

Isaiah

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Preacher: Rowell, Peter

[0 : 00] When Jesus shall dwell, my Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Trusting in the Lord's help, I shall speak from verses you find in Isaiah chapter 52, and the first two verses. Isaiah 52, verses 1 and 2.

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. For henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Shake thyself from the dust. Arise and sit down, O Jerusalem. Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

I admit to having fears about speaking last on an occasion like this. I've often had fears that what had been said in the earlier part of the day would leave me with nothing to say at all.

[1 : 45] Well, today I'm thankful that what was said in the earlier part of the day leads on, I feel, immediately to the subject in our text this evening.

And for that I thank God that there has been the overruling of his spirit and the guiding of his spirit to bring our dear friend Mr. Crowther to that point this afternoon.

Which leads immediately on to the subject of our text. Because I see the subject of these two verses as being the subject of liberty and the enjoyment of it.

You know that the events in Israel's history in the Old Testament are not only a record of an amazing work of God. An amazing overruling of God as the sovereign Lord in the lives of those people.

It is also, in that sense, prophetic. The history of Israel is prophetic. We were reminded of a case like Joseph. His life in that sense is a prophetic life.

[2 : 59] It's a type. It foreshadows something in the future. So the events in the nation are of that kind and character.

They foreshadow the truth and teaching of the New Testament. And the experience of Israel in the Old Testament is often a picture of the experience of God's people in a spiritual sense.

So we have really two aspects to these Old Testament scriptures, these Old Testament prophecies particularly. We have the immediate fulfillment in the life of the nation of Israel.

And that is important to notice because it is one of the proofs of the truth of Scripture that prophecy is fulfilled to the last detail. But then secondly, we have this foreshadowing of something in the future.

And I believe we have it, well we can see very clearly that we have it in this part of Isaiah's prophecy. Because as we read on into chapter 53, there is no one here this evening, surely, who would have any doubt that chapter 53 is a remarkable prophecy of the person and of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[4 : 21] Amazingly detailed it is too. Now, Isaiah had prophesied earlier in this prophecy of the judgment of God coming upon Israel, upon the people of God for their sin, for their idolatry, for their waywardness, their unbelief.

That judgment was that they would be carried away into captivity. And there in captivity for 70 years they would languish. And the godly amongst them would be greatly grieved.

These verses speak of an amazing deliverance. These verses, I believe, are to be particularly applied to that moment when the people in captivity, in bondage, were suddenly faced with the prospect of freedom.

You may just look in the prophecy of Ezra, or the book of Ezra rather, and see what is said there by Cyrus, the king of Persia, who was, by the end of the captivity, the leading chief king.

And this is what he said. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

[5 : 48] Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him. And let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.

He is the God, which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with beasts, beside the free will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

Amazing. That that Persian king should make such an edict. Amazing that the people who had been so long in captivity should be faced suddenly, unexpectedly, with the prospect of liberty.

And that sense of amazement is wonderfully expressed in Psalm 126. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.

[7 : 10] They were amazed that God had done so great a thing, that he had done it so suddenly. And even the heathen were amazed that God had done so great a work so quickly.

But when these people were faced with that amazing prospect of freedom, it seems as though part of them could hardly believe what had happened, and the other part were somewhat indifferent to it.

Even Cyrus recognised that there would be some who remained behind. There were some who had become so settled down in the place of their captivity, they had no wish to return.

But those who had, as believing and gracious people, had for so long been pleading with God for deliverance, those who had hung their harps on the willows and could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land, those people, when they were faced with this prospect, were bewildered.

They were confused. For so long they had been disconsolate and depressed at their situation. It seems as though many of them had not really believed the prophecies that had gone before, assuring them of the end, the certain end of their time of captivity.

[8 : 37] And so the Lord, again, before this event took place, long before the event took place, gives through Isaiah an encouragement, an exhortation to these people to arise and to enter into the liberty which he has given.

Awake, awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, the beautiful garments that they had taken off for sorrow, and put on instead sackcloth and ashes.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee, the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust.

Arise and sit down, O Jerusalem. Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. Now these verses tell us, I believe, something very important about captivity, about bondage, and the consequent blessing of true liberty.

And I want to use these verses this evening as words which are very applicable to a New Testament understanding of this matter of captivity and bondage followed by true liberty.

[10 : 11] For you well know that there is such a thing as gospel liberty. You know that there is a New Testament doctrine of Christian liberty. Liberty for those who for so long have been in bondage and fear and misery.

We were reminded this afternoon of Moab who didn't know anything of this experience of captivity and consequently could not have known anything of the subsequent experience of truly joyous liberty.

And if we look at these verses in a New Testament sense, it seems to me that there are two aspects of truth which we should bear in mind. There is first of all the way in which God by his Spirit quickens and convicts a sinner, brings him to feel his need, and then leads him to Jesus Christ the Saviour.

And there with repentance and faith that person comes into the experience, that personal experience of being saved by grace.

That person knows then the saving love of Jesus Christ. Now that is an experience of coming from a condition of bondage where they are held under the bondage of sin, under the direction of Satan, in love with the world, and held by its pleasures.

[11 : 46] They come from that condition of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And they are made sons of God. And they have the freedom of the family.

Now that is their privilege and their standing, that will never be taken from them. That never changes. But there are also, there is also the other aspect of this thought of captivity and liberty.

And that is that as we go on in our life as believers, there are many changes. And because we are so sinful, we can very easily sink into a wrong state, a wrong attitude, a wrong way of life.

And God deals with us in that situation and makes us feel that we have sunk again into bondage. And then we need the blessing of liberty.

I think the captivity of the children of Israel is a very vivid picture of that aspect of Christian experience. That through their sin, through their idolatry, through their ungodliness, the Lord had to deal with them.

[13 : 05] He had to chastise them. He had to change them. And it was a very painful, very long drawn out experience through which they passed before.

They eventually returned to their own land and enjoyed freedom in Jerusalem again. Well now, shall we turn to these verses in a more gospel, New Testament sense and look at them in that way.

This, then, is an exhortation to believers who have been long in a state of bondage and misery. so long that they may have despaired of ever coming out of it.

So long that they have sunk down into a kind of depressed despondency. And in that condition they have, as it were, bound themselves even lower.

Verse 2. The bands of thy neck. It's as though they've been hanging heavy weights round themselves. how often this happens.

[14 : 16] There are those here this evening who know this is true. When you sink down into this state of spiritual bondage and misery, it's so common to bind even heavier weights round the neck, to write bitter things against yourself and to conclude that here you are and here you'll stay.

And there is no hope of ever being in a better condition. I think also there is an application of this in a more general way to church life.

I think the church in this country has long been in a very sad condition really. For the most part there are exceptions but for the most part believers seem to me to be living in a very sad despondent condition.

They feel that things are not like they used to be. They remember the former days and not always wisely they say why were the former days better than these?

So there's a tendency you see to sink lower and lower and every discouragement that comes seems to be yet another evidence that it's never going to be any different, that things are just going to get worse and worse.

[15 : 43] I was listening the other day to comments about some of the effects of unemployment in our present situation in the country and the person speaking was saying that one of the consequences of youthful unemployment is that young people lose a sense of purpose in life and they just seem to spend a lot of time in bed lounging about with nothing to do and that's understandable if they have nothing to do eventually they get to the stage where they just don't want to get up and they don't want to do anything and when they're even presented with the possibility of doing something they say oh no they just don't want it their mental processes have become as it were in a rut and they can't break out of this condition they're in this rut and there they stay and it's a very dangerous situation and of course it's one of the classic symptoms of depression that people don't want to get up and face things they don't want they can't they've sunk so low in some cases they simply cannot get up and face the reality of the situation all around them and if you were to go to people like that and say well now here is a prospect for the future here is work for you to do here is something that will occupy you something that will interest you something that you can be really useful in they would turn over in their beds and say not interested it can't be for me

I don't believe that could have happened so they sink themselves down even lower now these first words then in the text are very significant awake awake there are times in a believer's life when we need to be reminded very forcibly of this important exhortation to awake we might just look and I want to vindicate what I'm saying from New Testament references if we look in Ephesians and in chapter 5 and verse 14 wherefore he said awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light let me just put it in this way in the light of what we heard this morning and this afternoon if you're not a Moabite why do you live like one and these people down in Babylonian captivity if they were not Babylonians why were they living like

Babylonians when the way to liberty was open before them and so in this verse in Ephesians awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead if you're not one of those people who are spiritually dead why are you living and behaving as though you were surely that's the meaning I remember my own father using this illustration when he was preaching from this verse once very powerfully he said you don't expect to see a living man laying asleep in a graveyard a graveyard is a place for dead people awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give the light there's the secret there is the secret of liberty and blessing of entering into the light and coming out of the darkness awake thou that sleepest now this is the voice of the

Lord this is God's voice this is the powerful word of God which comes with divine authority under the blessing of the spirit awake awake put on thy strength oh Zion there's another verse we might look at in Romans chapter 13 and verse 11 knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed Paul is not there speaking of the first experience of salvation he is speaking of the final climax and blessing of salvation when the Lord himself appears and when we shall be saved from all sin and misery and evil and all tears and sighing and sorrow now that day is nearer than when we first believed we are moving on toward that great day it's nearer so then it's no time to be asleep awake out of sleep says the apostle are you then like those people who sleep with the prospect of liberty before you are you like these poor depressed folk who had nothing to do for so long and you've concluded that you'll always be in this state and you sink down in despondency and sorrow and misery and you push away from you any suggestion by people that it could be any different we didn't believe did we in the election time we didn't believe that anyone any party any political party had an immediate answer to unemployment and so you could understand some poor young person with no prospect of a job just being rather cynical about any suggestion that their condition is going to be suddenly altered now friend spiritually we have to be very careful the things that are impossible with men in our national situation at the present would lead you to the conclusion that it can't be any different for a long time at the earliest but friends with God we don't talk about impossibilities with God all things are possible and with God the captivity of these people could be changed so suddenly so much so that they said we were like them that dream it was as though we'd been asleep and somebody had suddenly woken us up and said you're set free and in our sort of half awake state we'd said no it can't be true we've been here so long now perhaps there's someone here tonight who is saying it can't be tonight because

I've been here so long now don't you say that because God says awake awake it's real he speaks through his word it's not imagination it's not a deception he doesn't tantalise his people he says awake awake put on thy strength oh Zion put on thy beautiful garments oh Jerusalem you say well put on thy strength what does this mean put on thy strength it means get up get dressed face the possibility of the future do the things that God is commanding and encouraging you to do don't sit there any longer being so despondent about your condition because the

[23 : 58] Lord is calling you and as he calls you he gives strength with his own divine call so he says put on thy strength oh Zion put on thy beautiful garments oh Jerusalem how shall we explain then this sudden change they are to put on their beautiful garments take off and throw away the sackcloth and ashes and put on their beautiful garments Isaiah Isaiah in chapter 61 says something very significant we might look there at the beginning of chapter 61 again a clear prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus and of his work and ministry the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that abound to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God that is against his people's enemies to comfort all that mourn to appoint unto them that mourn in

Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they might be called trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness now friends that is what the Lord is calling his people to do to put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness when did you last praise God I know there's a lot of foolish talk about nowadays a sort of foolish talk about spiritual things which betrays its emptiness I had a book at home given to me it was called power through praise and it seemed to me it was just like a psychological trick you said praise words and felt better now friends

I'm not preaching that tonight I'm not saying you go through some rigmarole of words which sound like praise and then feel a lot better but what I am saying is that God by his spirit speaks very forcefully about about this matter of praise and he says that Jesus has appointed to them that mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness now if he gives you the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness you are to put on the beautiful garment of praise this is one of those gospel commands isn't it it's not this isn't one of those optional things this is a gospel command and I believe in gospel commands it's not legal duty the

Lord is encouraging his people to go into the full enjoyment of the liberty which is in him so he has given the garment of praise have you anything to praise him for one of the sad things about despondency and depression is that you lose all sense of thankfulness and praise because the scene is so dull it just looks as though there's no hope now the Lord is saying it's not like that it seems like that to you but it isn't really like that your eyes have been darkened by circumstances your spirit has been pressed down by previous experience of sorrow and misery your spirit may be bowed down under a sense of your former sin you say well I'm here in bondage because I deserve to be this is part of the divine chastisement friends that may all be true but the Lord comes in the midst of that dark situation and he says put on my beautiful garments there are other ways in which we could think of these beautiful garments again going into the new testament we look in Ephesians again in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 22 the apostle exhorts the believers at Ephesus to put off the old man put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness put off the old man if you feel that your present bondage is a result of your former sin well then what does the Lord say put off that sin the sin that brought you into bondage and I'll tell you one thing I'm sure about that when you've been made to feel what bondage is really light you're only too glad to turn away from your sin when the rebuking chastising hand of God has come down upon you you won't be clinging to your sin put off then the old man the old ways of life the old ways of sin put it off and put on the new man the new man of righteousness the the new man of holiness of purity the new man of gospel obedience this is the new life put on the new man which after

God is created in righteousness and true holiness wherefore putting away lying and so on and the apostle goes on to speak these practical words about the new kind of life that is to be lived well now if what I've said this evening brings you a conviction if what was said this morning and this afternoon brings you to a conviction that that your present condition is the result of your past sin well then these are words very suited to you put off these old things which are dark and sinful and put on the new man which is pure and holy put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness but I feel that there's no more precious expression regarding this garment this beautiful garment than you find in Romans chapter 13 chapter 13 verse 13 the apostle says let us walk honestly as in the day not in rioting and drunkenness not in chambering and wantonness not in strife and envying but put ye on the Lord

[32 : 00] Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof had some of those Jews down in captivity become so despondent that even their captors didn't know who they belonged to didn't know that they were Jews didn't know what city they'd come from didn't know what their real national identity was I guess that that was what had happened in some cases the people had become so mingled with the life of that nation well now there is a gospel word surely of great significance if your life has been indistinguishable from the life of the world then the way to enjoy the fullness of Christian and gospel liberty is to be different is to be separate to walk honestly to come out of the darkness into the daylight not to be in rioting and drunkenness and chambering and wantonness and strife and envy but then he comes to this beautiful expression put ye on the lord Jesus Christ he doesn't say only put on the new man he says even more he says put on the lord Jesus Christ be what he has made you isn't that what he's saying be what he has made you he has made you Christ's men he has made you true Christians then be what he has made you put on the lord Jesus Christ this is the garment of Christian profession not just with words in the mouth but with a whole way of life and the testimony of the mouth by a wholehearted sincere obedience put ye on with a living faith in your heart and a spiritual love in your soul put ye on the lord Jesus Christ no more ashamed of Jesus that dear friend on whom your hopes of heaven depend no more that cowardly shrinking away from the gaze of an opposing world but bold in your testimony to him as your lord and your God yes the journey that was set before these people in bondage down in Babylon was a long difficult dangerous journey but they were to go and go they did through all the difficulties that lay in the way until they reached the land of their forefathers the land of promise the land of covenant promise and there they entered into the holy city put on thy beautiful garments so if you have become dark in your spirit despondent in your mind these words are graciously encouraging words to put on the lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill it in the lust thereof put on thy beautiful garments so Jerusalem

the holy city for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean now this I take to be in its prophetic sense a word to the church a word to the church of Christ because now the whole of Zion collectively is being referred to as they each of them separately put on their beautiful garments and they enter into the holy city of Jerusalem then they're going to live together as a community within that holy city Jerusalem and the Lord's promise is that never again will come these alien armies these uncircumcised heathen to attack and to enter into the city it's a promise of safety and security for the future it's a promise of the separateness and the security of the church of Jesus Christ what a gracious word this is you know one of the sorrows of the church in some parts has been that those have come into the church who are described like this the uncircumcised and the unclean it happened not just recently it happened in the days of the apostles sadly you'll find it may seem small comfort to those who are passing through this sad experience but you will find that the apostle as he writes his epistles very frequently has to deal with this problem that into the infant church had come the uncircumcised that is the spiritually uncircumcised the knife of God's truth had never really cut away the the foreskin of their hearts they had an appearance of attachment to Jesus Christ they had a semblance of belief in the truth they seemed to enter into some of the spiritual experiences of the gospel but they were still at heart uncircumcised the convicting knife of God's truth had never really penetrated their hearts the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow and it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart and that had never happened to them they'd never been as it were laid bare before God but they found their way into the professing church of Jesus Christ they were unclean they had never been inwardly cleansed from their filthiness oh you see you can wash a sow from the mud and filth but it will return back to it again you can pull a dog away from its vomit but it'll go back to it again they're dreadful expressions aren't they but you know friends that is an a description of people who for a while seem to be reformed by the influence of Christianity but whose hearts have never been changed by the Holy Spirit's work within from for henceforth there shall no more come

into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean we need to pray to god that he will mercifully keep his church that he will mercifully give to his church and the leaders of his church that necessary spirit of grace and discernment to keep his church pure to keep his church from the most dangerous of all attacks the attack that comes from within shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down oh jerusalem shake thyself from the dust the dust surely in this verse refers to the dust and ashes which they sprinkled on their heads and bodies when they were mourning they had reason to be sorrowful you may say tonight well i have reason to be sorrowful and the lord says well shake yourself then from the dust you can imagine it can't you if they sprinkled dust and ashes all over themselves and the sackcloth had been there holding the dust as it would do when the change came and they were suddenly made joyful they had to throw away the sackcloth and then they had to knock all the ashes off had to make themselves clean again now these words are encouraging words to to shake off all the sackcloth and ashes of misery and sorrow shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down how can we do that well it seems to me friends we may do that in a spirit i'm talking now about spiritual activity i'm not talking about carnal activity we may do that in a spiritual way as we give careful attention to three things first in john chapter 8 verse 32 the lord says ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free shake thyself from the dust turn again to the truth it is the truth that sets people at spiritual liberty it is the truth concerning our lord jesus christ that sets people at spiritual liberty read the epistle to the galatians there were people who had been set free under the preaching of the gospel the truth had come into their lives in a most gracious powerful way and then along came false teachers and said no salvation is not by christ alone it's by christ and works it's by christ and law keeping it's by christ and law keeping it's by christ and all these other this rigmarole of duties it is not christ alone this is what they were saying and paul was so distressed because the galatians were drifting back into the old legality from which they had been so wonderfully delivered maybe you're like that tonight you're drifting back into the old legality i'll tell you when you're in a time of spiritual bondage and depression legality is a terrible thing legality is a terrible thing legality is a most painful terrible thing that you have to experience you become obsessed with all the things you haven't done and all the things you should have done

and you feel that god will never be merciful to you until you've done all these things and you've forgotten the gospel that says that god both first and last forgives graciously and freely and does not demand any payment for his merciful blessings now the galatians were drifting back into this old legalistic bondage from which the gospel of jesus christ had wonderfully delivered them now what did paul do he very strongly emphasized the truth he told them that those who believe are justified and that their justification is upon the grounds of the merit and work of jesus alone their justification is not as a result of any works that they do and friends we need surely to be reminded of the truth that god receives us for jesus sake that god accepts us freely and lovingly for his dear son's sake and not on upon the ground of anything that we have done or may yet do not our legal duties not our religious efforts not our tears our sighs our reading of the word our attending upon uh the preaching of the word our church membership not upon the ground of any of those things they have their place they have their important place i've spoken about some of them already but we need to go back to this fundamental truth when the old tentacles of legalism get hold of legalism get hold of our spirits we need to go back to the truth tells us we are free and we are free through christ and john chapter 8 verse 36 carries on this same theme if the son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed now friends it's that truth that precious truth which is so vital when in despondency and darkness and bondage you sink lower and lower the truth as it is in jesus christ the truth of his holy and blessed life the truth of that vicarious life and that vicarious death and by vicarious i mean lived on behalf of the of others and died on behalf of the of others it is this precious truth then of what the lord so willingly did what he so gladly did and yet the truth of what cost him so much to do oh it is this truth we need to go back to again and we need to have our spiritual eyes focused again as it were upon the finished work of jesus and you will see then that there is no condemnation to them that are in christ jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit which leads me on immediately to a third thing in regard to this gospel liberty and you will find this in chapter 3 of the second epistle to the corinthians verse 17 now the lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the lord is there is liberty three things

truth makes free makes free christ the son makes free and the holy spirit of god makes free the people of god now the lord is that spirit and where the spirit of the lord is there is liberty are you in bondage and pray god to pour upon you his holy spirit are you in misery and depression then pray god to fill you with his holy spirit because where the spirit of the lord is there is liberty are you in trouble in your church life through bondage and legalism then pray that your church life may be bathed in the power and blessing of the holy spirit for there is liberty shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down that means get up and go into the place of freedom and there sit down freely when the lord blesses his people when the lord jesus the great shepherd blesses his people they go in and out and find pasture they rise up they sit down they are free as members of a family my own children they come in from school they sit down at the table they eat they don't ask me if they can sit down they sit down because they know the table is spread for them they don't ask me if they can eat they give thanks and they eat because they know that it's been provided for them now friends the liberty of the sons of god is like that liberty it's it's not that we are being presumptuous it's not that we are taking false liberties with the lord it is that the lord has said he has made this provision for his people eat and drink yea drink abundantly oh beloved the provision is made shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down oh Jerusalem loose thyself from the bands of thy neck oh captive daughter of Zion you know the devil is very active in times of despondency and depression and bondage and he will be encouraging you to put even greater heavier chains around your neck he will be encouraging you in the most dark and desponding thoughts he will even encourage you to have wrong thoughts of god to think that somehow god is not as gracious as you thought he would be oh says the word loose thyself from the bands of thy neck resist the devil and he will flee from you your eye fixed upon Jesus the great liberator the one who comes to bring this holy liberty let's go back again to this lovely verse in chapter 61 of Isaiah the lord god the spirit of the lord god is upon me because the lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the me he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and if he does it if the spirit of the lord god was upon the very son of god and he preached like this and he proclaims this liberty to the captives well then you can understand the force

[52 : 14] of this exhortation loose thyself from the bands of thy neck oh captive daughter of Zion are you afraid afraid that he has cut you off oh I know what that feels like afraid that there is no mercy for you perhaps you're afraid that because you have made a Christian profession for so long you have been accepted as a believer or a church member or a preacher even or a pastor for so long and yet secretly in your heart you have sinned so grievously you fear that god is not any longer merciful to you this is part of the the bondage these are the bands of thy neck and what do you need then why you need to be reminded that god is true to his own word he that has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of jesus christ god doesn't go back upon his word the promises of god are yea and amen in christ jesus he has come to proclaim the acceptable year of the lord to comfort all that mourn to appoint unto them that mourn in zion to give them beauty for ashes one of the blessings of true liberty is that the people are reestablished in jerusalem and there is a gathering again to the holy city one of the blessings of gospel liberty is that there is a gathering to the gospel church there is something attractive to a spiritually awakened person when that person senses spiritual liberty and there is equally something repulsive to those who are spiritually sensitive when they see bondage and captivity so friends there is something attractive in the life of any church where there is this holy liberty there is something that draws others to the enjoyment of that liberty because they say well now the spirit of the lord is there the spirit of the living god is with these people these people know the lord these people love the lord these people are blessed by god there is something that draws me to them shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down oh jerusalem loose thyself from the bands of thy neck oh captive daughter of zion just one final word if i may i know the time has almost gone one of the saddest delusions these days in the professing church is that liberty means license that liberty sets people free to indulge in all manner of wild extravagances that liberty has got to be expressed by wild physical activity and excitement and great emotional events and so on and that this kind of so called liberty is consistent with a life indistinguishable from the life of the unregenerate now far be from me to preach bondage but friends i do preach

conversion i do preach the work of the spirit of god i would preach as god may help me a change in people's lives when the holy spirit works within and i believe that change brings people down as we were reminded this morning down into humility down into tenderness and sensitive of heart sensitivity of heart and conscience before god it doesn't lead to this free for all that people seem to equate with liberty these days i can understand people accusing those who preach the doctrine of new testament christian liberty with being mistaken they accused paul of the same thing they said to paul let us sin that grace may abound if that's what you're really saying that we are freely forgiven that all our sins are forgiven for jesus sake alone without any reference to our works whatever well then let us sin the more sin we sin the more we have forgiven the more it will redound to the grace of god and what is paul's answer to that i'll tell you one thing paul doesn't do he does not go back upon his doctrine of christian liberty he doesn't say very well i've made a mistake and perhaps i ought to have said you must keep this this and this part of the law and then believe on the lord jesus christ he did not say that but he did say to these people who said let us sin that grace may abound he did say god forbid god forbid that is no part of his teaching and friends true christian liberty never led a man to sin if the son has made you free you shall be free from the bondage of sin as well sin shall not rule over you you'll not be in that kind of captivity sin shall no more have dominion over you so if any would misrepresent the preaching of the doctrine of christian liberty let them remember that the apostle says there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in christ jesus but he didn't stop there because he knew there was something else who walked not after the flesh but after the spirit and where the spirit of the lord is you see there is liberty and you i can't i haven't timed that i'm i'm beaten by the time this evening but you look at the new testament passages that deal with christian liberty in galatians in romans in colossians and you will see that immediately following this very clear declaration of the doctrine of christian liberty there is a long passage on the things which the believer will shun because he's free the evils which the believer will turn from because the lord has set him free to be a servant of god a disciple of jesus christ awake awake awake put on thy strength o zion put on thy beautiful garments o jerusalem the holy city for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean shake thyself from the dust arise and sit down o jerusalem loose thyself from the bands of thy neck o captive daughter of zion shall we pray o lord we plead with thee this evening that if there

is anyone here in bondage in misery in despondency of heart thy gracious spirit may come now and set them free we plead with thee o lord to bring them out into the glorious light of thy gospel and of thy love and to know that the son has made them free and that they are free indeed we pray for jesus sake amen we would extend the welcome to our friends as was this morning to all who have gathered during the day and would express that gratitude in the doxology that we will sing after the closing benediction may i give you a date to remember if god willing we hope to hold our annual thanksgiving service this year and join with it a recognition services of the lord's goodness in sending mr.

rowell to us as a pastor that is on saturday october the 15th in the afternoon and evening let us conclude by singing hymn 989 this hymn has been chosen by mr.

rowell the lord enable us to sing it spiritually and with blessing ye captive souls in fetters bound who feel your misery the way to liberty is found the sun shall make you free hear the redeemer's gracious call poor captives come to me into my arms for freedom fall come and i'll make you free you so you i'm really glad you did.

[63 : 16] I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

[64 : 46] I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did. I'm really glad you did.

I'm really glad you did. Dear Lord, we pray now that we may go under the blessing and influence of thy Spirit.

[65 : 54] We pray that those who journey may journey safely, but may journey in the convoy of thy love.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the communion of God the Holy Spirit our Comforter be with us always.

Amen. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heaven.