How he describes his affliction. He says, the good that I would not, that I do.

And the evil that I would not, the evil that I would not, that I do. The good that I would, I do not. How opposite was everything to what he would have desired.

He said, I find when I would do, good evil is present with me. Oh, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this dead?

But you see, with a mark of life there, it was an affliction to him. Now I ask you, is it an affliction to you? Is sin a grief to you?

[ 12 : 50 ] Is it a burden to you? And let me come a little closer, friends. Because you see, we may, as it was here, in a sense, a grief about sin just for its consequences.

Yes, the man who's been apprehended and convicted in a court will feel sorry when he's got the prison centres awaiting him. But my dear friends, true conviction goes deeper than that.

God's dear people grieve for grieving him. And they grieve because within there is a principle that hates sin. We have it in our previous verse.

Surely they are, my people, children that will not lie. Does not mean they're sinless. But it means there is that upright, holy principle within them.

And that principle within, my dear friends, hates sin. And it's a grief that when he would believe, unbelief rises up as well.

[ 13 : 54 ] When he would be humble, pride rises up. When he would be spiritually minded, the world comes in. When he would seek better things, he finds his heart drawn aside to seek other things.

There's a war, a spiritual warfare going on. This is an affliction. What will you see in the Shulamite? But as it were, a company of two armies.

So that's one aspect of the affliction of God's dear people. In dwelling sin. And that's an affliction, friends, that you will know something of more or less.

Right down to your dying day. But secondly, there is something that compounds and adds to this affliction. There's something that makes it more intense, more burdensome.

And that is, my dear friends, of the Lord Jesus, expressed so beautifully in that wonderful invitation, come unto me, you are ye that labour. There's the affliction, the battle within.

[ 15 : 01 ] And are heavy laden. Now what's the heavy laden part of it? There's the guilt that sin has brought upon our conscience.

There's the senders of death from God's holy law. And that's an affliction. That's a grief to God's dear people. When they feel that fiery flaming sword of justice stretched out against them.

When they come to the mercy seat. And they feel instead a frown. It's an affliction to them. When sin stared them in the face.

Yes, that's an affliction. A grief. A burden. And it adds, my dear friends, to the weight. Here on my heart the burden lies.

And past offences pain my eyes. And if my soul were sent to hell. Thy righteous law approves it well. Oh, this is a deep, dark state, isn't it?

[ 16 : 01 ] The affliction of the soul. And then again there's something else that is added to it. You say, well surely you've described enough about this affliction.

Oh, but there's something else, isn't there? Is there not that enemy that comes in like a flood? Is there not Satan, that roaring lion who's ever at hand. To come and to make, as it were, the most of the fertile ground he has within.

The carnal nature. How soon can Satan stir us up. And raise a fire of iniquity within. Draw us aside after some forbidden thing.

Oh, he's an arch-foe, is Satan. And he's an enemy to the soul. And he's an enemy to God's dear people. And it's an affliction to them. It's an affliction to them.

And then again there's something else. You see, when God's dear people are called by sovereign grace, from that moment they are changed from being at home in the world to being strangers and foreigners in it.

[ 17 : 09 ] They are aliens from now onwards. This world is not my home. And what does it mean? It means you will find the world a hostile place.

Have you ever thought of that word? All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. And friends, I believe the reason why some of us suffer so little persecution is because there is so little of that spirit within us to live godly.

And I speak to myself. How often do we remain silent when we should speak? How often do we compromise when, my friends, we should live godly?

Oh, that spirit of fear within at times, the fear of man, it brings a snare, doesn't it? But all they that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

And those of us who are younger, I fear, may have to learn more of that, ere our days are numbered if we are spared. But there is an affliction then to God's people in all their affliction.

[ 18 : 23 ] But then, on top of these soul troubles, these soul burdens that the world knows nothing of, the Lord's people, they have their losses and their crosses and their disappointments.

They have the crooked things in their family, in their business. And in the church too. Here are afflictions. Many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Now you may say to me, I thought the Lord's dear people were very favoured people. I thought there were people who had been redeemed, who had been saved. I thought there were people who were on the mountaintops.

Well, my dear friends, as they stand in Christ their living heaven, yes. They are secure forevermore. Blessed be God's holy name.

But you will find this. In living experience, it will be the experience of this text in all their affliction.

[ 19 : 24 ] More or less, you will find the path to heaven and a path of affliction. Indeed, the Lord Jesus said it would be so.

In the world ye shall, not ye might, ye shall have tribulation. And again, the apostle Paul speaking in the Acts of the Apostles confirmed the souls of the disciples that it was through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom.

Now why is that? Why is there a need to be for it? Because, my dear friends, it is in this school of affliction that we learn most of our God.

If you are going to have a religion in which you've tasted, handled and felt of the word of life, then, dear friends, you will know something of this path. And if you are going to be made useful in the church of God in any sphere, you must first know something of this path.

For if the sufferings of Christ abound in you, then, my dear friends, the consolations will too. But if we know nothing of the afflictions, then, friends, what can we speak of the consolation?

[ 20 : 40 ] What comfort can a saviour bring to those who never felt their woe? And in case some of you younger ones may think, well, this is a very depressing religion you're bringing before us.

In case you think, well, surely there's an easier way to heaven. Let me tell you this. And some of you older ones here will say amen to it. That in some of our deepest fires, some of our most severe trials, we have found Christ to be so precious in them that we would not be without them.

You say, is that so? It is. Some of us know just enough of this. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

But that brings me to the other aspect of our opening clause. In all their affliction, he was afflicted.

Now here we have that sympathising, precious high priest. Now I want to come straight to it, friends. This is Christ.

[ 22 : 02 ] This is Christ. This is Christ. And I want to consider for a few moments here, that endure such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest she be wearied and faint in your mind.

You may have come into the house of God tonight, and you may be considered, yes, in all their affliction. You've been considering your afflictions, and you're so weighed down by it.

There never was a path like yours. There never was a case like yours. Surely no one's ever had, should have crossed as I'm enduring. And friends, we soon get into a spirit of self-pity, don't we?

Now, friends, that's not gracious. Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind.

Do not forget, he was a man of sorrows. He was acquainted with grief. He was despised and rejected of men. He, my dear friend, was one who endured chastisement.

[ 23 : 16 ] Not that he deserved it. But, my friend, why? Because he stood in the sinner's place. In all their affliction, he was afflicted.

Let us examine this, then, as the Lord may help. And first of all, notice this. The amazing condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ when, as he was the eternal Son of the Eternal Father, that he took that almighty stone from heaven down to his sinful earth to be clothed in a body like unto our own, that in all things he might be made like unto his brethren, that he might know all their afflictions, that what love there was in that.

You think of it, dear friends. What love! To leave that radiant throne on, I assume, into a body of human flesh, sin-accepted, a perfect body, a perfect humanity, but nevertheless, for this very purpose, that in all their affliction, he too might be afflicted.

What part did the Lord Jesus have? You think of the characteristics of that part. Think of his humiliation.

You think of it. Where was he born? No room for him in the inn. He was in a manger. Oh, as we sang, we sing sometimes in the time of the year, we remember that, and it seems very sentimental, friends, but you think of it.

[ 25 : 07 ] Would we be willing to lay one of our children in a manger? You think of it. His humiliation. And then think what home he was brought up in.

A humble home. The home of a carpenter. What humiliation. He was subject to his parents.

And then, all through that long, weary journey that he took from Bethlehem to Calvary, look at the sorrows and the griefs that attended him.

Look at the loneliness of it. Look at the weariness of it. Look at the burdens of it. You see him at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus wept.

Jesus groaned within himself. And then, my dear friends, you see him. There he was, obedient to God's express command.

[ 26 : 06 ] Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. And then, no sooner he followed and set an example for his dear people in that sacred ordinance, but what do we read then?

Straight wide. The spirit driveth him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Notice those words.

It was the spirit that drove him there. Very sovereign, isn't it? Very mysterious. And yet, you see, he took every step he took under the gracious constraint of the Holy Spirit.

It was given without measure to him. And now, Lord, look at the temptations that he endured. Only a few of them were recorded, I'm persuaded.

And that was not the only time Satan came against him as a roaring lion. Oh, my friends, he hath suffered being tempted that he might succour them that are tempted.

[ 27 : 14 ] In all their affliction, he was afflicted. Friends, it matters not what temptation you may be in tonight. Jesus knows it.

He's endured it. He understands it. He feels it. And my dear friends, he went through that temptation and he was without sin.

There's our hope. There's our foundation without sin. Cannot be said of us, can it?

But it was with him. Our captain stood that fiery test and we, oh, I humbly hope we can say it, and we shall stand through him.

No other way. There's no other way of enduring temptation, friends. But through him in all their affliction.

[ 28 : 13 ] But I want to come a little closer yet. For the Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to get Sam in his garden, took upon himself the deepest affliction of his dear people.

took upon himself their soul trouble. He felt the weight and the guilt of his people's sins.

They were placed on him, particularly. In all their weight, in all their full, dreadful comprehension, they were placed upon his sacred shoulders.

What did we read in Isaiah 53? He was, surely he had borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. And again, all we like sheep have gone astray.

[ 29 : 20 ] We have turned every one to his own way and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Friends, if our sins were not laid there, we would have to bear the burden of those sins ourselves to a never-ending eternity of misery.

there's no alternative to this. Oh, do be very clear about this. Either your sin and my sin was laid by God and only God could do it upon those sacred shoulders that he might feel the weight and carry the burden of it away.

Or, my dear friends, it would be a burden, an unbearable, intolerable burden that we will have to bear to a never-ending eternity.

Oh, that we might be able to come in where the dear hymn writer came in. My soul looks back to see the burdens one did bear when hanging on the accursed tree and hope's her guilt was there.

My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine while like a penitent I stand and there confess my sin.

[ 30 : 46 ] In all their affliction he was afflicted. See him in Gethsemane's garden sweating, as it were, great drops of blood to the ground.

Why? Because, my dear friends, he was in the sinner's place. That was why. See what sin is. See what a vital thing it is. that even when his heavenly father saw it imputed to his beloved son, think that he should still deal with it.

Oh, what a solemn thing sin is. And then, my dear friends, think where it led him to, to calvary's cross, and there he suffered in his body the rejection of man, the scourging, the smiting, the spitting, the buffeting, the affliction.

Look at him there, my dear friend, that dejected, rejected man of sorrows. And do you know that you deserve to be there, and so do I.

That's where we deserve to be, my dear friends. It was Jesus in the sinner's place, heaven's brightest, glory, sunk in shame, that rebels might adore his name.

[ 32 : 09 ] But you see, my dear friends, his affliction, his grief, was not just that that was outward. It was comprehended in this. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Now there it was, when he drung to the very dregs of that cup, the wrath of God, the unmitigated wrath, against sin and against sinners, on him almighty vengeance fell, that must have sung a world to hell.

He bore it for a chosen race, and thus became their hiding place. This is salvation, isn't it? this is the only way in all their affliction, he was afflicted. And blessed be God's holy name, when he cried, it is finished, it meant that all those afflictions, not one of them, would now ever stand in the way of his dear people in the path of heaven.

He has conquered them all. And this is what the dear apostle said in the closing chapter verses of Romans 8, what shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[ 33 : 33 ] Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or all these afflictions, will they separate? Nay, he said, in all these things we are more than conquered through him that loved us.

He said, for I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Oh, how vital it is, my dear friends, to be brought within the compass of this precious word. In all their affliction, he was afflicted.

It does not mean you will not have the affliction, it means this though, that this dear sympathising high priest will be with you in them, and the way you take cannot be wrong if Jesus be but there.

Now notice how the prophet, as he reviews this precious God and his loving kindness, how he goes on to show how the Lord kept them in these afflictions.

[ 34 : 49 ] He speaks of the angel of his presence, saved them, the angel of his presence. This is in that mysterious way, the messenger of the covenant, the angel of the covenant, which really is in substance the dear Lord Jesus Christ.

This is what Moses desired. If thy presence go not with me, carry me like some pens. And he said, thy presence, my presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

How else could Moses have come through? You look at the affliction of that dear man, how else could he have come through? You think of the murmuring children of Israel, look at the rebellions, look at the privations, look at the hardships.

But my friends, if the Lord's presence went with Moses, certainly I will be with thee. And friends, the way you take cannot be wrong if Jesus be but there.

If God is directing you into a path, if he said this is the way, walk you in it. Now friends, be sure of this, it won't be an easy way. I'm not suggesting it will be a way without affliction, on the contrary, it will be a way with many effects.

[ 36 : 26 ] I will speak just of three of them briefly, I can only hint at them. The first is this, the presence of the Lord is a sanctifying effect, it must be so.

If we, anyone boasts to have the presence of the Lord and yet is haughty and proud and rebellious and determined to have his own way and is still worldly minded, then my dear friends, that man is utterly deceived.

But if he's humble, if he's contrite, if he's sincere, if he's dependent, if he's spiritually minded, if he seeks this grace, Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be saved.

Lord, I've got a heart that's proud to wander. Keep me, Lord, uphold me, hold me up, and I shall be saved. Ah, now then, there's the mark of the presence of the Lord.

There is one who knows what it is, for he feels the need of this gracious God. So it's a sanctifying work. It's a sanctifying presence.

[ 37 : 31 ] It will humble you. It will separate you. It will keep you when you feel as gracious it is. But then secondly, it's a justifying presence.

Not only do I mean in that precious glorious work of justification that surrounds all of God's dear people and presents them blameless and faultless before the presence of God with exceeding joy.

There is that to it, but there's something else to it. It means this, the way you take cannot be wrong if Jesus be but there. Whatever men may say about it.

If the Lord is with you then he justifies you being in that path. You may be the only one in it, but my friends, if God be with you, who can be against you?

There are some lonely paths. There are some paths to which only you and your God will walk. But my friends, if God be with you, then be sure of this, it's a justifying God that is with you.



[ 38 : 39 ] He will justify your cause. He'll bring you through. Yet he maintains the cause of the righteous, the angel of his presence.

You see, dear Moses, could look back. He didn't put himself in that path, did he? God put him in it. It was God who called him at the burning bush. It was God who said, certainly I will be with thee.

It was God who said, this is the way, walk ye in it, Moses, and it was God who went through with him in every step he took, and it was God who brought him honourably through. Now if you can look back in any path and say, yes, God put me there, then that's a justifying present.

Not that it would justify your infirmities in it, not my dear friends, an excuse for our failings in it, there'll be many sins and many falls, but the Lord has said, whom once he loves, he never leaves, but loves them to the end.

The angel of his presence saved them. And then again, as I must come to the amen soon, the angel of his presence saved them in this respect too.

[ 39 : 48 ] He upheld dear Moses, he was a strength to him. Whatever Moses needed, God provided it for him. The Israelites cry out for water.

Murmur against Moses, the Lord shows him the rock. Smite the rock, Moses, the water will gush out. Yes, the Lord will provide day by day the man of hell.

Oh, to learn that lesson while the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity, he redeemed them.

Love and pity. And you need both, don't you? We need love. Oh, my dear friends, only love and mercy can save us.

You think of it. We cannot earn it, can we? If a man should give his whole possessions, we read, for love, he'll be utterly content.

[ 40 : 50 ] Love is free. God loves because he will love. He loves because he always has love and ever will. And it's in his love he redeemed his dear people.

He said to Jeremiah, I have loved thee with an everlasting love and therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. But friends, it's love and pity.

Love and pity. The Lord knows all about you. He knows where your weaknesses are. He knows what temptations you are susceptible to. He knows your fears.

He knows those mountains. He knows what your thought in the flesh is. He knows all about you. He knows your brain. He remembereth you are but does.

Some of us approve this, you know. It's no easy thing, let me speak personally for a moment, to continue in the ministry, you know. To come up again and again and again and we feel so dry and so barren sometimes and we think how ever can anyone profit under a ministry as this.

[ 41 : 56 ] But you see the Lord's a pitiful God. And how often we have to look back and say having obtained help. Now some of you in the pew can say that, can't you?

In his pity. He's pitied your complaints. He's felt your weakness for you. And when you were just about to faint, he came and restored your soul.

It is pity. God is not a God afar off, you know. You may be one of you, you may be one of you younger ones, I know not, the Lord knows, but you may be in a path and you're greatly fearful about it.

You're fearful about what the outcome will be. Now friends, God is a pitiful God. He knows all about his people and he understands their case better than you do.

He's a God of great pity. In his pity, he redeemed them. And finally, he bared them and carried them all the days of old.

- [ 43 : 02 ] Notice the dependence of this character. That's the only way to heaven, you know, in gracious dependence. who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?
- As I came to you this evening hour, there was a word that went round and round my mind. I nearly preached from it and still it's with me.
- And it fits right in with this text. And it might be a word that is just what someone needs tonight. And it concerns those who need to be borne up and to be carried.
- And it's this, the eternal God is thy refuge. And underneath are the everlasting arms.
- And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say, destroy them. Beneath thy fainting head, thy father and thy friend.
- [ 44 : 11 ] His everlasting arms have placed to succor and defend. And child of God, you'll never fall out of those everlasting arms.
- Never. It's impossible. Sooner all nature will change than one of God's sheep fall out of those everlasting arms.
- hands. The feeblest land in Jesus' fold is blessed in Jesus there. Underneath are the everlasting arms.
- So what is going to help you through? Not your strength, is it? Not your wisdom, not your ability, not your ingenuity, that won't do. But his grace, his strength, his wisdom, his power, his might, his loving kindness.
- Oh, how strong underneath are the everlasting arms. There'll be sometimes, and I'll leave with this all, there'll be sometimes in the path that lies before you when it will be like this, when you'll feel to be sinking and to falling and be falling and falling.
- [ 45 : 29 ] And Satan will say you're going to fall to rise no more. But friends, you'll fall into those everlasting arms, and you will prove when I am weak, then am I strong.
- And friends, there's coming a time to every one of us, and we know not how soon it will be, when heart and flesh will fail, when all natural strength is going to flee away.
- die. But my dear friends, the dear people of God, when they come down to die, have everlasting arms beneath them.
- Is it Asaph, he sums it up so beautifully, my flesh and my heart failing, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- May that religion be yours and mine. Amen. Amen. God will preach here on Friday evening and next week.
- [ 46 : 54 ] Hymn 939 June 847 Jesus immutably the same Thou true and living Thine Around my all supporting stand My feeble arms I twine 939 June 847 Thou of Thou this m hall
- CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
- CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
- CHOIR SINGS All that thy pure and holy eyes must have seen roll in our poor attempts in thy name.
- Do bless us now as we part and take us to our homes in peace and in safety. But may the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God the Father and the fellowship and the communion of God the Holy Spirit rest and abide with us each both now and forevermore.
- [ 51 : 10 ] Amen. Thank you.
- Thank you.

- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [ 54 : 10 ] Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [ 56 : 40 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- [ 59 : 12 ] Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- [ 61 : 28 ] Thank you. Thank you. Resting in the Lord's help, I shall speak from words in chapter 52 in the prophecy of Isaiah.
- Chapter 52 in the prophecy of Isaiah, and verses 13 and 14. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently.
- He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.
- There can be no question that these words belong to what follows in the next chapter, and that this is really the beginning of a description that goes on into that chapter 53.
- And there is no doubt at all, from the way in which Philip spoke to the eunuch, that chapter 53 of Isaiah is speaking prophetically of Jesus Christ.
- [ 62 : 55 ] I take these verses then to be the beginning of a description of the person and work of Jesus Christ. They are very blessed and very precious words, because they are indeed God's words.
- Isaiah is speaking, but he is speaking on God's behalf, simply conveying God's message. And it is God who is saying, behold, my servant.
- God the Father from heaven is speaking of his own dear Son, and is especially speaking of his own dear Son, as he is incarnate in this life.
- These are prophetic words. It was when the Lord Jesus came into this world of sin, that he was seen as the Father's servant.
- Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighted. But these verses describe a very remarkable contrast.
- [ 64 : 07 ] He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. That's the description of one who is honoured, one who is regarded and revered and worshipped, one who is seen to be very high, very exalted and lifted up.

And yet, to the astonishment of many, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

One might almost think that the prophecy here is in a sense reversed. We know that after the suffering of crucifixion and death, the Lord, risen, then ascended into glory.

The echo of the words of the psalmist, tell us something of that glory. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in.

That was his exaltation. Godly men down through the ages of the church's history have spoken of those different stages, or phases, shall we say, in the life and existence of the Son of God.

[ 65 : 41 ] First, his eternal glory with the Father, as the eternal Son, and the second person of the glorious Trinity. And then his humiliation as he is born into this world.

And then his humiliation as he proceeds toward the cross of shame and rejection. And then his exaltation in the resurrection, and finally in the ascension.

So you see that there is a coming down, and then a rising up. And you might then look at these verses and say that verse 13 should come after verse 14.

That he was brought very low, so marred more than any man, and is for more than the sons of men, and then exalted. But you know, whilst that is true, whilst that is indeed a biblical pattern in the life and experience of our Lord Jesus Christ, I feel that these verses express something else.

The word, says John, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Then what?

[ 67 : 02 ] What did he behold? Did he see a face so marred more than any man? Yes. Did he see a form more marred than the sons of men?

Marred there means spoiled, damaged, harmed. Is that what he saw? Yes, that's what he saw. But he says, the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.

Before his resurrection, and certainly before his ascension, can't mean that. We on this earth, says John, we here on this earth, ordinary mortals, we beheld his glory.

How? By faith. And so there is an order, shall we say, a spiritual order, that even though verse 14 describes something of the awesome suffering suffering that the Lord Jesus passed through.

Verse 13 describes to us the glory which believers can't see. And they can see both. And sometimes they can see both at the same time.

[ 68 : 29 ] As the hymn writer puts it, what beauty, in grief, appears. Or we could put it in other language, more biblical, and say, what exalted glory we see in a face which is so spoiled, so harmed, and marred, more than any man.

Well, I want this evening to speak particularly from these words in verse 14. His visage was so marred, more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.

It may seem a rather strange subject to preach on the face of Jesus Christ. But that is the subject. The face of Jesus Christ.

I can quite understand why people who are true believers who love the Lord Jesus Christ have wanted to know what he looked like.

It's a very understandable desire. I can understand why people have tried to depict the face of Jesus Christ.

[ 69 : 55 ] I believe it's wrong to do so. And I shall say in a moment why. I feel it's impossible to do so. But I can understand why. Because if you really love someone, you want to see that person.

And if God has given in our hearts a true love to Jesus Christ, we want to see him. And indeed, one of the glorious prospects in front of every real believer is that when he shall appear, we shall see him as he is and we shall be like him.

So it's not wrong to want to see him. What is wrong is the attempt to portray in a purely physical way the face of Jesus Christ.

We have no photograph, we have no remaining authentic portrait of the face of Jesus Christ. And the believer does not either need one or want one.

He wants something better than that. he wants to see him face to face. It is impossible to portray the face of Jesus Christ in a natural, a physical way.

[ 71 : 32 ] of Jesus. Some speak a lot about the shroud of Turin, don't they? Which it is claimed bears some mysterious markings which are supposed to be the face of Jesus Christ.

Others think that the essence of real Christianity is to somehow have a kind of vivid imaginary picture of Jesus or even a vision of the physical appearance of Jesus.

But friends, it seems to me that these words are a very clear warning against that and tell us that it is impossible for us really either to depict or fully to imagine the face of Jesus Christ because he was so marred more than any man.

and if an artist was trying to draw the face of Jesus in his sorrow and grief and bitterness he would fail because the very limits of our imagination can only take us as far as our own experience.

man. He was so marred more than any man. There lies the impossibility you see.

[ 73 : 03 ] We cannot really indeed we cannot at all draw or depict the face of Jesus Christ in a natural way.

but what can we say about the face of Jesus Christ that is biblical and that is spiritual and that should be said?

Friends we can say I believe many things about the face of Jesus Christ. I'll try and tell you a few things tonight about the face of Jesus Christ.

And let me try and put it like this. That our faces sometimes portray some of the things that we're passing through.

You see a person's face and you can tell to some extent what that person is feeling. If you see a person's face light up with joy and pleasure you have a sense of what that person is feeling.

[ 74 : 23 ] If you see a person's face marred by tears and the lines of strain and sorrow you can sense something about what that person is passing through.

And those of you who are observant and have been in the company of people who are shall we say bereaved can see the effect of bereavement on the face of a person.

It does affect us physically not just on our faces but in every way. I watched my mother at the time my own father dying and her face changed.

I've seen people in bereavement not only become pale and haggard but bent. They seem suddenly to have aged by 10, 20, sometimes even 30 years it seems has suddenly come upon them.

It's not really so but it looks like that. But friends we are very adept at hiding what we feel.

[ 75 : 35 ] We live in England and English men are renowned for hiding what they feel. The stiff upper lip they call it don't they? Don't show your feelings.

Pretend for that's what it is very often. I know it's not always wise to show one's feelings because that could upset and distress other people unnecessarily.

There are times when we do have to control our feelings but also there is a sense in which we pretend. Now friends Jesus could not pretend.

Can't you see this? He was sinless and pretense is a kind of deception. Jesus could never pretend. And so I believe that the face of Jesus as a real human face had to portray what he was feeling because he was utterly honest and open.

There was no deception, no deliberate attempt to make people think differently of him by putting on a false appearance.

[ 76 : 56 ] Jesus did show what he felt. Take one simple instance. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus because he was showing on his face what he felt in his very heart.

He was grieved. He was deeply grieved. He showed it. And for the life of me friends I don't know why people try not to show their feelings when they stand beside the open grave.

But that by the way let me say then there are a number of things which I believe by faith we can see on the face of Jesus Christ.

We can see on his face the effect of the things that he saw. When you remember that he came pure, holy, harmless and undefiled into this world of sin and ruin.

Surely then you can understand that his face will portray the inner feeling of his heart when he observed around a fallen sinful world.

[ 78 : 34 ] You travel on the road these days and it's not long really is it before you see some awful accident your face shows it.

A feeling of consternation appears visibly on people's faces. Our friends, when Jesus was here he lived in the world he had made, a world he had made and seemed to be very good and yet on every hand he saw the evidence of a divine curse for he came into a cursed world not a world as it once was.

This he saw and this I believe showed on his face. face of Jesus Christ the depth of his real human experience.

The depth of his real human experience. You would be able to see on the face of Jesus Christ weariness. you would be able to see the effects of intense hunger and of thirst.

You would have at times been able to see the effect of deep human grief. Strong crying and tears we read of in the official to the Hebrews.

[ 80 : 23 ] They have the effect on a person's face, don't they? Strong crying and tears will show. As he wept over Jerusalem deep was his human emotion as he saw a city hastening to destruction.

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem that stoneth the prophets and killeth them that are sent unto me, how oft would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not.

And there was intense human grief at the prospect of a city doomed and the people under divine judgment.

you and I are sometimes tempted of the devil, but never to the depth and intensity that Jesus was.

When you have been tempted of the devil, doesn't it show? You may not go around saying to everybody you meet, I am being tempted of the devil, but one thing I am sure of, that if you are tempted of the devil, you won't be able to hide the effects of it.

[ 81 : 50 ] The devil's temptations are very real. They are sometimes very prolonged, and to a true believer, they are intensely painful.

he, he was tempted, tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin. In the time of his temptation, he was hungry, intensely hungry, tempted to change stones into bread.

He was assaulted in a most terrible spiritual way by the enemy. The whole of his life's work was attacked by the enemy.

He stood as it were face to face with Satan and resisted him. His relationship to his father was the object of Satan's hatred, if thou be the son of God.

friend, you cannot pass through temptation without being affected by it. His face would show surely the intensity of his grief as he is despised and rejected of men.

[ 83 : 22 ] The next chapter tells us he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His face was a sorrowful face because he was a man of sorrows.

His face portrayed grief because he was a man of grief. Have you ever been rejected? Have you ever been despised?

not only despised and rejected but despised and rejected by those who you thought better of?

it is not easy is it? I think that is one of the most painful human experiences.

I believe that that is one reason why in this sad world of grief and sorrow there are so many people whose spirit is utterly broken because husbands are rejected by wives and wives by husband and children by parents and so on.

[ 84 : 27 ] It is rejection which breaks man's spirit. which is why we have our mental hospitals overcrowded and the services that they provide stretch beyond all limits because one great reason because men and women and children are suffering rejection.

You know that a little albeit a little but you know a little of the pain of rejection. He came unto his own.

There was a greater debt you see. He knew the purpose of his own coming. He knew why he came. He knew what he came to do. He came unto his own.

He came to minister to them, to preach to them, to teach them. He came as the Messiah of Israel. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

Yes, he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we esteemed him not.

[ 85 : 55 ] Are you adding tonight, as it were, to that grief and sorrow of Jesus, despising and rejecting him in your heart? Yes, this showed on the face of Jesus Christ.

This is why his visage was so marred more than any man. There's a deep mystery in the extent to which the human mind and understanding of Jesus was enlightened by the Spirit.

There are times when Jesus speaks in ways which are truly divine, but there are times when Jesus speaks in ways which are truly human.

Speaking, for instance, of the day of his return to this world, his second coming, he says, of the day and the hour knoweth no man. No. He said he didn't himself know that.

There were things then hidden. He was content that there should be things hidden from his human understanding. There's a great mystery.

[ 87 : 15 ] And yet, friends, there were times when the Lord Jesus speaks very plainly of his knowledge, a knowledge which was far more extensive than a mere human knowledge, far more extensive than a deep human perceptiveness.

There was a divine knowledge because he was the God man, Emmanuel, God with us. Being what he was and being despised and rejected as he was, can't you see the depth, the greater depth of his own sorrow?

He knew himself to be the light of the world, the life of the world, the only saviour of sin. he is called the saviour of the world, for there is no other saviour for any sinner in the world, but when he comes into the world, he is despised and rejected of men.

His face was so marred, more than any man, man, as he draws near to the end of his life. My soul is exceeding sorrowful and very heavy.

Have you felt like that sometimes? I'm not drawing an immediate parallel here, but you know, you can tell when people are depressed, can't you?

[ 89 : 07 ] We call it depression. When there's a dark cloud comes down over people's spirits, and you can tell, you can just see it. It's so obvious.

We say to people, you look down today, or you look depressed today, you can see it. Now, friends, I'm not saying that Jesus was in that sense depressed, but what I am saying is that there was an intolerable weight that pressed down upon his spirit.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. That can't be disguised.

Jesus could not pretend. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.

That was something that could be seen. He was crowned with thorns. His visage was so mild.

[ 90 : 26 ] He was spit upon and he was beaten. His form more than the sons of men.

And there, in the midst of his greatest sorrow, his followers are far away.

There is no voice raised to declare his generation. There is no one to stand beside him and defend him against false accusation.

He has no advocate. He has no lawyer or solicitor as we might call him today. He has no advocate to speak for him. him. It is a wonderful comfort, you know, to have someone with you when you are in trouble.

It is a wonderful thing to have a close friend or relative, husband or wife, mother or father, when trouble is near.

[ 91 : 35 ] he had none. They followed a pharaoh. Judas had betrayed him. One of his close, intimate friends had betrayed him.

Another had disowned him with oaths and curses and they all forsook him and fled. His visage was so marred more than any man.

You understand why? But that was not all. The deepest pain we feel is when the deepest relationships of all are affected.

Isn't that true? When the closest, deepest, most intimate of our relationships are affected, then the pain is greatest.

And the closer the relationship, the deeper the pain. I was taken one day to see the mill and millstream where Anne Steele lost the person she was about to be married to.

[ 93 : 00 ] Yes, pain as deep as that. Friends, what was the deepest relationship of all, in all human history?

My relationship to my father was very deep, but it was a human relationship. later on it was a relationship not just human, but spiritual.

My father in the flesh was my brother in the Lord. A double relationship. But friends, even that falls short of another relationship, and that is between a divine father and his own son, his only begotten, his well beloved son.

This is the deepest, greatest of all relationships that this world has ever witnessed. Jesus and his father in heaven.

and he said, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?



[ 94 : 26 ] On the cross, why hast thou forsaken me? Don't ask me to explain. I take those words just as they appear.

This is exactly what Jesus felt and it's exactly what he meant. My God, yes, he knew he was still his God. And yet within his own being he felt forsaken of God in heaven.

Why hast thou forsaken? And friends, that was because he was bearing the sin of me.

that was because he was made sin for us who knew no sin. You see, even for believers in this world who are sensitive to sin, there is a hardening effect, isn't there, of the world in which we live and its way of life and its attitude and its word.

We become hardened to it. We hear cursing and swearing and vileness every day of our life. and we become somehow hardened to it. Almost used to it.

[ 95 : 54 ] But here is Jesus, holy, undefiled, separate from sin, being made sin, bearing the burden, numbered with the transgressors, being cast out into the place of the cross.

Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. This is where Jesus was taken. And at that very time, feeling inwardly that deep forsakenness of God, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Friends, sometimes, in the spiritual experiences of your life, you have felt, perhaps, that God had turned from you, that God was frowning upon you.

You said with the psalmist, be not silent unto me, lest if thou be silent unto me, I become like them that go down into the pit. You felt that God somehow was against you.

You became overwhelmed with a sense of your own guilt and shame. You could see your sin, you knew why God had withdrawn his blessings from you.

[ 97 : 22 ] You were like David in that psalm of penitence, take not thy Holy Spirit from me. you were saying with him, against thee the only have I sinned.

But friends, that, that is but a dim shadow of what Jesus knew and felt. The greatest depth of our own spiritual sorrow is but nothing compared to his.

that's why his visage was so marred, more than any man and his form, more than the sons of men. But friends, I can't stop there because this verse is not all that the Bible says about the face of Jesus Christ.

Christ. And I want to go on and tell you something else. That in the face of Jesus Christ, we now, by faith, can see compassion.

I like those words of the hymn, the same dear man in heaven now reigns and lives to intercede. It's the same dear man.

[ 98 : 51 ] And when he was here on earth, he had compassion on the multitude because they were a sheep having no shepherd. He had compassion on the multitude because they were hungry.

The widow of Nain was there sorrowing over the loss of her only son. He looked on her, it says, and he had compassion on her. Compassion shows.

Oh, friends, there are faces today, which are hard and unfeeling. It is a shame for Christians to have hard unfeeling faces because Jesus had a face of compassion.

And, friends, not only compassion to those he knew he had come to save, but compassion upon men as men, in their need, in their sorrow.

love. I don't believe that everyone whom Jesus helped and fed and healed was of necessity eventually converted to a living spiritual faith in Jesus Christ.

[ 99 : 59 ] Some were. but Jesus had compassion on all of them, in a deep human feeling for their misery, for their need.

do we want to be like him? Then, friends, we need a face of compassion.

We need to be able to look compassionately upon others, in all their need. Yes, in their ignorance, in their godlessness, the ignorance that blinds them.

There is need of a face of compassion, not to excuse their sin, not to condone it by any means, but to see their need.

In the face of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, Saul, the glory of God. the second epistle to the Corinthians, he saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[ 101 : 23 ] You know, some have drawn pictures of Christ with a strange light shining around his head, a strange halo, as it were, around his head, but it was never like that.

I believe only believing hearts, could see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And I believe that they could see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ when it was so marred more than any man.

The face of Jesus Christ was a face of power. You read the first chapter in the book of Revelation, Revelation, there you see that awe-inspiring description of the glory that there is in the face of Jesus Christ.

His eyes were as a flame of fire. fire. But lastly tonight, you may see in the face of Jesus Christ a rare beauty.

He is, as the psalmist says, Psalm 45, fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into his lips. That's the beauty of Christ.

[ 102 : 58 ] Fairer. Fairer than the children of men. That doesn't mean the colour of his skin or the colour of his hair. It is no physical fairness in that sense of the word, though I believe his humanity was perfect.

Though so sorely marred by man's hatred and bitterness and by the burden he had to carry, yet perfect humanity.

But there the psalmist is speaking of the fairness of his character, fairer than the children of men. And that would show in his appearance.

The attitude he showed as he went about doing good. Grace is poured into his lips and his beauty was recognised by those who heard him and said, for instance, never man spake like this man.

song of Solomon, wonderful description of the beauty and loveliness of Christ.

[ 104 : 10 ] Let's look for a moment in the song of Solomon, chapter 5. one, my beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

See, there's his fairness. He is white in his purity. He is ruddy in the intensity of his life. A ruddy countenance is a sign of health, isn't it?

Here is his purity and his health. He is the chiefest among ten thousand. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, are sweet flowers, his lips like lilies dropping, sweet smelling myrrh.

Every sentence that fell from his lips, every beautiful expression of all his teaching. His countenance is as leavening, excellent as the seed.

There is a sense of dignity, isn't there? We speak of a dignified person, a person who has what we call a presence, so that those who meet people like that instantly recognise that here is a man of character.

[ 105 : 40 ] He may not be a rich man, he may not be a great man, a prince or a queen or a king or whatever, no, but there is something that we recognise, dignified, upright.

there is a strength of character. This is what is poetically described in these words. His countenance is as leavening, there is a strength, an exaltedness in the face of Jesus Christ.

He is exalted and extolled, is very high, even in the midst of his rejection. There is a wonderful attractiveness in the way that Jesus withstood all the onslaught of his accusers.

Excellent as the cedars. Friends, this is the face of Christ, the face of beauty, the glory of the Son of Man, who is the Son of God.

I can't leave this tonight, can I, without a question. And the question really is that of the hymn, what think ye of Christ?

[ 107 : 06 ] Or the question of Scripture, what think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he? What work did he do? Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?

As Jeremiah says in Lamentation, see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord has afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

Is it nothing to you? Now, friends, this spiritual view of the face of Jesus Christ, so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.

I believe it is to be the great and grand motive of all spiritual obedience. This is what Paul means when he says, the love of Christ constrains us.

This is not some maudlin sentimentality. This is the strength of real Christianity, because the love of Christ is demanding and compelling.

[ 108 : 16 ] love of Christ is not not in the world. Surely this is so. Are we not drawn as the bride in the song pray?

Draw me. We will run after thee. Now, that's not just a mere foolish sentimentality, is it? It's an expression of discipleship and an expression of love.

The lover will follow the one she loves. So it is in real believing, Christianity, the believer loves, the believer follows, the believer obeys.

Jesus, as many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

So shall he sprinkle many nations. He will affect, he will wash away the stain of sin, he will revive and strengthen, he will sprinkle many nations.

[ 109 : 30 ] Amen.