

The Incomparable One

by Carl Armerding

The sermon explores the futility of seeking security in idols and emphasizes the importance of finding true security in God alone.

Duration: 38:03

Scripture: Isaiah 40:18-26, Romans 15:4

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Spiritual Security"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the quest for security and the tendency of people to seek it in worldly things rather than in God. The speaker emphasizes the need for a ministry of hope, comfort, and faith for those facing life's battles and struggles. The transcript also highlights the importance of looking up to God and seeking Him for security and truth. The speaker concludes by reminding listeners that God can be known through intuition, communication, and the understanding of His creation.

Transcript

Chapter 40, and commencing tonight at verse 18. Isaiah chapter 40 and verse 18. To whom then will you liken God? For what likeness will you compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith threadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

He that is so impoverished that he hath no ablations, chooseth a tree that will not rot. He seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

Yea, they shall not be planted, yea, they shall not be sown, yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth. He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as shovels. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number.

He calleth them all by name by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faith. For the information of those who are with us for the first time in this series, I would just say this, that we have been studying this fortieth chapter of Isaiah under the general title of Words of Hope, Comfort, and Fear.

And so far in our studies we have seen first of all the introduction to the whole thing in the first two verses, where you have God through the prophet announcing comfort to his people, and giving them some of the basics of that comfort.

And in the next address, where we heard the voice crying in the wilderness and so on, we saw the preparation for this. Then thirdly, we noticed how those who have received comfort become messengers of that comfort. As you'll notice in verse nine of the chapter and so on, old Zion that bringeth good tidings and so on, going out with a message of this comfort.

Then this morning, as we gave our last address, we spoke of the questions which God himself raises, and pointed out how that even in these questions concerning himself we find great hope, and comfort, and fear. I might also say that we have justified what we're doing by a quotation from the fifteenth chapter of Romans, which says that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. And, I think you'll agree with me that we live in a day when there is plenty of need for just this.

I do not deny that there is plenty of need for our hearts to be stirred up with regard to the needs of those who are still in their skin. The very fact that I'm a member of at least three different mission boards proves that I have an interest in that very thing, but I believe that there is also a need for those who are at home, who are facing the battles, and trials, and struggles of life. There is a need for a ministry of words of hope, and comfort, and fear, and so there has been the purpose in this series of meetings and addresses on this fortieth of Isaiah to give some of these words right out of the book itself.

Now, in the section that is before us this evening, I believe if I were asked to give you a title for this little talk, I would call it the quest or the search for security. And, I believe I've only need to state it that way to right away in your own heart there is an answer you say why that's exactly what I'd like to have. The very fact that men have been clamoring for this, and that, and other benefits in connection with their yearly wages, and so on, is proof of what we say that men are seeking for security.

You can call it social security, you can call it whatever kind of security, but they're looking for something to give them that feeling of security. Alas, many of them don't know where real security is found. They're trying to tie to something that has no security in it, instead of coming to him who alone can make us secure.

And so, in our study of these verses which I've read this evening, and tomorrow morning we're going to continue our study and complete this fortieth chapter of Isaiah. May I say for the information of those who may have been debating whether you'll be out tomorrow morning for the first hour, that we're going to complete our study of this fortieth chapter of Isaiah tomorrow morning. And, I believe that you will notice there's a climax as we come right up to the renewal of our strength, and so on, as we have it in the closing verses of this chapter.

But now, to address ourselves to the verses which we have just now read, I believe I can see in this very activity that we have here, in verses 19 and 20, that very thing that we've been talking about, men wanting something to which they can anchor their souls. Dr. Ayer referred to it this morning, quoting from the writer, from one of the writers in New York City, who referred to God as a hitching post. As he preferred, he said, and I agree with him, to speak of God as our hiding place.

But, there you have the idea. Men wanting something to which they can tie, something to which they can anchor their souls. As I said a moment ago, they've cast off to one side the only one who can give them that security, but they find that in their heart, if they've cast off the one, they're bound to replace him with something else.

And so, we find in this passage of Scripture here tonight, in verses 19 and 20, that those who have cast off the living God immediately go about to manufacture another one for themselves. Those who are rich have to make him of gold and silver. Those who are not so rich have to make him of wood.

But, he must be a God nevertheless. And, you'll notice in the 20th verse, it must be a God who will not rot, and a God who cannot be moved. Now, you see, those two ideas that you have there in that 20th verse, they want somebody that will not rot, somebody who will not go to corruption, and they want something that will not move.

And, I take it that that's the purpose of these silver chains that are mentioned here. For, after this man has his God made, he's afraid perhaps that his God will depart from him, so he chains him down. Or, it may be that he's afraid his God may topple, and therefore he secures him with chains, so that the very one to whom he's looking for his security has to be secured himself.

Reminds me greatly of a remark made by a psychiatrist down in one of our southern cities. In talking about his work, he's been examining some of our prospective candidates to go to the mission field. I believe he's a very fine Christian psychiatrist.

And, when we were talking about a certain missionary who had required the services of a psychiatrist, I said, well, I'm sorry that she can't stay right here with you in this city and receive your attention. But, I said, you know, we have a psychiatrist, and I mentioned another city where there's another so-called Christian psychiatrist. Well, he said, yes, but I'm afraid he's a little insecure himself, referring to this other psychiatrist.

Well, now, what in the world would you do, dear friend, if you need a psychiatrist? You feel the need of security yourself, but you go to somebody who isn't too sure of himself. Well, you say to yourself, there couldn't be any benefit in that. No, dear friends, neither can there be any benefit in putting something in the place of God, in something in the place of the living God, when you can have the living God himself.

Ah, but somebody says to me, you must remember, we live in America. We're not idolaters. We weren't born in China.

We weren't born in Africa. We weren't born in any of these places where they bow down to the gods of wood and stone. Let me tell you something.

You don't have to be born in China. You don't have to be born in Africa. You don't have to be born in some heathen country to be an idolater.

Anything that takes the place of God in your life is an idol. It doesn't make any difference what it is. And it may be that you've got something built up in your heart that you're looking to for that security.

And when I uncover the whole thing tonight, by the spirit of God, you're saying to yourself, my, that fella makes me squirm. But that's the very thing I've been doing. I've been setting up something in my life to which I've been looking for security, instead of finding it in him who is absolutely secure in himself.

Now it is the face of these things that God raises the question that he does in the 21st verse of our chapter. There are four questions in this verse, and I want to just pause briefly over each one of them. Notice what God says here.

After he has told us what these people are doing in order to find something to which they can anchor their souls, he says, have you not known? Have you not known? You know, dear friends, what I get out of that question is this, that somehow even in the hearts of those who say they don't know God, there is what they may call an intuition that there is such a being. Even the atheist who is constantly defending his negative philosophy of life and trying to prove to us that there is no God, he's fighting that intuition within, which it seems to me is born in every human being, in his heart, that there is such a being as God. On the basis of that, God commands, ask this question, hast thou not known? Doesn't your own intuition say to you that there is such a being? Secondly, notice that he says here, have you not heard? Yes, there has been a communication from this God.

From the very beginning, God has communicated with man. His book has been in the making now for many, many years, and even though the bible may not be found in every part of the world tonight, thank God here it is, and its voice has been speaking. And so God may very logically, very rightly raise the question, have you not heard? Have you not heard? If you haven't heard here in America, dear friend, you're certainly without excuse, for all you need to do is turn the button on your radio anytime and you can hear.

Then notice the third question, and he says, has it not been told you from the beginning? Yes, there's been a God tradition from the very beginning. From the very time that Adam stepped into this world, dear friend, there has been a tradition of God. Time was when everybody knew there was a God.

The bible says so in the first chapter of Romans. He says, but when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Perceiving themselves to be wise, they became fools, and it was then that they adopted idolatry in order to satisfy their craving and hunger within, to have something before which they could bow down and worship, and something in which they could put their trust for security.

Then notice the fourth question. He says here, have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? Yes, we can know God, first of all, by intuition. We can know him by the communication in his words.

We can know him by the tradition of God that originated in the world, but there's still another way. We can know him by these chapters. From the very foundations of the earth, the world in which we live, he's so full of evidence of God that anyone who studies these things must come to the conclusion that there is such a being.

How simple is the illustration that has been used for many, many years, that when one takes a watch such as we have in my hand here tonight, I've only to ask the question, do you think that that thing just happened by itself? Would anybody be so foolish as to say in this audience tonight, yes, I believe that watch just happened. It simply came together. These atoms, these molecules, these parts of this watch, they simply travel together, and lo and behold, I've got a watch.

Oh, you say I wouldn't be so foolish, and yet people are foolish enough to believe that a creation such as we live in tonight somehow happened by what they call a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and they refuse to believe that there was a mastermind at work in the production of that thing. Oh, my dear young friends

tonight, let me say this. You'll be studying your deceased subjects, and perhaps some of you in schools where they will deny the existence of God.

I myself am the graduate of a university where I had infidel professors. Where in a class in philosophy, one of the students could dare to stand up and say in that class, there is no God, I don't believe in God. That was said in a state university supported by the tax payers of that state.

A man could stand up and dare to say there is no God. That's the kind of an intellectual atmosphere in which I had to study during my university days. But dear friends, I thank God for this, and when I went to that university, I had on the helmet of salvation, and when you've got on the helmet of salvation, your mind is protected against those fiery darts of the wicked.

I had on the breastplate of righteousness, covering my heart, so that both mind and heart were protected as one studied in the midst of those infidel professors, and kept that pupil's fire-like faith which had been bequeathed to one from his parents, and which he's confirmed as really the word of God. Here is something to which I can anchor my soul. Yes, I say, Lord, I know that thou art.

My very intuition tells me so. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, and I believe the report. Yea, the tradition that came down to me from my parents, I believe it.

Moreover, I have seen thy handiwork in creation, and from the very simple process of dejection, I come to conclusion that there is a God. And then notice what God says about himself. As you go down here, verse 22, he tells us that he actually sits on the circle of the earth.

He sits on the vault of heaven. It is he who controls the whole orbit of this earth, its movements as well as the movements of other planets in the solar system, not to speak of the systems outside of our own. And then you'll notice that he compares himself with the inhabitants of the world.

He says, as compared with him, they are nothing but grasshoppers. You know, we think we're wonderful when we get in a big constellation, or a DC-7, and we leave the earth, and we go up to, say, 21, 22,000 feet, and then we come down again. We've left in Los Angeles, we come down in New York, say, this is wonderful.

You know what God says that is? That's just like a grasshopper hopping from one place to another, that's all. You say, well, that's a long hop for a grasshopper. Well, it is as far from your human standpoint.

But in the eyes of God, that's nothing more than it is for you and me to watch a grasshopper just drop, jump from one sphere of grass to another, that's all. He says the inhabitants are just like grasshoppers. For this is the one who stretches out to heaven as a curtain or a door, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in.

And how wonderful is that? Friends, when you and I consider the size of this universe, some of them are foolish enough to tell us that he has limitations. Those who are wiser say no, there seems to be no limit to them. They tell us that these paranebulae and these gray systems outside of our own system are so innumerable.

We were hearing the other night, one was asked how many stars there are in the heaven. He said the scientists have come to the conclusion that there are as many stars in the heaven as there are in the grandest hand of a musician. Oh, what a wonderful community to be in.

But then, oh dear friends, there is still another thing to which men look for security, and that is found in verse 23 where you have reference made to the princes and the judges of the earth. These, I take it, are the men who are supposed to guide our political affairs and our judicial affairs and so on. These are the men to whom we give credit for being able to discern the signs of the times and to give their judgment.

What does God say about that? He says he brings them to nothing, he makes the judges of the earth as planetly old. And you put in your trust in that kind of thing tonight? Don't misunderstand me, dear friends. I'm an American.

I was born under the stars and stripes and I love it. I love my country, but I'm not so foolish, dear friends, as to put my hope for time and for eternity in my country. I'm not so foolish as to do all of that.

It is true that my country celebrated its 180th birthday on the fourth day of this month. 180 years since this country declared itself independent in 1776. This is a healthy infant, you say, 180 years old.

Yes, dear friends, remember this. We probably have reached the zenith of our growth. We have seen in our own brief lifetimes how other nations, that the peak has gone down.

I can remember when, as a boy, I used to admire the greatness of countries in Europe, and particularly the British Empire. And I listened to the statement of a man like Sir Winston Churchill who said that he would never preside over the liquidation of the Empire. Well, he never had to preside over it, but he had to, and you and I are living in days when that which used to be the great standard of the world, the pound sterling, has passed out of the picture, and the American dollar has taken its place, and we're asked to break our own arms, patting ourselves on the back because of it.

Don't make any mistakes, dear friends. We too, we too will discover, we left you a little while long, probably this is the very peak, this is the very peak. You were reminded this morning of the explosion, population explosion, to the south of us in Latin America, and you know what will happen, dear friends? When that explosion that is taking place down there is realized, we will be so proud of numbers that the North American will be, shall I say, a pigman alongside of these people who will outnumber us for the time being.

Right now, we can train numerical superiority at least so far as the Western Hemisphere is concerned. Don't make any mistakes, dear friends. We are far outnumbered as compared to the population of the world.

As God blows on the schemes of all people, and he does this for a purpose, he tells us in the 24th verse that they can't laugh. They're just like little bricks that are planted in the ground but never take root. That can be said of a country like ours.

This is 180 years old. You say, I thought you were going to talk to us about words of Pope Francis here. I am.

You know, dear friends, some people are so ignorant of what's going on that they don't realize that they need words of Pope Francis here. And one of these days, when the storm overtakes them, they're going to wonder where they can go. Now, dear friends, it's with that in view that we're talking about these things tonight.

And so, I'm going to bring this to a close this evening by turning you now to the brighter side of the picture, which is found in the 26th verse, the last verse, which we read today. What does God tell us to do in this quest for security? First of all, he has asked us to look around and see this creation. But now, what does he ask us to do? He asks us to lift up our eyes on high.

I think you know the way that puts me. It would have been enough to say, look up. But he says, lift up your eyes on high.

And I believe there's real purpose in this word, word of lifting up your eyes. Because we've got so accustomed to looking down. We're so accustomed to looking down into the world.

So accustomed to looking down on others. It seems to be the habit of our lives to look down on others, to look down all the time, instead of looking up. And sometimes God has to put us on our back in order to teach us a lesson just like this.

I remember talking to a lady down in New Zealand when we made our home down there. She was a helpless cripple with arthritis that's been lying on our back, I think, for some 10 or 12 years. I remember speaking to her and I say, listen, can you tell me what is the greatest lesson that you have learned here on this set of prisons? She said, brother, the greatest lesson I've learned is to look up.

She was only waiting for a second. Even while she was talking to me, she couldn't turn her head from one side to the other. Her neck was so stiff with this arthritis.

But she's learned to look up. It may be, dear friends, that God will have to bring us into just such a position as that in order to teach us to look up. And yet, strange to say, the very word which is used in the original language of the New Testament for man, I'm speaking of the word anthropos, from which we get our word anthropology, and so on.

I am told that anthropos, the Greek word for man, really means the up-looker, as though man had been constituted by nature as a gift from his Creator to look up. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things. Now, I want to give you a few things that will really give words of hope, comfort, and healing.

The first thing he says about these things is that he brings them out, brings out their hopes by nothing. You say, what, there's no comforting about that? The comforting thing about that, dear friends, is that God knows how many creatures he has. He never loses sight of one of them.

And not more, not only that, he never loses sight of them. But he's never lost sight of you. Just as surely as he is put within your bosom, as well as he's put within my bosom, something that the great figure cannot bury.

Forget that. You are more than a mass of bleeding flames. God has given to you a spirit by which you may have God's consciousness, and he's never lost sight of you.

He sees you exactly where you are tonight. He knows your number. He knows exactly where you came in in the whole scheme of creation of the millions and billions of human beings that have crossed this earth.

He's got your number. And I'd like to just play on that for a little bit. You know, when we say we have a certain person we do not know, we sometimes mean by that that we have his name.

And that's exactly what I would like to weave into us tonight, dear friends. He not only knows where you come in into this great process of created beings, who play possession rather of created beings, but he knows exactly your state and your condition. He knows you by name.

And you'll notice it says here, he calls them all by name. That's more wonderful yet, isn't it? Some of us have worked in institutions and factories where we had a number. And as I said to some of you the other evening, while I refused social security a few years ago, now that I'm going back on to the teaching staff of Wooten College this fall, I'm told that I shall have to take social security.

So, beginning with September the 1st, I shall have a social security number. And in Washington, there are no parliamentarians by number, median total. I'll have a number.

That'll be more important in Washington than my name is. Doesn't it more important sometimes when you walk into a plant to have your number on your coat lapel? My friends, God has something more than a number for you tonight. He's got a name for you.

Yes, but then somebody says to me, doesn't this here passage of scripture really talk about the stars? Aren't you just stretching this a little bit tonight in referring this to human beings? Yes, the lady down in Florida tried to set me up with that question some years ago, as I was talking about this verse. She said, what? That 26th verse doesn't talk about human beings. It talks about stars.

I said, lady, do you go to the motion pictures? Oh, yes. I said, uh, do you have any favorite actors? Well, she had her favorite actors, and she named some of them, and that's Mrs. Sue. I said, it seems to me, if my memory serves, that back in Hollywood, where they make these pictures, they call these individuals that you've just now named, they call them stars.

And if they're just a little bit young, they call them scarlet. Is that right? I said, what right have you got to call them stars? Many of them, I said, are stars, all right, but they call them stars. Stars.

But Daniel is the one who gives us the right to use a figure right in the Bible itself, when he says, this day that turned many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever and ever. Yes, we believe we have a right, dear friends, to apply this verse to human beings as hidden names, to say that not only does God know the complete number of us, he knows each one of us by name. I don't know what his name for me might be.

I have a very humble name, so far as my name Armerding is concerned. I made them smile a little bit in Germany last fall, when I was giving some addresses over there in the Puerto Rico to the Thessalonians. I referred to myself as an Armerding, and they laughed because they knew immediately that it meant a poorer thing.

I used to think it meant poor things. So one day I discovered that Armer is in the comparative degree. So I was not only an Armerding, I was an Armerding, poor as yet.

Ah, friends, thank God, when he puts your name in the book of life, you're nothing but a poor sinner, but saved by grace, and enriched with grace divine. What a wonderful thing that is. Now let's look at this last thing in connection with this security which we're looking for tonight.

Notice this last statement, it says, "...by the greatness of his might, and because he's strong in power, not one saves him." Or, as the Revised Standard Version puts it, "...not one is missed." Friends, what set of

security could you have tonight? Here's a God who's never lost sight of me, he's made me. Here's a God who knows me by my name, and he's written my name down in his book, since I've trusted his beloved son as my Lord and Savior. My name's written there on the page right in place.

I challenge you at this point that I close this simple talk tonight with your name written in. Can you rejoice tonight that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life? Friends, you can have it written there tonight by putting your simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your person, that you're justly sure that he who writes your name in the air will never have to erase you, because by his might and by his power you've reached those you need to reach. Notice it doesn't say, "...by their strength and their power." We'll talk about that tomorrow morning, but tonight we're speaking of his power and his might, and it is because of that might that not one of them is missing.

I never talked along these lines of what I think of an incident that has occurred in our ministry out in the state of New Mexico, when we live in the city of Albuquerque. One night I was speaking along these very lines, and I think I must have used this quite internally secure. In any case, I said I was as sure of being in heaven as if I were there already.

As I was in that audience, it was a small audience, I noticed one lady's countenance changed immediately when I said that. I had reason to believe that somewhere along the line she'd been offended that evening, for when she went out that evening she gave me one of those cold, sweet handshakes, you know what I mean? And she was gone. When I got home, I said to my dear wife, I said, I'm afraid that I offended Mrs. Cox tonight.

I said, we better go around and see her and find out what it is. So my wife said, well, let's go tomorrow. Don't let it last too long.

Well, I said, maybe tomorrow she'll be busy watching. You don't want to get in any complications. We'll wait to see if she'll be there watching.

So we did. We went, and when we arrived at the house, I very carefully put my wife in the fanny car to take the first blow. Well, my wife greeted me, and Mrs. Cox was there.

She looked at the door, and she was handed to us very cordially. I, if I remember correctly, gave a kiss to each other. I said, well, that's fine.

Everything's looking all right. Not that I expected the same kind of treatment. When I saw her face, I thought, this ain't going all right.

But when I got to the door, another one of those cold, sweet handshakes. That's all I got. When we got inside, she ignored me in any conversation.

She never said a word in that. It hurt. It hurt.

Finally, I couldn't stand it any longer. I said, Mrs. Cox, I think I'll come around here this afternoon, because I believe that I've offended you in something I've said. And I said, if at all possible, I want to apologize for it and make it right.

I said, is there anything I've said that has offended you that you should say? She said, I should say so. She said, the audacity of you, the presumption of you, to stand up in that place at Sunday night and say

that you're as sure of being in heaven as if you were there already. Who in the world do you think you are anyhow? You're all out now.

Oh, I said, is that Mrs. Cox? Yes, that's it. I said, now, Mrs. Cox, let me explain to you how that'll be. I said, I'm not so sure of being in heaven as if I were there already, particularly because I'm so sure.

But I said, Mrs. Cox, the same one who saved me is teaching me. He says that when he was, he was kept by the power of God, true faith on the salvation. Kept by the power of God.

I said, you see, Mrs. Cox, my faith was not based upon my own strength or my own ability, but it is based upon the strength and power and might of my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. At this time he's stretching on her face with the angels talking to him. And before that afternoon was over, we had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Cox to hear her thank the Lord that she was as sure of being in heaven as if she were there already.

Friends, why am I so sure tonight? Because the one who loved me and gave himself for me is watching over me. Do you think that the one who paid so dearly for the salvation of my soul is going to let me slip through his fingers now? What a, what a deceit that would be! Hey, friends, his own reputation is at stake. He's promised to save a fool or a ruined sinner like me.

And I've committed a business to him. I've turned it over to him. Fifty-two years ago last month, I turned it over to him.

In all those fifty-two years, dear friends, I thank God for this assurance and for the one who saved me, Jesus. And because he is strong in life, not even calamity will be missing today. God grant that everyone listening to me tonight may know something of the joy and the comfort and the peace and the hope.

Heavenly Father, we now commit to thee thy precious word which we have before us. We thank you, O Lord, that it is possible for us in

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