

Isaiah

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Isaiah, chapter 45, and the second verse.

I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron.

Chapter 45, the book of Isaiah, and the second verse.

This is a wonderful word for poor sinners to get a living interest therein.

And every sinner who has the mercy to be born again has such an interest therein.

[1 : 21] Not that you always feel it, but there is one way in which it can be made plain to you that you have an interest therein, if you are the character.

A sinner born again. This word enjoins upon us, I will go before thee.

And now, you may have things this Sabbath afternoon before you. And you know in your heart that they are things in which you need God.

You need His divine aid. You have been asking Him to appear for you regarding these things.

And you have many fears and faintings. It may be, as you survey the future, as to whether the Lord will appear for such a sinner as you feel to be.

[2 : 36] And now, in such a frame of mind, I would counsel you, and I do wish you well. I would be so glad to say something to help you to hope in God and trust in Him at all times.

And I would counsel you to look back. This word speaks about God going before us. And now, if you look back, you will remember many times when trouble, like a gloomy cloud has gathered thick and thundered loud, and your fears ran high as to how matters would fall.

And how did they fall? Did ever trouble yet befall and God refuse to hear thy call?

If you call to remembrance the former days, ask for divine aid to do it in heaven's own light, to look back over the way you have come along, and you will see many an evidence, many an instance wherein the hand of God was upon you for good.

and if you say this Sabbath afternoon what you should say, what you ought to say, and perhaps say it before the church of God, our good guidance Savior has helped us thus far, and tis by His favor we are what we are.

[4 : 34] And now ask the Lord to help me, I want to look at this subject from three viewpoints. I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight.

I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And first of all, the person who is the speaker in the text, who is he?

The opening word in the chapter is, thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him.

And I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two leave gates and the gates shall not be shut. And now to understand that, I just turn aside a moment or two and make this comment.

I have told you sometimes who Cyrus was. And here is Isaiah and do listen. And Isaiah lived a hundred and seventy years before Cyrus was born.

[6 : 16] But God inspired Isaiah to record in the chapter that in the future he would raise up Cyrus to do a great work which God ordained to be done.

And when Cyrus was born and raised up, a word in this chapter was fulfilled, I have raised him up in righteousness and I will direct all his ways.

He shall build my city and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord.

God. And when Cyrus was raised up to do this, it was at the time when Israel had been in Babylonish captivity seventy years and the seventy years were ending and Cyrus was made a wonderful warrior warrior by God who gave him great skill in warfare and he overcame many, many kingdoms and among others he conquered Babylon as a kingdom.

And when he had made that conquest he issued a proclamation that Israel in captivity all who found it in their hearts to do so had the permission and privilege and provision made for it to return to the land of promise from whence they were carried captive and to dwell therein again and worship the God of Israel and to build another house of prayer for him to be worshipped in.

[8 : 40] And now while this is recorded 170 years before it came to pass it did come to pass in every detail of it.

And you dear young people take notice that is a wonderful evidence of the word of God being inspired of God in all that it records in its sacred pages.

What is recorded here came to pass in every detail of it. And Cyrus became a great warrior conquered many many kingdoms and while God used him Cyrus himself though God used him never knew Israel's God as his own God.

And you may say what does it mean then when it says I have raised him up in righteousness it just means this I have raised up the right man in the right place at the right time.

And that is what the word righteousness sometimes does mean regarding how God works among the sons of men beneath the sun.

[10 : 18] Cyrus was never made a godly man. He lived a heathen he died a heathen. But the word of God says the hearts of all men are in his hand to dispose and so it was with Cyrus.

And now the word of God tells us this whatsoever things were written before time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope.

And this word which was spoken to Cyrus thus saith the Lord it is spoken not to Cyrus only it is a word recorded for poor sinners taught of God nowadays who find the way of life difficult to go along who find every day new straits attend.

And so the person who is the speaker in the text is the God of all grace.

but most important of all it is to think of the people who are spoken to.

[11 : 49] And now there is one word in the text which you will have to weigh up before God. I will go before thee.

As though God as the God of all grace address the word especially to you and you can say with Ezekiel as the outcome the word of the Lord came expressly to me.

And you must remember at all times dear friends in listening to the gospel you do not want to listen to it shall I say from a general viewpoint you hear this text read out and you may respond in your heart and say I know God will do that for all his people but will he do it for me?

Will he make it manifest? I am one of his people will he go before me with the difficulties I have to encounter and the gates of brass that I cannot break in pieces bars of iron in my circumstances I cannot cut in sunder and now that is that is that is that it might come to you like this I will go before thee thee to whom I am speaking and that you might feel a living interest in this declaration for as I have said already it is addressed to every sinner who is following on to know the Lord and dear friends

I do not need to take up time to enlarge upon the difficulties there are nowadays and the mountains that need to be leveled and the crooked places to be made straight for everyone who is taught of God especially some of you dear younger people following on to know the Lord with your little families around you in your everyday life wherein you find it difficult sometimes to make ends to meet and live as you desire oh you do need an interest in this word and you have it that is the thing for you to ponder before God you have an interest as sure as you are following on to know the Lord you can plead remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope and what do you find in your everyday lives with the duties to do and the difficulties to face and sometimes finding in the way you go everyday new straits attend so that you wonder how you will continue as the future unfolds with the world making the background to your life like it is the world full of chaos and confusion and hell itself let loose in the earth and men's hearts failing everywhere for fear as they survey the things which are coming on the earth but if instead of surveying the things which are coming and have come on the earth if you were helped to survey this subject and ponder it in your heart you will find

[16 : 21] God can make it and he will make it a living word in your soul's experience and you can plead it remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope and now let us look at this subject from two or three viewpoints and I would like as God to help me to unfold what I might call the doctrine of it I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight you may have at the present time some crooked places in your circumstances it may be in regard to you with a case as a poor sinner before God there are things you want made right between your soul and God and now

God has promised to do it and that brings us to this point in the subject let us now go even on to Bethlehem and see that thing which came to pass there and what do you see when you get there it will do you good to go God help you by living faith to do so and when you get to Bethlehem and see the little babe cradled in the manger sheltered in a stable you will see this word being made a blessed reality I will go before thee in other words Emmanuel God with us

God for us for when Jesus Christ came down into this world to do love's redeeming work it was indeed that he might go before all that vast host making up the people of God in the aggregate that he might go before them and do for them what they could not do for themselves fit them make them meet and save them with an everlasting salvation make them meet to dwell in the inheritance of the saints in light and he guaranteed before God before the world was built a time was born before you read in the beginning

God created the heavens and the earth and before then Jesus Christ guaranteed that he would become Emmanuel God with us that when the world was built that God purposed to build another word would be fulfilled when the fullness of time was come God sent forth his own son made of a woman made under the law and it had to be like that because he had to go before his people to work out for them a righteousness which would make them fit to be the guests of God because not one of them would possess any righteousness of their own wherein they could appear before God acceptably all this word is very very far reaching and so you see

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and there is no event do listen no event which can come into your life no crooked place no gates of brass bars of iron in your circumstances but what Jesus Christ as Emmanuel God with us can go before you and deal with all these things and do what he promised to do I will make all my goodness to pass before thee Lord increase our faith you see if you and I had faith enough and it was active in everyday life how should we be living we should be living like this trust in the Lord at all times ye people pour out your hearts before him

[21 : 55] God is a refuge for us and when any difficulty looms large on life's horizon when a day dawns and something happens therein that is indeed to you like gates of brass or bars of iron you cannot begin to break in pieces the gates of brass or cutting sunder the bars of iron you were made more and more aware of your helplessness in things divine and when you have done all that prudence would suggest to you to do you then come at length to your wit's end and all your wisdom is swallowed up and then you have to come back to depend on a blessed declaration like this

I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight oh how good it is sometimes to look on and see God at work and to realize then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses try us make the promise sweet try us give new life to prayer try us bring us to Christ's feet and lay us low and keep us there and I want also in opening up the subject as grace is given to do so to follow that line of thought along from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross in all that Jesus Christ did in the life he lived as verily man verily God every step he was led to take was a step in which he was going before his dear people to do love's redeeming work in every jot and tittle of it and if

I may say so with great reverence the knowledge that he was doing so void him up in his holy breast and inspired him to go on in doing love's redeeming work hence you read in Hebrews looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him was willing to suffer all that God had ordained he must suffer as verily man who for the joy that was set before him he bore the cross he despised the shame he went with willing feet and it will be good for you when you can follow him with willing feet and feel in all his dealings with you though your circumstances be like gates of brass and bars of iron though you have crooked places no human skill of yours can begin to straighten out it will be good if you can feel in your heart it is the

Lord let him do what seemeth him good I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight and now we might look for a little to at some of these crooked places and the adjective crooked is very suggestive these places that come in our lives they are crooked and there is a scripture which says this and you have to learn it who can make that straight which God hath made crooked and you want to think upon that with a right mind God has not at any time anywhere along life's way ever made a thing crooked far be it from his holy majesty to do such a thing and when the scripture says who can make that straight which

God hath made crooked he has allowed it to be what it is in its nature crooked as it comes into your lives some event which you cannot sort out some circumstance which you cannot straighten out but he can do it and the purpose of it being in your life as it is is that you might be brought to do some business in heaven's own marketplace and gain by trading there and see this word fulfilled and wrought out in your soul's experience and in your everyday life I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight and now to help you to understand this I ever desire to preach and teach as

[28 : 07] God shall help me crooked places and now sinners made things crooked so that these crooked places are to do with you and me poor sinners as we are we are crooked we are warped in our judgment sin has defiled us and we cannot look at things from a right viewpoint as we were born sin has made things to do with us in our everyday lives to be crooked because we are I'm not fitting any caps on but you will remember you have met people and you felt they were very difficult people to get on with you hoped and believed perhaps they were godly people but they needed very careful handling because they had got a crooked temper a crooked disposition and it is like that with each of us who is taught of god which shall know every man the plague of his own heart so there will ever be coming into our lives crooked places because you and

I live in such lives are crooked by nature and we need grace to super abound over all that we are by nature crooked places then there are other things that come into our lives and they come in by the will of god god sends into our lives trials of one kind and another he sends sorrows afflictions disappointments losses and crosses and these things are not inherently crooked they are what god allows in his infinite wisdom to come into our lives you think of some people whom you know and others whom you may have seen who are sorely afflicted and their affliction is of such a nature that it needs god to undertake on their behalf you can do all you can do all that love will suggest for you to do and do it willingly but there it is they are so afflicted and the affliction is of such a nature that it is indeed a crooked place which has come into their lives and you cannot make it straight what are you to do all that you can do and good it is if you do it is to remember what

Peter says humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time and he can make crooked places straight difficulties that seem to us insurmountable they melt away as his hand undertakes for you and the crooked places are made straight the gates of brass break in pieces the bars of iron are cut in sunder and you see the hand of God at work on your behalf in going before you along life's way and he makes it very plain that he is leading you forth by the right way

I will go before thee there is a sure guarantee and make the crooked places straight I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron and now dear friends I feel constrained to say this and that is that as the more or less immediate future unfolds you and I also we should very much need this word to be fulfilled for us for we are living in exceedingly perilous times and the future as I said more or less immediate is full of uncertainty and instability and man is at war with his maker and that means man will be at war also with anyone who desires to be following on to know the

Lord and you and I will find these crooked places rising up in our circumstances in everyday life we should be brought into contact with circumstances like gates of brass and bars of iron and we shall need God more than ever and though we have needed him at times along life's way we have had to say Lord save or I perish and the Lord in his mercy appeared then and he made a way where there seemed to be no way and he will still do that but it means this for you and me call upon me in the day of trouble I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me and apart from what you may meet in the treatment you receive from the world at large without wherever you may reside there are these crooked places within and you need deliverance from them what a crooked place it is to be in when you feel hard hearted when you think of the word adamant which only almighty power can break when you think of your inability to do good yet your heart possesses a will deep down to do good and live unto

[36 : 04] God but you find yourself saying with the apostle Paul when I would do good then evil is present with me and this evil means crooked places are in your temperament locked up in what you are by nature and they need to be subdued and I might turn aside a moment and make this comment and that is when God declares I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight there may be crooked places that are allowed to come into your life that will remain crooked places as long as you live you may say what does it mean then to make crooked places straight it means

God will make you straight with the crooked places say affliction comes into your life or into your family circle whatever trial God may see fit to come into your life it chafes your spirit and you wonder at times how you can endure it and continue in it eh but you will it only needs God to give you as he will do a little touch a little softness and at once you feel straightened out inside the crooked place is still there whatever it is that you feel indeed is in your home life your everyday warfare a crooked place it is still there but you are made straight in accordance with it and how do you feel then there is a word

I have looked at many times I am hoping ere I die I might preach from it but it is a great word to practice and we have to try to practice those things that we preach and now there is a word like this think on it prayerfully be ye reconciled to God and that means be ye reconciled to what God has allowed to come into your everyday life that chafes your spirit and seems to be such a hindrance to you at times that ye cannot do the things that ye would you seem to make such little progress in things divine but be ye reconciled to God it just means this Lord I would indeed submit gladly yield my all to thee what thy wisdom sees most fit must be surely best for me and it is

God lays affliction upon us and we know the affliction laid upon us will be with us till we come down to the end of life's journey and sometimes our spirits chafe under it and we wish we could have a renewal of the strength and courage we felt in former days but no it is the will of God and you and I must seek divine aid to be subject to it and to do it oh it is a wonderful thing to do the will of God willingly and so these crooked places are to do with their sins and shortcomings in everyday life sometimes it may be in opposition from the world against us from without and when we find ourselves unable to fulfill our responsibilities in everyday life when our experience seems to be in such a tangle we hardly know what we are or where we are when we say with

Job oh that I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his seat when we cannot see our evidences zeal extinguished to a spark life is very low or their evidences dark and good works with none to show these are crooked places but God can make them straight but do you ask him most of all to make you straight with them you will be glad to feel straight did you ever feel like that you remember the man in the gospel and that is what I mean sitting at Jesus feet clothed and in a right mind so that you can look at your life with all its crooked places its gates of brass its bars of iron and you can say before

[42 : 23] God Lord I would not have one thing altered let it be as thou wilt only make me willing to go in the way thou hast ordained for I want to be that character in the Psalms the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way much might be said but I must come to the Amen the following verse is very suggestive too which could be opened up and maybe another time if all is well and I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places and now just a comment upon that to help you think upon it it is not the treasures that are darkness the treasures are to do with light come from him who is the light of the world but they are hidden in dark experiences and when it says the hidden riches of secret places

I think the best comment on that is what Martin Luther said and he said on one occasion when he was sorely afflicted affliction has given me a new Bible so that when he read in the sacred pages there were things therein he could understand and enter into with a gracious experience and he found as in water face answereth unto face so does the heart of man to man the word of God opened up in our souls and trouble as it is overruled and sanctified can indeed lead you into the truth much more deeply than you have ever known it or felt it and you can say thy word is a lamp unto my feet a light unto my path and

I thought upon this subject there is another secret place in which there are hidden riches and that is the unfolding of providence in our lives oh you go back over your life and I will guarantee you have said not once or twice or thrice you have said it ten or twenty times all these things are against me but how do you look at those things now where you are in life's journey as you remember the way God has led you as you regard these things and see how God with his all wise hand his wondrous providence overruled and you could see there is an overruling providence that wisely marshals every circumstance and whereas you said all these things are against me what do you say nowadays who so is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the

Lord I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron you think of Jacob who said all these things are against me but when he saw the wagons coming up from Egypt to take him down to Egypt where Joseph was alive and he was going down to see him always he slept that night there he slept if he did sleep at all he went back over his life and the thoughts he had had and how unwise they were to no particular purpose at all but he could see God at work all the while making crooked places straight bringing to pass his eternal purposes so it was with

Joseph when he was raised up to be alongside Pharaoh on Egypt's throne that night he could look back and see his dreams were fulfilled to the full and when his brethren came down to buy corn fulfilled in every jot and tittle and he could see the way he had come along was the only way he could have come along seeing God ordained it to bring to pass what his purposes were for Joseph to be oh it is a great thing to think about the things of God in our lives and it is indeed a great truth who so is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the

[48 : 38] Lord do think on this word dear friends I have brought it before you hoping it may be and will be a word in season and if it is I will tell you how you will feel now let the feeble all be strong and make Jehovah's arm their song his shield is spread or every saint and thus supported who shall faint his grace is given neither you or I will not faint but by the grace of God we will desire still to follow on to know the Lord Amen Amen