

A Love That Never Gives Up

by Alan Redpath

The love of God is invincible, impassable, indelible, infinite, and inexhaustible, and it is the key to overcoming obstacles and living a victorious life.

Duration: 30:07

Scripture: Isaiah 49:6-54, Matthew 5:17, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses those who feel trapped and hopeless in their spiritual captivity and bondage to sin. He emphasizes the love of God and the power of Jesus to deliver and set free. The preacher encourages listeners to look beyond their failures and obstacles and focus on Jesus, who sees them as complete and intends to make them complete. He reassures them that even the captives of the mighty will be taken away and delivered by the Lord. The sermon is based on the scripture in Isaiah 49:24-25.

Transcript

Bellion to thee, may we be blessable today because our hearts are meek and humble and open to thy word. For Jesus' sake, Amen. We invite you to turn to the 49th chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 49.

This is the chapter from which Pastor Dewey read to us earlier in the service this morning. It's a chapter which is full of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is language here which cannot possibly have its complete fulfilment except in him.

For instance, in the sixth verse we read, I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. And in the eighth verse, I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritage, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth, and to them that are in darkness, show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in all high places.

They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them. For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them even by the springs of water shall he guide them. Those words could not possibly be fulfilled in any other save in our Saviour.

But this chapter is spoken primarily to the Jew. Now, if you ask me how it can be spoken to the Jew and to our Lord Jesus at the same time, I would just remind you that when the Jew for the second time failed in the purpose of their captivity and returned from Babylon and ultimately became just a race religiously of Pharisees and legalists with no love and compassion for others, the Lord Jesus took over the responsibilities which they had evaded. And he fulfilled the purpose which they failed to fulfill by the gospel he taught and by the church which he formed.

And in the mission of Christ, the heart of Judea, the heart of Judaism, unfolded itself. He was the perfect fulfillment of all that they had failed to be. But this is not only a chapter which has to do with our Lord and which has to do with the Jew.

For my purpose this morning, it has to do with your heart and with mine. I want therefore to maintain our consistency as we've gone through this second part of Isaiah and consider this message in its relation to our own personal life. Therefore, for a moment, will you just fasten your mind and attention on the 16th verse of this chapter where our Lord says, Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

Thy walls are continually before me. These words in their context are the assurance of God to his people's complaint that he had forgotten them. The 14th verse reads, Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me.

Humanly speaking, of course, they had every reason to think that that would be so. For this chapter anticipates a time when they had languished for nearly 70 years in the bondage and captivity of Babylon and being crushed and overwhelmed by the power of that great empire. And between them and home and hope and joy in Jerusalem were deserts and mountains, apparently insurmountable obstacles, and they seemed to be completely trapped.

In any case, they'd only got bitter memories of a home that lay in ruins, for Jerusalem was in waste, a mass of debris. You recall that when Nehemiah visited the scene a few years later, so terrible was the destruction of the city that the animal upon which he rode couldn't pass over it, and his determination to rebuild the wall was scorned. Oh yes, there was many a reason for his people to say, The Lord hath forsaken me.

Whenever you look at God through circumstances, you're inclined to think like that. But when God enables us to look at circumstances through him, we think differently. And this is exactly what the Lord seeks to do in this tremendous passage of scripture today.

How can I, he says, bring this people to a new hope, to a new confidence, to a new courage, to a new step of faith, to a new obedience and commitment? How can I bring them to see that there's a way through from their captivity? I have no new plan. It can only be if they understand the depths of my love. And so he brings to them in this chapter the assurance of a love that cannot fail, that will never let go.

And he says to them, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. Thy walls are continually before me. I am thinking as I bring this word this morning from my heart to your heart in his name, of some people perhaps here in church and others listening by radio who feel just like those people felt.

God's forgotten me. God's forsaken me. Perhaps you're comfortless or sorrowing or afflicted.

Perhaps even worse than that. As a Christian, you may have felt that you've grieved the Holy Spirit so seriously that you feel yourself outside any possibility of recovery. You listened last Sunday morning to the

word that came to you, I trust, with the authority of his Spirit, which commanded you to an exodus, go ye forth out of spiritual captivity, a complete deliverance from the bondage of self and sin.

And perhaps during the days of this week you made a feeble effort, but by the time Wednesday came, you are back in the same bondage all over again, and you've come to think the situation is hopeless. Perhaps there are some listening to me today whose lives are so full of obstacles and difficulties and impossible contradictions that it just doesn't seem the tangle could ever be straightened out. You've tried, you've made the attempt, but just as often you've failed, and it seems you're doomed to fail.

What is God's message to such a heart? He's no new plan, but I believe he does want you to understand, as you've never understood before, the meaning of his love. And as I seek to open up this forest this morning, I pray that the Spirit of God may talk to you at depth about this love of Jesus. I bring to you one or two thoughts about it from this chapter.

In the first place, from the eleventh verse, God says, I will make all my mountains away. And that leads me to suggest to you that the love of God is invincible in its purpose. Invincible in its purpose.

I will make all my mountains away. Though there be great mountains and unsurpassable obstacles between Babylon and Jerusalem, what does God do about them? He won't remove them, but he will make these mountains, which seem to this people to be obstacles, he will make them actually contribute to their deliverance. There isn't anybody here this morning but who has some mountain in their life somewhere, something that threatens to bar their spiritual progress, something that frustrates your every hope, something that's brought you back to a sense of failure and collapse, a daily cross, a thorn in the flesh, a sin.

Oh, if only these were removed, you say, how much holier a life I could live, how much more satisfactory a Christian I could be. We say that and then we pray, oh Lord, remove these things. For example, Lord, give me patience.

And please remove this awful thing that tests me beyond endurance. Beloved, you have supposed that the obstacle which you try to avoid and to escape is the biggest hindrance in your life. If only it would go, how patient you would be.

But if it went, that would only remove the temptation to be impatient. That wouldn't make you patient. Patience only comes through the trial that God puts there, for his word tells us that tribulation worketh patience.

And sometimes the very thing that I try and avoid, and the situation which I try to escape from, and the circumstances which I beat away from me, are the very things in the hand of God to sanctify me and make me like the Lord Jesus. The very things I dread are the things that God uses to make his mountains away. You notice what he says, I will make all my mountains away.

There's no exception to that great but that little word, all. Nothing in life, no obstacle, no loneliness, no trial, no sorrow, which may not be a way into God's richest blessing, no situation of entanglement, nothing, nothing that you can possibly conceive, but this can be part of God's way to make his mountains a way of deliverance. You notice the pronoun, I will make my mountains away.

Yes, they're his. He put them there. He will make them away.

And in the distance, and in front, if I can only see a mountain when I reach the foot of it, I'll discover there's a path. What's the secret of this, therefore, discovering that the love of God is invincible in its purpose? It's just this. It's the commitment of your life to Jesus Christ without reservation.

And it's then to meet this mountain and meet this obstacle in Jesus. Not to meet it outside of him, but to meet it in Christ. For if I do that, then, then the mountain between myself and God's land of blessing becomes the way into it.

Do I speak to someone in whose life today you're just confronted with nothing but mountains, and they seem to be in front of you on all sides, and you face them, and you wonder, and you almost despair. Friend, have you ever taken a moment to look back? What do you find there? If you find surrounding you in front and on all sides, nothing but mountains that seem to be absolutely insurmountable, look back a moment. Is there a mountain? Not one.

Every mountain that you confronted has all been leveled out flat, and you look back, and everything's a plane in front of you. All is mountains. Surely the God who has removed every mountain thus far will remove the one that confronts you right now.

Face it, therefore, friend. Face that mountain, that obstacle, that impossibility, whatever it is. Face it in Jesus, and watch him make it away.

The love of God is invincible in its purpose. But look at the 15th verse of this chapter, and let me suggest to you that the love of God is absolutely impassable in its preciousness. Can a woman forget her child? Yea, they may forget.

Yet will I not forget thee? And here the Holy Spirit uses the illustration to encourage this despondent people to believe. He uses the illustration of the love of a mother, a mother's love that bends over a little child, that perhaps soothes it in times of suffering, that watches it, and sometime maybe even watches that little life flickering out, that comes to it constantly ready to surrender food, sleep, anything, anything for the sake of that little one. The love of a mother, a love that follows us through all of life.

Often we don't understand it, often we resent it, often we rebel against it, often it's misunderstood. But is there any love that quite replaces that, the love of a mother who prays from childhood and at the first simons of distress she's there? It would be a love that would stand by us even if one day we became a prisoner in a dock. That love would stand there, it would hunt us through the foulest sodom anywhere in the face of the earth.

That's the love of a mother. But the Holy Spirit says it's only a simple ray of the love of God. There's much more than a mother's love in the love of Jesus.

You see, she, says the scripture, may forget, he never can. We may fall so far down and get in such an appalling mess and muddle and catastrophe that the dearest and nearest to us may just forget and forsake. We may have been so far away from God and far away from righteousness and truth that perhaps someone who put a candle in their window hoping one day we'd come back has given up hope.

Maybe the fire on every altar of every human heart of love for you has just died down till nobody cares. But my Bible says when my father and mother forsake me the Lord will take me up. It says I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

It tells me that the Lord Jesus loved his disciples and having loved his own he loved them unto the end. A love that's absolutely impassable in its preciousness. And that love never gives up and never lets go.

And to the person here today who feels so utterly bereft and utterly God forsaken, I can but point you to that love and ask you, though you may never understand it, to believe in it and rest in it and rejoice in it even now. There's a little children's chorus that I used to sing, perhaps you did too. Love, wonderful love, the love of God to me.

Love, wonderful love, so great, so rich, so free. Wide, wide as the ocean, deep as the deepest sea. High, as high as the heavens above, his love to me.

Dare I believe that today, dare you? But look, I find something else about the love of God here that's even more amazing. Look for a moment at this verse which I've chosen as our text. It tells me that God's love is absolutely indelible in its penetration.

I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. The hand of God, the hand of power, the hand of authority, the hand by which he upholds all things with his strength. But something more than this, the hand of love, the hand of God.

One day the Lord Jesus stepped into a room when he'd risen from the dead, and he showed to his disciples his hand and his side. I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. He doesn't say, I have tattooed thee, for a tattoo mark could come off.

But I have graven thee, and he shows to us his hands, and that with which our names are graven there, was a sword, and a spear, and a nail that drove holes into his hands, and into his side, and into his feet. I have graven thee on the palms of my hands. Never are you out of the sight of God, never out of his thoughts.

Our names, our very lives are photographed, photographed in a place where God always sees them. He could never forget them. They can never be obliterated.

Do you remember that tremendous verse in the book of Revelation, where John is given a vision of glory? This is what he says, I beheld in the midst of the throne a lamb as it had been slain. And throughout all eternity there's one from whom the marks of suffering are never removed, and the constant, constant source of joy of all who cry in the glory worthy of thou, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, the constant source of it all is that they're gazing, we shall gaze all the time upon hands that have been marked with nails and driven to a cross. A love that's absolutely indelible.

I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, and to some person here today who feels so utterly, completely hopeless, I want you today not to look at things and then try and look at God, but I want you to look at the throne and the nail-pierced hands of Jesus and his side, and that's where God has put you. Look what the verse goes on to say, thy walls are continually before me. From the people's point of view, all they could see was ruin, destruction, debris.

Their memory was of a city that was flattened out, where the walls had been destroyed, the whole thing lay in ruins, but God speaks to them at this moment of their captivity, and he says to them, thy walls, not your ruins, not your past failure, not your breakdown, not your sin, but thy walls, the thing that I purpose for you, that which I intend you to be, thy walls are continually before thee. Oh brother, today, if I speak to someone who just feels in their heart the situation is hopeless, may I say, you look at the ruins of life, God

looks at the walls. You look at what you've been, and you're conscious of such awful failure, but bless the Lord, he sees us in Christ.

He sees us as what he intends us to be. He sees us as what we long to be in our best moments. He sees us as what we will be when the grace of God has finished the task.

We look back upon failure and frustration and disappointment and breakdown. I bid you today in his name, look away beyond all this. Look right up to the Lord today, for before him, what do I read in his word? I saw, I saw, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, adorned as a bride for her husband.

Thy, thy names are graven on the palms of his hands, and thy walls are continually before me. Oh, how good to me, in my heart, to know that God looks at me in Jesus Christ. He doesn't see that which is gone.

It's all buried in the depths of the sea, and he sees me as he intends to make me. Thy walls, the task finished, the task complete, and he sees me complete in the Lord Jesus. A love that's absolutely indelible in its penetration.

But let's look a little further into this chapter and see something else. He is a love that's infinite in its powerfulness. Look at verse 24 a moment, will you? Verse 24.

What do I find there? I find here the language of someone who's disconsolate. The language of this people who feel it so hopeless. And this is what they say, shall the prey be taken from the mighty or the lawful captive delivered? A helpless captivity in the heart of a mighty empire.

And perhaps today in your soul a helpless captive to the devil. Just helpless, just weak. And you tried this week to break through and make your exodus, and no sooner had you started than you broke down and you're back again.

And here's the word, I'm just a captive. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty or the lawful captive delivered? How can it ever be? But the Lord God has calculated his resources. Beloved, don't let the difficulties or the seeming impossibility of deliverance absorb you, nor brood over the past, the failure of the sin and the breakdown.

Look away from all this to Jesus and read in the verse 25, thus saith the Lord, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered, for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. Jesus is stronger than Satan and sin. Satan to Jesus must bow.

But there's one other thing here, perhaps most precious of all. I have to look at the first verse of the next chapter to find it actually, but it completes the picture. For it tells me that God's love is inexhaustible in its patience.

Thus saith the Lord, where is the bill of your mother's divorcement whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? You understand the picture? When the Jew put away his wife, he gave her a bill of divorcement. Without that, the divorce would not be complete. And in Israel now in exile, they are imagining themselves like a divorced wife, forgotten and forsaken of God.

But the Lord interrupts this kind of thinking and breaks into it and challenges his people this and says, where's the bill of divorcement? Produce it. Produce the bill and show me where I divorced you and cut you off. But she can't do it.

Of course she can't. Can't find it because he'd never given it to her. God cannot divorce those whom he has taken into covenant relationship with himself.

Backslidden, perhaps. Rebellious, maybe. Faithless for a while, perhaps.

They may be all that, but still they belong to him. You can search the universe. You can search everywhere.

You can ransack the whole place. But if you're a child of God, you will never, never find a bill of divorcement from God. Even the devil can't produce it and show it to you.

Oh, no. Satan would love to do that. Would love to come to some disconsolate Christian today who's absolutely beaten and hopeless and produce to you proof that God has cut you off, but he cannot do it.

Oh, then someone says to me, that means there's a license for sin somewhere in the gospel. Oh, no, there isn't. Oh, no.

If I am truly the Lord's, then his love will mend my heart this morning and I will respond to it and I will recognize that this amazing love of God that will never let me go is that upon which I can rest everything and count upon him to take me out into victory. But if I am not his, then that love and its story will openly harden my heart and one day will prove to be the basis of my judgment. For light has come into the world, but men prefer darkness to light because their deeds are evil.

So, beloved, the call comes again this morning. Go ye out from that spiritual Babylon. Flee from it.

And what's the motive? Listen to the words of Hebrews chapter 13, where I read in the 12th verse, the Lord Jesus, that he might sanctify his people through his blood, suffered without the gate. Wherefore, let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. He's calling to his church.

He's calling to you, to me, to a great exodus, to a great deliverance, to an escape while there's yet time from the life of self, from the life of the world. But listen, you only meet God outside the camp. There was a deliverance which Pharaoh offered these people at one time, which suggested they might worship the Lord in the land.

But you remember, Moses' answer was, no, there shall not be a hoof left behind. We cannot worship God in the land. And there's no place where I can meet Jesus, meet God, save at the cross, which is outside of city wall.

It's the place where I willingly and gladly, like the prodigal, I say, I will arise and I go to my father and say to him, I've sinned and I'm no more worthy to be called my son. And I don't only say that, I arise and go. And when I do, I discover the reality of the love of God in Jesus Christ, a love that's absolutely invincible.

I will make my mountains away. A love that nothing ever can pass. He will never forget thee.

A love that he can never wipe out because he's graven you in the very palms of his hands and thy walls are before him. A love that's absolutely infinite in its power. No matter how strong the enemy, he is

stronger.

A love that's inexhaustible, completely inexhaustible. He will never write the bill of divorce. Beloved, if I respond to that love this morning, then I find the way of deliverance.

If I don't respond to it, I merely testify that I am not his. Oh God, help us today to look right off to Jesus and his love at Calvary. May we bow together in prayer.

One moment of quiet prayer. The love of God, so rich, so free. The love of God revealed to us at the cross.

The love that will not let me go. I rest my weary soul in thee. Lord Jesus, how we thank thee today.

There is a place of calm retreat. There's a place of rest and quiet near to the heart of God. We praise thee this morning that there we may come and find in the very heart of Jesus, in the very wounds that sin inflicted, we can find there our salvation and our deliverance.

Jesus, keep me near the cross, there my glory ever. Oh, may there be that response from our hearts which will just demonstrate that our grand desire is that we might know thee and live for thee. Grant, O Lord, there may be in our heart an exodus from a spiritual Babylon which would captivate our lives.

We ask it for the glory of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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