

# Isaiah (Quality: Average)

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Date: 04 November 1990

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [ 0 : 00 ] I'm feeling so much to need the Lord's merciful and gracious help.
- I venture again this evening in directing your thoughts to the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 43, reading verses 1 and 2.
- The prophecy of Isaiah chapter 43, reading verses 1 and 2. But now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, O Jacob, and he that created thee, O Jacob, and he that created thee, O Jacob, and he that thou art mine.
- When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.
- When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
- [ 1 : 30 ] I often feel on First Lord's Day evenings the need that the sermon might perhaps be more brief, thinking of the communion service that we hold afterwards, and in this perhaps particularly thinking of our aged friends.
- And yet how often these thoughts go completely out of our mind when it comes to the time. But having this in mind, and yet desiring that the Holy Ghost may come upon us, may we be favoured now in our meditation.
- Those of you that were here this morning will know that we read these two verses, and yet was not permitted to preach from them.
- And that because our thoughts were arrested by the closing words in Isaiah 42.
- And I just read it again this evening, Isaiah 42, and the last clause in verse 25. Yet he laid it not to heart.
- [ 3 : 21 ] Well, the Lord knows how we were taken, as it were, this morning in the burden for your souls.
- For eternity, for death, and all that these solemn things mean. And now this evening, may we just consider this last clause again, because it is linked to the opening words in this 43rd chapter.
- Yet, he laid it not to heart. But to all those whom the Lord will have mercy upon, to all whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, they will, according to the sovereign will of God and his purposes of grace, come by experience into these two verses.
- I have the feeling that we shall only just begin in our meditation. But bear with me then, in reading this last clause, and the opening words in this first verse.
- Yet he laid it not to heart. And then it says, but now. But now. The Lord knows how many of us here this evening do have these two words in our soul's experience.
- [ 5 : 18 ] But now. The appointed time. Having rolled on a pace not to propose, but call by grace to change our hearts, renew our wills, and turn our feet to Zion's hill.
- Well, the Lord knows how many have that hope in their hearts. May we then be favoured to consider a little at least of what is contained in this first verse.

But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob. To my understanding, this speaks to us regarding our life here upon the earth.

What I mean is this. Every one of us have been born at the appointed time. God's word has been fulfilled in each of our lives as contained in his own word that says, a time to be born and a time to die.

Now, with all of us here, the time to be born has come. And whatever God purposed in this, who was to be our parents, where we were to be born, and everything to do with us in this has been fulfilled.

[ 7 : 05 ] But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob. I think of the truth as contained in hymn 64 here, He that formed me in the womb, he shall guide me to the tomb.

And again in that same hymn, it says, Parents, native place and time, all appointed were by him. I wonder how many of us, in reflection, know that God was indeed in our birth.

Who were to be our parents, where we were to be born, everything surrounding us in our life as we came into the world.

And then it says, And he that formed thee, O Israel. Well, of course, we need to pause here, because in the exercise that I have, this word is very distinct.

First of all, regarding everything to do with our birth, everything to do with our being, everything to do with us in our lives, our God has created us.

[ 8 : 43 ] And then it says, And he that formed thee, O Israel. Now, to my understanding, or to my exercise in this, I feel that it speaks of God's mercy, and his grace, regarding our never-dying souls.

Jacob, as a man, was just a poor sinner. His very name signified a supplanter. And we know how this took place in his life.

And I believe that the Lord began to form him for his praise at Bethel, when God met with him there.

Well, has the Lord met with us? Has he called us by his grace? This is an important matter for us to consider.

And while we seek just to speak from this part of the word, and he that formed thee, O Israel, we also need to remember that the Lord has been the heavenly potter in our life.

[ 10 : 09 ] Have we ever had to arise, by faith, by the prompting of the Spirit, to go down to the potter's house? Have we had, from time to time, a glimpse of God's sovereign purposes, of love and mercy, to our souls?

And if we also just think of it like this, every one of us here is different in our personality and our disposition.

But how the Lord forms his people for his praise, as we have read in this very chapter in verse 21, this people have I formed for myself.

They shall show forth my praise. You see, and it goes even deeper than this. Our very temperament and our personality, and included in this, is the talent or talents that God has given to us.

You see, dear friends, our providential path as poor sinners is intertwined with God's purposes of grace to our souls. You dear children that are here tonight, just a thought here for you.

[ 11 : 36 ] You see, at the moment, with those of you that are at school, or even in those early formative years, God is working out his purposes for you.

And I hope that it will prove to be his purposes of grace. You see, everything to do with you in your young life, the school that you attend, the subjects that you are taking.

And if we are favoured to view these things rightly, the hand of God is over it and upon it. And with those here tonight that went on in further education, and yet, you see, the forming hand of God was in it.

I am speaking now, of course, in his purposes of grace, love and mercy. See, our very education, and everything to do with us, is bound up with the sovereign purposes of God.

And this people have I formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise. I go a step further here with those that have gone on in further education, or as you've gone out into life.

[ 12 : 53 ] You see, we only see this as grace is given. But to those of you here tonight, in your very life and path, whether you are in business life, or in whatever your occupation, but if we rightly consider this, God's hand is in it.

His hand is in it. Just to illustrate the point, we think of Peter, James, and John. They grew up and became fishermen.

And Jesus met with them by the seashore, and commanded them to follow him. How different with the Apostle Paul. He grew up at the feet of Camelial.

He perhaps had one of the best educations that any man could have had in his day and generation. But you see, God was in it. I hope that will just cast a little light in your life and in your path.

You see, it's often been in the lives of those whom God will have mercy and does have mercy upon, he directs their way. He moves them in their providential path.

[ 14 : 07 ] They enter into whatever they are to enter into, and then the Lord sanctifies the whole thing, that this word may be fulfilled, that I am reading and bringing before you.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, and he that formed thee, O Israel. We have a hymn that says this, Under thy forming hand, O God, give me the frame that thou think'st bears.

What a mercy then, to trace the hand of God in your life, to see how the steps, some that you may well have taken without praying about it.

Some of us here tonight look back to such things in our life. We took certain steps, we didn't pray about it, and yet the overruling hand of God was in it.

And then if and when the Lord called us by his grace, we began to be very concerned about what we should do, and the steps that we should take.

[ 15 : 13 ] Oh, the difference when it was like that with us. Then we had to come to our God and plead for direction. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel.

Now I know there are those here this evening who in reflection, whatever your life has been, and whatever path you've been in your life, the Lord has been forming you for his pride.

And that is something that is very profitable to consider, to reflect upon the Lord's dealings with us in our life.

The very things that have happened to us, there may be those here tonight. You look back perhaps to a certain time when certain things happened in your life, and it may have changed the whole course of your life.

You may have been, you may have found that that you were then walking in a path that you would not have desired, and certainly would never have walked in if you had had your own way.

[ 16 : 34 ] But have you seen the hand of mercy when the Lord has not allowed you to have your own way? That you may have been moved in a completely different direction in your life.

You see, the whole thing is to form us for his praise, that our lives may be sanctified to his own honour and glory.

Much more could be said regarding the opening words in this verse.

And he that formed thee, O Israel, the way that the Lord has been fashioning us, forming us.

He is the heavenly potter. His people are in his hand. He fashions them according to his own will. And even with regard to the things to do with our souls.

[ 17 : 36 ] The way the Lord brings his people into the church here below. The way the Lord brings one or another into positions of responsibility in the church.

The way the Lord brings men into the ministry. All these things in the hand of God. The Lord has been forming his people. And he does form them.

And he forms them for his praise. Just let me remind you of the temple that Solomon built. Do you remember that it is said regarding that site, I mean the place that the temple was built, there was no sound of hammer there.

There was no sound of hammer or chisel. Every stone was prepared away from the site. And then it was brought to the site.

And every stone went into its place. Now that's just like that in the Lord's purposes of grace. Do you know what it is to be chiseled? Do you know what it is to be hammered?

[ 18 : 44 ] Do you know what it is for the Lord to do these things in secret? This is where the Lord forms his people. So much of it all goes on in secret. The Lord's hand upon our hearts and in our lives.

And it's all to bring about his holy sovereign will. And then it goes on. And it says, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

What a subject we have here. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. What does this mean?

His people. First of all, I believe it means that he brings them out of bondage. The bondage of sin.

As they were held by their enemies. What an enemy sin is. What an enemy the world is.

[ 19 : 49 ] What an enemy the devil is. For I have redeemed thee. I have put forth my hand in your life.

And I have brought you out of bondage. If we were helped tonight to think of the bondage that we were in before we believed the Lord called us by his grace.

The way we lived our lives then. The things that we were interested in. The pleasures of our life. The things that we pursued. And of course we could name many different things.

And if it was the Lord's will we would do so. But if we think of our past life. Think of how we did live before the Lord touched our heart.

And touched us in our lives. I think of the dear men and young people. Young men and boys that are here tonight.

[ 20 : 53 ] And the Lord knows where you are. The Lord knows your life. The Lord knows the things that you may be pursuing. The things that interest you. The things that captivate you.

Oh if the Lord has redeemed you. He has brought you away from all this. Let me illustrate the point from my own life.

But in this we would not be seen. But only just to convey the thought that we have. In my teens I was taken up with sport.

I was taken up with going to the theatre. I was taken up with going to the cinema. I was taken up with those kind of things.

And my heart was in them. But you see when the Lord I believe called me by his grace. He began not of course all at once.

[ 21 : 57 ] But he began to bring me out of these things. I was no longer happy in them. I can remember being at a football match one Saturday afternoon.

And feeling utterly miserable. And yet before I had delighted in it. And was one of the crowd as it were. But now there was something going on in my heart.

And I well remember that Saturday evening. The misery. And the feeling that I had. You see I was no longer at home on the football field. And as the Lord dealt with me.

I was no longer at home in the cinema. I loved it. I loved going to the cinema. Oh I was always there. There was scarce a film that I didn't see.

You see dear friends. This redeeming work. The Lord brings his dear people out of all this. He brings them away from this. And he makes this world to be no longer their home.

[ 23 : 03 ] They are no longer at home in it. And of course we might go on in this. But perhaps the Lord would have me speak another way.

To the dear girls and young women. And the dear friends that are here tonight. It may well have been. I'm sure it would have been. Very different with you.

Do you remember the novels that you read? Do you remember the magazines that you used to buy? Do you remember how your thoughts were taken up with your dress?

Yes. And all that that meant the fashions of the world? We know it is a very natural thing for girls and young women.

Their attention is taken up very much with this. Of course it is with men. But I feel perhaps with girls and the dear ladies. That this is something that perhaps they are more ensnared in.

[ 24 : 05 ] I have told you the true story before. Perhaps the Lord might use it tonight. Of the dear young woman that went to a service. And the minister was to leave England.

Never to preach there again as I remember it. And she went with her new gown. You have heard all this before. But it may touch some heart here tonight.

All she could think about that Lord's Day evening was her new gown. Do you know what that kind of experience is? Have you sat in chapel sometimes?

And all you could think about was some new costume. Some new clothes that you had on. But what did the Lord do for that dear girl? The preacher's text was this.

Be ye clothed with humility. And the arrow of conviction reached her heart. And she went home from the service a convicted sinner.

[ 25 : 04 ] And she could think no more about her new gown. She went home considering having to consider her never dying soul. And where shall I spend eternity?

You see the change that happened in that one service. And friends it's still like that as the Lord grants it today. He's only got to speak to you tonight and you'll hear his voice.

Of course there are all the differing pursuits of our lives. And the dear children that are here. You know the things that please you. You know the things to use an expression that people do use.

The things that you live for. And all you can think about. And as we go on in our lives. We can be very taken up with your home.

Your possessions. The things that you have. And you live for them. Many people are doing this. Indeed we all do. Apart from the redeeming love and mercy of our Saviour.

[ 26 : 09 ] We go on in our life. We think of nothing else but the things of this life. We just wait for Monday morning. As it were if you go to chapel. You just wait for Monday morning.

You wait for the preacher to say Amen. You do not want to have anything to do with the things of God. But that's one aspect of being redeemed. It is to be delivered from bondage.

Do you remember the children of Israel in Egypt? They had their taskmasters. You know dear friends. The things of this life. They are just like taskmasters.

And they go on and on. And in the end they were expected to make bricks without straw. And the poor people was in such bondage. And you see this is how the Lord deals with his people.

He will bring you into bondage. He will make the world no longer to be a place of rest. But he will bring you away from it. Now that's one aspect of being redeemed.

[ 27 : 16 ] For I have redeemed thee. Friends is it true of us tonight? Now that is a question the Lord help us to answer. Is it true of us tonight?

Have you left this world's deceitful shore? I mean in the experience of it. And in your feelings you've left it to return no more. You do not feel as you once felt.

The things that you once loved. They mean nothing to you now. And the Lord continually stirs up your nest. And he keeps telling you this is not your rest.

It is polluted. Now the second aspect of this being redeemed is. And it's very essential.

Fear not for I have redeemed thee. Now this is what it means. If we have been redeemed.

[ 28 : 17 ] The Lord Jesus is our redeemer. On the one hand we have an holy God who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence.

There will be no hope for us out of Christ. He is the redeemer. And in this redeeming work of our saviour it means that he gave his life upon Calvary.

He gave his life. That was the purchase price. And as the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross and hung up to be a spectacle to men and devils as it were and all they that passed by the way reviled him.

They spit upon him in the judgment hall. They derided him. They said if he be the Christ let him save himself and us.

I believe that was spoken by one of the thieves or both of them perhaps in the first place. So dear friends if we are among the redeemed then the Lord Jesus has given his life upon Calvary for us.

[ 29 : 51 ] He's paid the price of sin. And the price that he paid was his own precious blood.

It was his own precious blood. That was the purchase price. And we need to remember too the agony of his holy soul upon Calvary.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? If we were helped to think of it for a moment the almighty God and his beloved son the Lord Jesus the eternal son of God and his father, holy father hid his face from him as he was upon Calvary.

what it must have meant to our Saviour's holy soul. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I believe dear friends the only way we shall understand it a little is when the Lord has forsaken us.

You see if there's life in our soul we shall dread the thought of the Lord forsaking us. And when we do feel this how it burdens our heart I feel forsaken and alone I hear the lion roar our mercy is yet every door is shut but one and that is mercy's door for I have redeemed thee fear not for I have redeemed thee.

[ 31 : 30 ] You see and as the Lord has paid this purchase price and the exercise and the burden that he gives to his servants is to feed the flock of God which is among you which he hath purchased with his own love now that is the purchase price that is the purchase price.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have of God and ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price.

Let us not the cost forget. Another meaning of being redeemed is that as the Lord Jesus has given his life upon Calvary for all his people it is through his redeeming love and mercy that he brings us back.

Another meaning of the word redeemed to be brought back and for the price to be paid. But I just venture to go a little further before I close.

Fear not for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name thou art mine.

[ 33 : 08 ] Now we read this morning in John chapter 10 those very sacred words of Jesus. My sheep hear my voice I know them and they follow me.

They the Lord said concerning his sheep he has called them by their name. If I might just turn and if I'm able to get the right verse I may not be able to but you see the Lord in speaking he says and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.

Now how do we know that the Lord has called us by our name? The Lord help me just to speak about this. I have called thee by thy name thou art mine.

Now the thing is this have we known what it is for the Lord to call us by our name? We may not have known this in a literal sense but we shall know it in this that we shall be made aware that the Lord is speaking to us.

We shall know his voice by the power that attends it we shall be arrested by his word. We shall be arrested by him himself as he calls us by our name.

[ 34 : 49 ] Now I'm going to ask you all a question here. Have you known what it is for the Lord to call you by your name while you've been in chapel? Have you known what it is for the Lord to call you by your name while you've been in the field?

While you've been in your lorry? While you've been in your car? While you've been here or there? It may have been in a place of amusement. It may have been as you've been watching the television set.

Whatever it is. But have you been called by his name? Have you heard his voice speaking to you? Friends, when the Lord calls us by his name it will separate you from everyone else in the world.

You'll feel that the Lord's eye is upon you. You'll feel that he is speaking to you. He will arrest you. Almighty love, arrest that man.

Arrest that woman. But have you been called by your name? I've sometimes heard dear people speak like this and they've said, they felt as they were in their home, in the field, in the office, or in the house of God, they've really felt that God has spoken to them.

[ 36 : 08 ] Have you known what this is under the ministry? Have you ever felt that the Lord has called you by your name under the ministry? What I mean is, as the minister has preached, the word of God has reached your heart, and you've known it then to be the word of God.

It's arrested you, it's affected your heart, it's made you listen, and you couldn't forget what you heard. Now this, I believe, is the meaning, and I read the verse and then leave it, but now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.

You say, I have called thee by thy name. And he says, thou art mine. That is because the Lord has called you by your name. He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.

He leads them into the green pastures and beside the still waters. He restores their soul. He leads them in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

[ 37 : 43 ]    They preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. My cup runneth over.  
These are the things that the Lord does for those that he calls by their name.

And then she knew that it was Jesus. The Lord had his blessing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word.  
What more can he say than to you he has said, you who unto Jesus for refuge have laid in  
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I am thy God and will still be made.

O, I will guide you, thy love, and will still be made.

O, I will guide you, thy love, and will still be made.

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Amen.

Help us, Lord, to sing the hymns there. Help us that we may consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.



[ 46 : 59 ] Lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. Remember those that may stay to look on, Lord.

Oh, that thou wouldest bless them also. And who so touch their hearts with thy love, that they too must come and tell what the Lord has done for their souls.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, with the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Yea. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 47 : 58 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.