

Isaiah

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 February 1976

Preacher: Elsom, Thomas Cousins (1910-1988)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord may be pleased to help me, I will direct your attention to Isaiah 38, verse 16.
O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.
So will thou recover me, and make me to live. The 16th verse, the 38th of Isaiah. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit.
So will thou recover me, and make me to live. It is only a work of grace, my friends, that brings man into such a place as this.
And to acknowledge before a holy God, that the pathway he walks in is of the will of God.
- [1 : 35] And he is prepared to fall into his hands, to accept the way, and endeavor to understand that the outcome of it all will be for his good, and for the glory of his God.
Man can't come into this place of himself, for man is utterly ruined through sin.
Being in such a condition naturally, rather than coming to a place of acceptance of the way, when that way is a rugged way, brings rebellion, not submission.
This character then is one loved of God, and precious in Christ. How can we arrive at such a conclusion and so quickly?
Because, my friends, an acknowledgement that God's way is right, can only come by his work in man's heart.
- [3 : 04] And he doesn't work in those he doesn't love. For those he loves, he makes a change.
He doesn't let them continue in that way of ruin. For there is an eternal purpose in his heart, God's heart. And that purpose is to bring all those whom he loved before time began, into conformity with Christ, his own dear Son.
And they can never come that way, remaining as they are born. In sin, shapen in iniquity.
It's a work of grace then, that brings this character into this condition. The condition of our text. Do you know anything of it, friends?
For it will do us no good at all to look at these things in the word of God, and to look at them at a distance.
- [4 : 18] It's no good understanding these things in the abstract. That is, to have no interest in them. There must be, if we are ever to enter into that place, where peace remains eternally heaven.
We must know something experimentally of these things in the time state. What is your pathway, sinner?
For the children of God are no different to anyone else in the world, in themselves. They'll have a pathway, and that pathway will have trouble in it, as all men have trouble, and the reason will be always the same.
Sin is the bottom of it. But the pathway of a child of God knows what it is, knows in that pathway what it is to have sanctification.

Trouble sanctified. The child of God knows what it is to have the living God condescend and look down upon him in his trouble.

[5 : 44] The child of God knows what it is to realize a little of the compassions of a precious Christ. How do we connect these things up with ourselves?

This is the great matter, friends. Well, for a moment or two, let's look at the pathway of Hezekiah. For he is the one who used this language.

And Hezekiah, king as he was, He had many opportunities, no doubt, to satisfy his flesh.

No doubt he was comfortable in many ways in life. But the Lord God had a purpose toward Hezekiah, not just to leave him in that condition of authority, power, and probably a great measure of self-satisfaction.

The Lord God brought trouble into Hezekiah's life. It didn't come by chance. The Lord permitted another king to rise up against him.

[7 : 09] And that king was a mighty king. He was able to speak, this king, and tell Hezekiah the great things he'd done, how he'd destroyed other nations.

He was able to sneer at them too. For he said they'd relied upon their gods, but they'd proved to be helpless.

He'd had his way. He'd overcome them. And he was going to do the same with Hezekiah, unless he bowed down to him. But Hezekiah was loved of God.

And the Lord worked in his heart and caused him to cry unto him in his time of trouble. But the Lord so frequently lays trouble upon his people, not just once or twice, many times, and sometimes He permits these troubles to be great troubles and to come together.

And so as he saw fit to permit this king, Sennacherib, to attack Hezekiah, bring him into this place of fear, so he laid upon him affliction of body.

[8 : 43] And then he sent his servant, the prophet, to tell him to set his house in order because he was going to die. Hezekiah was brought then into a state of great need.

But he had a good God. Have you got one? This God. For the Lord gave him heartfelt prayer.

How few have got that, friends. Have you? Many pray. Many pray.

By word of mouth. With a knowledge of this God only in their heads. Many pray.

Many pray. Out of religious flesh. The devil may well say, Oh, well, they get answers too.

[9 : 48] But, my friends, they get answers because the Lord must honor his own word. And the Lord hath said, They that honor me, I will honor.

And when a man honors him naturally in this way, believes him to be a God who's able to do things for them in this life, oft times there are answers to those petitions.

The Lord honors his own word. But there was more in Hezekiah's case. The Lord had set the desire in his heart.

And he was able to take hold of this God as his God. For at the very onset, he says to him, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart and have done that which is good in thy sight.

There's a difference here, friend. Do you know anything of this pathway? I not only have a need of this God in that there are those things in your life which you can't manage yourself, but you're able to speak to him at times and tell him you love him.

[11 : 18] Here's the matter, the great matter, friends. Hezekiah was able to tell his God he loved the way it was necessary to walk to please him.

The Lord heard his prayer not because of that. The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer because he belonged to him. The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer because Christ had died for him.

How do we confirm that? Toward the end of this chapter we find the answer to it, friends.

Hezekiah was able to say having been brought through his great trial thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy bank.

What a case we have here. The pathway of Hezekiah then, it's a strange pathway to nature, but it's an illustration of the pathway of a child of God.

[12 : 43] What's yours like? Hezekiah brought into this place a deep trial pleaded with the Lord.

There was to be an end to that. His trial was to be overcome. There was to be an end to it. By the almighty power of God none else could have done it.

But there was also to be teaching in it for Hezekiah. He was to be brought into a place that he could never arrive at naturally.

gracious submission. And he was to glorify his God. What's your pathway like, sinner?

A trial? A big trial, perhaps? Something peculiar to yourself? Didn't come by chance.

[13 : 50] But do you walk Hezekiah's way in it? Do you pray? Hezekiah pleaded with the Lord.

But there was something else in his experience. And oh, it is worth looking at, friends. There was a rebellious spirit with Hezekiah.

You got that? Hezekiah didn't lie down under this immediately. He didn't say right away, Oh Lord, by these things men live.

No. Hezekiah came to a conclusion that was altogether wrong. He decided the Lord was going to cut him off. He decided that he wouldn't see anyone in the land much longer.

He wouldn't see the Lord. Even the Lord in the land of the living. I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Perhaps you've got a case something like this.

[15 : 08] How quickly we conclude all these things are against us. Even when we pray.

Tell the Lord about it and then come away. The case is still the same apparently. And we begin to get worked up inside.

The hand of the Lord is against me. But Hezekiah came to a different conclusion under the teaching of his God.

Oh, it's a good pathway, friends. If this God Hezekiah's God is your God your pathway will be much the same as this.

There'll be trials there'll be wretched self rise up in those trials too. You may well write bitter things against yourself in it.

[16 : 12] The devil won't give you any peace. Oh, what a mercy if this God is your God the outcome will be the same as Hezekiah's.

For the Lord brought him into a place of real humility. Humility. You've got to come there, sinner. Perhaps you have tonight.

Perhaps there's someone here in this particular path. All these things are against me. Tell the Lord about it but there isn't humility in it.

There isn't submission in it. Grace isn't in evidence. Rather in heart it is why should these things be like this?

Why should I have to come this way? It may even be I've walked in the ways of the Lord. I've sought to do those things that are right but a rebellious spirit finds alliance with that great enemy Satan.

[17 : 35] He hates your God and he's ever ready to tell you the Lord is against you. You shouldn't be in this way.

You've done your best. It's all gone wrong. What a mercy this God loves with an everlasting love.

But my friends I feel we've perhaps jumped ahead too quickly. Hezekiah was a child of God. Are you?

Yes, the great matter isn't it? You may have something of his way, a trial in your path, but all men have trials.

We've already said this. you might have a heavy trial. You may well be too, one who prays.

[18 : 35] Why you've sat in the house of God for many a long day, you've mixed with the people of God. You can learn to pray, friends.

You can imbibe these things in your head. you can have lost the way. How close he'd come.

The character who will walk in the experience of our text, he's taught of God. How do you come into a knowledge of it then?

How can you be sure you are amongst this people? you'll know something of sin. Do you?

Know what it is to confess your sin? You'll know something of the difference between those two who went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a Republican.

[19 : 47] And my friends, often have I thought about this. If the Lord's taught you, you won't jump quickly to it and say, ah, I'm the Republican.

You know what it is to have a little of the Pharisee spirit in you. But here's the difference.

The Pharisee told the Lord all the good things he'd done. The poor publican beat upon his breast and confessed his sin.

And if you're found in his place, there'll be a pharisaical spirit to confess from time to time. But it'll be in truth.

It won't be with joy, it'll be with grief. and it'll be seeking mercy, not credit like the Pharisee sought. And my friends, if the Lord hath brought you into this place, he's not a changeable God.

[21 : 04] If he brought you into a knowledge of sin, it was because he loves you. and in that love to you, he'll bring you into this pathway of real confession.

He'll break your heart at times over your sin. He'll give you eyes to see what took place because of your sin.

He'll give you here and there a sight of Jesus, a suffering saviour. Many know this story.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Many speak of his life and death in a religious way.

But the child of God in secret from time to time will grieve over the sufferings of his dear Redeemer.

[22 : 09] Do you? These are real things, friends, and is the character in our text. It's one whom the Lord foreknew her time began, a sinner to be saved by grace, to be manifested in time as a chosen vessel of mercy, born the same as all men in sin, shapen in iniquity, with those desires that were alien to the ways of God, but in the time state quickened by the blessed spirit, taught to pray, led to the mercy seat, eyes to see a precious Christ, his atoning blood, the only way of salvation, and to cry again and again and again, say it unto my poor soul, Lord, thou art all my salvation.

You come this way, for here's the character, and this character, friends, will have a case throughout his life.

You won't settle down for long in peace, for here we have no continuing city. Everything here is polluted.

The Lord then permits something to come in your way. But he'll bring you just the same pathway as Hezekiah.

You'll have to lay your case before Him. And it may well be in the same spirit as He was at one time. Why should it be like this?

[24 : 10] All these things are against me. But the Lord will cause your trial to be to His glory.

And there'll be that teaching which He hath determined shall take place. He'll bring you ultimately to that place of real humility.

Oh Lord, I am oppressed. Bow down with sin, wretched and undone, undertake, ache, or I perish.

Have you been there? You may not be there tonight. Have you been there? Oh, it is so wonderful to me, friends, for I know this to be true.

When the Lord puts His hand to the work of grace in a sinner, He never leaves him. the changes will be in you, never in Him.

[25 : 22] His eye is upon the righteous and that means all time. You've got a case tonight, a difficult case, something perhaps that continues with you day after day, something you may have to carry to your grave.

but the mercy seat will ever be the same. Jesus waits to be gracious.

What is it then? The outcome to be? An acknowledgement first, as Hezekiah did, like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter.

Wretched self, wretched self, all that I had not of myself, one said. The outcome, He brings this character to His dear feet, a loving Jesus.

What is it? Fear not, little flock, tis your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[26 : 43] This is His language. Your way hasn't come by chance, I have permitted it. Tis for your good, I will bless you.

God So with Hezekiah he destroyed his enemy, that wicked king, first of all he destroyed his army, the angel of death, destroyed them all in one night, the whole army.

Then the angel of the lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 104 scorn 5000. Is there any other god like this god?

Could there be any man avenge thee in such a way as theirs? So quickly. Don't have to put your hand to it, Hezekiah didn't.

Twass to lay his case before the lord. vengeance is mine saith the lord. No solemn to fall into the hands of the living god as an oppressor of his people.

[28 : 07] In Hezekiah's case he had that physical trouble. The lord told him he would extend his life by fifteen years.

who is a god like unto this god? Why shouldn't he deal with your case just the same? Is it the same rebuke needed as Jesus gave to his disciples in the days of his flesh?

Oh ye of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt? he's the same god. He brought Hezekiah to this place.

Oh lord by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit. Can you keep your soul alive sinner?

you in whom the lord has worked this great and mighty god who condescended to touch you in heart give you to know what you are in his sight and accepted you as you pleaded with him for mercy.

[29 : 32] This wonder working god uses your pathway your particular pathway to bring you into conformity with christ.

It is to bring you to that place from time to time father thy will be done got to come there sinner you've got to come to that place to accept whatever he lays upon you to know yes tis to know shall not the judge of all the earth do right but when we bring it home close to ourselves do I deserve anything different to what I pass through what a good

God yes in the midst of trouble he'll bring you there no matter how deep the trouble he gives you to see your wretchedness how you deserve to sink into hell and then a sight of his wondrous work that he sent his own dear son into this low world to seek and to save those that were lost even you oh what a change by these things men live doesn't it bring you to that place to see it has been good that I have been afflicted before I was afflicted I went astray the psalmist said this it's your experience isn't it it's only these things that keep your soul alive truly it is only these difficulties these trials these fears that rise up that drive you to

Christ where would you go if you hadn't gotten rest in yourself find your comfort your satisfaction in the world is it not true has it never been with you I'm going to turn back who keeps you in safety a kind and gracious God by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit world but everlasting life hereafter in

Christ for here Hezekiah brought through this deep trial and brought into this gracious place of submission and acknowledgement of the mercy of his God he says behold for peace I had great bitterness for as it says in the margin on my peace came great bitterness it was the trial he was in passing through a quiet way but then this trial came along and brought him into a sense of great bitterness inclination but he now says but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back isn't it worthy isn't it something that you've been seeking something that you continually seek to know a precious Christ hath put your sins behind his back forever been washed in his precious blood your sins taken away into the wilderness never to be seen again to consign you to eternal death how do we arrive at this wondrous conclusion it is my friends that if the Lord condescends to look upon a rebellious wretch and bring him into a place of gracious submission to his will it can be none other than that a precious Christ hath made and does make intercession for him for this God with whom we have to do hates sin he hates sin to such an extent that countless numbers they shall go to hell this great and mighty God in that glorious triumph three persons in one God in an eternal day gone by decreed a people should be loved with an everlasting love found complete in Christ though foreknown as with the mass of humanity utterly ruined in their own sins of this glorious Jehovah a sore way of salvation that would satisfy his holiness and that way was in the deep sorrows agonies an ignominious death of his own dear son in a manhood not defiled with sin a holy manhood but the sin of this people imputed to him to be born away because of that full satisfaction given in himself enduring the curse this great almighty God he sees you as a sinner but he sees you in Christ hence there is this gracious work done to bring you into this place

[37 : 28] of submission to his holy will does he describe your case sinner you've been in this place an acknowledgement by these things man led has he brought you into this understanding that your pathway though it be difficult and perhaps at times bitter yet all these things are indeed the life of your spirit because they bring you into closer communion with him it brings you into the place of prayer see the difference then that he hath put between you and the Egyptian between you and the world which is God's own work not man's work for with the world these things harden them embitter them drive them off times to their place of black despair but in your own experience you have proved it's brought you to your God

Lord help me undertake for me have mercy upon me and he's blessed you dare you say he hasn't there have been times of deliverance there's been an upholding when at the ends of the earth there has been this acknowledgement in your heart by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit now friends the pathway continues the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked there is the experience as the poet expresses my soul through many changes goes there is again and again the attacks of the adversary and he has much to play on there's weakness in you because of sin come into dark places again there'll rise up from time to time doubts and fears the question may rise in your heart how shall I stand in the swellings of Jordan but if the Lord has brought you into the first part of our text friends there isn't any doubt of the second part so wilt thou recover me and make me to live the recovery is in Christ it is in the fulfillment manifestly in the time state in that you'll know the experience of it the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin the fountain open for sin and uncleanness ever is there he'll recover you from your sin he'll make known from time to time a precious Jesus standing in the breach that dear man who stands in garments tied with his own blood still the same precious man wounded hands and feet and ribbon sighed he who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God there to make intercession for his people make it to live in Christ forever oh it's to be a blessed end friends we're near the end of our time but something very wonderful happened to me and I came into this chapel tonight friends

I had a text or thought I had earlier on in the day but certain things took place this afternoon that filled my poor mind and tossed me about so much I didn't know what it was I came into the vestry tonight with this text on my mind but I was tossed about all day but I believe the Lord led me to our chapter for the character who comes in this pathway experimentally Lord by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit so will thou recover me and make me to live must and will again and again enter into the language of the psalmist bless the Lord oh my soul and all that is within me bless his holy name there's every reason for it friends for while all men are subject to trouble difficulties fears deaths often there are but a few and tis that blessed remnant loved in

God and precious who will endure to the end who have a kind and gracious God whose eye is upon them who sets forth that his people are as the apple of his eye and those that touch them touch him it is so with your trial poor sinner it isn't only man you know that great trial you may be passing through when the enemy roars and says where is now thy God when he laughs saying aha aha putting those his agents in that way to attack you your God looks on he will deal with that great adversary even as he is able to deal with men oh poor sinner thou hast a

God who is able to uphold thee through all the circumstances of this life and he cares for thee with a love that passeth all human understanding for thou art bought with a price so well might thou say bless the Lord oh my soul and forget not all his benefits for the psalmist goes on to say he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities can't you say that as far as the east is from the west so far have he removed our transgressions from us the character who walks in the experience of our text then again and again will say bless the

[45 : 50] Lord oh my soul until you arrive at that place which will be blessing forever it is one day to enter into that place prepared for the living family of God an inheritance incorruptible undefiled that fadeth not away prepared in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time oh the certainty of these things kept by the power of God and ready to be revealed Jesus said I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there ye may be also it's going to be well poor sinner but it's now isn't it it's with me now the trial but my friends the eye of the

Lord is upon the righteous and his ear is open unto the cry so he gave her a point to say cast he says on me thy care tis enough that I am nigh I will all thy burdens bear I will all thy needs supply what is it poor sinner I can bear temporal trials but oh tis that deep sin that is within my heart how shall I continue under this often tis the way you can't help yourself can you if you could poor sinner you wouldn't need Jesus would you the apostle said it is a faithful saying worthy of all except

Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief your burden is so great got within me a wicked heart I can't get above it so weak the enemy so powerful again and again the fall the Lord says cast thy burden upon the Lord he shall sustain thee he will never suffer the righteous to be moved bless blessing for it friends because I interpret it from time to time he'll never suffer the righteous to be moved away from their hope what is it my hope is built on nothing less than

Jesus blood and righteousness can't you say it he'll keep you poor sinner in safety until he takes you home to glory you'll never be any better here in yourself but the Lord knows that and that's your mercy and mine he didn't choose his people because they'd be greater than another he didn't choose the individual because that one would be better as time went on he chose his people because he loved them and you'll never be able to understand that but it doesn't really matter does it the great thing that does matter is having loved his own that were in the world he loved them unto the end oh

Lord by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit can you say it tonight is this God your God do these things make you pray and is there an outcome to desire do you find the blessing and then do you bless him it's all his own work and there isn't any doubt now so will he recover you and make you to live forever in Christ you you know again my friends it opens up the truth of his word ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you and it is because of that you can't help yourself but he will make you to live for his choice must live forever and glorify his own dear son the whole object of your salvation that throughout the rolling ages of eternity to come you will crown him a precious

[52 : 02] Christ Lord of all Lord have his blessing thanks for having thanks amen