

Thou Art Mine

by Carl Armerding

God's investment in us is not just about creation, but also about redemption and calling us to belong to Him.

Duration: 38:38

Scripture: Isaiah 42:21 - 43:1, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Gods Love", "Belonging To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the passage from Isaiah 43:1-4, emphasizing that although it primarily pertains to God's ancient people, Israel, there are valuable applications for believers today. The theme of the sermon is 'Thou art mine,' highlighting the human desire to belong to something. The speaker shares a story of a missionary in Africa who saved a man's life, illustrating the preciousness of each individual in God's sight. The sermon emphasizes the value of the soul and the immense love of God, who sent His Son to die for humanity. The speaker encourages listeners to trust in God's companionship through all of life's experiences.

Transcript

Will you please open God's word at the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 42. Isaiah chapter 42, and beginning at verse 21. The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake.

He will magnify the law and make it honorable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled. They're all of them snared in bolts.

They're hid in prison houses. They are for a prey and non-deliverance. For a spoil and non-death restored.

Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken and fear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel for the robbers? Did not the Lord, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, neither were they obedient unto His law. Therefore hath He poured upon him the fury of His anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about. Yet he knew it not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to harm.

But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, neither form, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thine age, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I'll 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. For I am the Lord thy God, the only one of Israel, thy Savior. I gave Egypt for thy ransom.

He'd yoke and fever for thee. Since thou art precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee. Therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life.

Fear not, for I am with thee, and I'll bring thy seed from the east and gather thee from the west. I'll say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back. Bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth, every one that is called by my name.

For I hath created him for my glory. I have formed him, yea, I have made him. There are two things I should say before I launch into a few things that I have to say about this wonderful fast portion of God's word, and that is that I'm fully aware that it belongs primarily to God's ancient people, Israel.

Anything that I will say tonight will be known by way of conversation to ourselves. And the second thing I'd like to say is that I'm not going to deal with this passage, shall I say, exegetically, that is, to bring out the fine meaning to each and every word, and perhaps not even expositively, but to make a little application so that every one of us may receive a blessing from God. And with this in view, I've chosen the last three words of the first verse of chapter 43.

I've chosen these last three words with my peace. Thou art mine. You know, it just seems like a human being is born with a desire to belong to something.

I think we can see this even in an infant that's a few days old. They like to snuggle down to their mother's breast. There's a desire, a feeling that they like to belong to something.

And for those of us who have never experienced what it means not to belong, it's difficult for us to imagine just what sort of a predicament this puts one in. I remember reading a story not so long ago in Christianity Today, at least within one of the main issues of Christianity Today, which some of you may know as an evangelical magazine. And in this magazine was an article about refugee children.

And he also had the article told in the last paragraph of his article of a group of little children, refugee children, who were passing by a registration desk. And he noticed a little girl whose hair was badly disheveled and she was clad in rags and tatters. When her turn came, she came up to the desk.

The man who was registering these refugee children, he said to her little girl, what's your name? Beginning to sob, she said, I ain't nobody's nothing. I ain't nobody's nothing. Nobody cares for her.

Nobody that she could call father or mother. Nobody that she could call brother or sister. And to that nobody that she could even call friend.

You say that's an extreme case, and it is. But let's look at this passage here in those last verses which we read in chapter 42. And here we see God using these very terms of his own ancient people.

You notice all these words that are mentioned in verse 22 of chapter 42, verse 22. This is the people robbed, and spoiled, slayed, imprisoned, for a prey, for a scourge, and nobody says restored. You ask, how did they get into this predicament? Well, they got there because they disobeyed God.

And he gave them over to their enemies in this way to punish them. But what I want to talk about a little bit tonight is the contrast in chapter 43. You know, when a chapter opens the way this one does, it reminds

me a great deal of the second chapter of Ephesians where God tells us, Gentiles, you happy Christians who were dead in trespasses and in sins, were in time to actually walk according to the course of this world, according to the principle of power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

And they who were by nation, the children of God, even as others. But God, but God who was rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, he saved us by his grace. And so we've got an Old Testament illustration of the same thing here.

But now, and here God is actually claiming these people that nobody wanted. You know, this is an interesting thing when you come to think of the kind of people that God is saving. Very often they're the kind that nobody else wants.

It may be that you and I have also left the impression, as we have passed by our fellow citizens, we've left the impression, well, so what? If you want to hear the gospel, you can hear it. You just need to turn on your radio and you can hear it. But dear friends, that's not enough for us as Christians.

We need to have a real deep interest in souls, men and women who are going on their road to a Christless eternity, and all that that means. I sometimes wonder whether we realize just what we have been saved from. Sometimes the question is put to me by people who question whether there could be such a thing as an eternal hell.

So on this, well now, what do you suppose it will be like? And I suppose the standard answer to that question would be that it's the lake that burneth with fire and doomsday, which of course is a very horrible picture that God himself gives us in his holy words. But I think there's something even more horrible than that. You say, I can't imagine anything more horrible than that.

Yes, there's something more horrible than that. And for that something more horrible, we go back to the gospel, particularly Matthew and Mark, where we hear our Lord using the very words with which the 22nd Psalm opens up. And he cried out in the anguish of his soul, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? That, dear friends, is what hell is like.

And just imagine blowing away a salvation and not telling it to somebody, at least letting them do it for once. Oh, may I put the burden of it upon your hearts that you speak to others about the one who loves you and gains himself for you. So now let us notice the change that God makes.

In these verses here in Isaiah 4-3, the first thing he says, but now says the Lord that created thee, O Jacob. Yes, God has an investment in us. He has an investment in you and in me.

He made us. He doesn't say this about the animals, but he says this about you and me. And I suppose that the best way we can explain that is because he took great pains when he made man.

He didn't simply say, well, let the earth bring forth men. But we read in the book of Genesis that he took the dust to the ground. He poured it into the human body.

And then he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul. And so God here says two things.

He says he created us and he formed us. And it's interesting that in the book of Zechariah, we have this very expression that God formed the spirit of man within him. I remember one day in the state of Florida, having a little conversation with my dear departed friend, Donald Gray Barnhouse.

The lady came up and I saw that she was anxious to ask Dr. Barnhouse a question. And so I just stepped to one side and she put her question to Dr. Barnhouse. She said, Dr. Barnhouse, do you think our spirits have forms or are they just part of the atmosphere when we die? And I think he knew the answer.

So he looked at me and said, you answer that, will you? And it just so happened that I had been reading recently in the cross chapter of Zechariah. And there I read the description of God as the one who stretched forth to heaven and laid the foundations of the earth and formed the spirit of man within him. Something inside of you and me, dear friends, that the gray figure can't bury.

The spirit of man directly communicated by God the creator. He says, dear I created thee and I formed thee. These are God's primary rights to each and every soul that breathes the breath of life tonight.

They may even deny your existence, but they'll never get away from this, that as responsible human beings one of these days they're going to stand before him who gives them the very breath of life. And they're going to listen to his claims as he's making them here that he created us and that he formed us. But that isn't where this topic stops.

You notice it says, and I have redeemed thee. Now it's very simple. We see all these things in one verse.

They're almost in one sentence. But do you realize, dear friends, that between the creating and forming of man and his redemption, something must have happened. An unfallen being doesn't need any redemption.

As long as Adam was in his innocence, he didn't need a redeemer. So that this very word here when God says, I have redeemed thee, inquires that something happened in between the creation and the forming of man and the redemption. And there's no way of explaining this except to admit what the scriptures clearly teach that man is a fallen being, that he sinned against God, and ever since that day he needs a redeemer.

And even this isn't as simple as it sounds, because in order to be our redeemer he had to become a man. For as much as the children will partake of the flesh and blood we read in Hebrews 2, he himself likewise took part of the thing that through death he might destroy him that has the power of death, that is the devil, and to deliver us from the fear of death. For all our life I'm subject to bondage because of the fear of death.

Yes, in order to redeem us he had to become one of ourselves. I don't think I could ever forget a story told by the late John Alexander Clark, who for many years was a missionary in Africa. He came to Dallas where I was teaching at the time in seminary.

This was many years ago now. I may not remember all of the details of the story, but in general it was something like this. One night as Mr. Clark was sitting in his hut in Africa, he heard unearthly cries not very far from his door.

He decided to go out and investigate what was going on. So he lit a lantern, went out there, and he found three Africans teaching another African. He saw that he was no match for them.

He couldn't even argue with them to quit what they were doing, because they seemed to be intent on killing this man. And when they thought they had killed him, they took off. When they took off, Mr. Clark went out there with his lantern, and discovered that there were two kinds of light.

So he managed to get the man into his hut, and all through the night he nursed him back so that by daybreak he was able even to talk a little. Mr. Clark says, What was the reason for this? Why did they beat you up like this? Well, he said, I don't belong in this part of the country. He said, my folks live over in such and such a part.

And he said, we are not on friendly terms with each other. Matter of fact, he said there was a war on between this tribe over here and our tribe, and I was taken a prisoner. And because I displeased my new master, he decided he'd kill me.

Well, said Mr. Clark, isn't there some way we can get you out of this? Oh yes, said the African, I could be redeemed. Well, he said, what would it cost to redeem you? Well, he said, it might cost a bolt of cloth, it might cost a gun. Well, said Mr. Clark, I've got both of those.

I can give you a bolt of cloth, and I could give you a gun. He said, let me redeem you. And the African shook his head, he said, no.

He said, you couldn't do it? Oh, he said, I'll prove it to you. Well, in fact, he gets the material to show him that he had it. Oh, he says, I'm not, I don't just desire that you have it.

But he says, you can't redeem me. Well, why can't I redeem you, said Mr. Clark? He said, because it has to be one of my own people. Who will come over here and redeem me.

What a wonderful illustration this is. How do you suppose they got this in that part of Africa? The only way I can answer that question is that somehow this must have trickled down from the land of Palestine. The great truth of the kinsmen redeemer.

God giving this precious truth in the Old Testament. That the redeemer would have to become a man. So you can see how much is written in this simple statement here tonight.

God says, I created thee, I formed thee. Yes, and when he says, I redeemed thee. That means that he actually comes down to be made a man.

In order that he might die for man's sin upon the cross. And you'll notice that immediately after he says, I redeemed thee. He says, I pulled.

Notice this please. I have called thee by thy name. You see, after God makes the whole plan of salvation work out.

Now he sends out a call. He says, I've called thee by thy name. Thy name.

You know what your name is according to the book. I remember a heckler in a crowd. He was putting some questions to the speaker.

A young fellow was just beginning his preaching. And a heckler in the crowd says, young fellow. He says, you seem to be very proud.

He said, can you tell me the name of David's mother? There was a little bit of a hush. And I wondered myself how he was going to handle it. Because I wasn't much older than he is.

He said, yes, I can tell you. David himself said, in sin did my mother conceive me. Her name was sinner.

He said, exactly this is our name. And God says, I've called thee by thy name. And of course this implies that there was a response.

But some people don't like this. They don't like to be told this. I remember a young lady down in New Zealand where we spent some three years.

In the Lord's works. It so happened that an engagement that she had for a Monday night was broken up because of the rain. And so her mother persuaded her to come out and hear this American preacher.

And when she left the gospel hall that night, she was heard to say, I'll never go to hear that man again. He makes me feel like a wretch. So she was there the next night.

I didn't know anything about this. But I just thumped down as I did the night before. That men need to realize that there's sinners, all sinners in the sight of God.

That there's no help apart from salvation which God himself has wrought in the person of his beloved son. I have told you. I'm happy to tell you that that lady, Marian Wilkinson, the third night received the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal saint.

Yes, she heard the call. And this is exactly what's implied in this word. I have called thee by thy name.

God expect the response. And if I'm speaking to someone this evening who has never yet responded to that loving, gracious call of God, I beg of you, my friend, not to close your ears to it tonight. Because this may be the last time you'll hear it.

Tomorrow's sun may never rise to bless thy long deluded sight. This is the time. Oh, then be wise, thou wilt be saved.

Why not tonight? And it's right on top of this that God says, thou art mine. You notice he didn't say this after he said, I created you. Oh, he had creative rights in us.

He formed us. He had certain rights in us because we were his creatures. But it is not until after we have answered the gracious call of God that he says, thou art mine.

Do you feel tonight that you've been left out somewhere? You know, in dealing with people, and especially with young folks, and I've had a good deal to do with them down the years in school teaching career, I've taught in various institutions, and again and again the young person will come into the office, and before they've been there 10 or 15 minutes, I realize that somehow they feel detached. Somehow they feel they don't belong. Somehow, even though they may have learned from their mothers and their fathers to say our father, which art in heaven, they don't feel any relationship with him.

But as we were hearing so sweetly from the 8th chapter of Romans today, when you're born again, the Holy Spirit puts the language right in your mouth and in your heart, Abba Father. Yes, dear friends, this is it. And the minute you can say that from the heart, you're his.

You belong. And so I just want to challenge you with this at this point here, and this was a talk this evening. Do you really belong? Do you really belong? You know, sometimes this question is put to me.

People are very anxious to know where I worship. They say, to what church do you belong? I tell them I belong to the Lord Jesus. I belong to him.

You know, when I say that, dear friends, I'm saying a lot, because this implies that somewhere along the line, I have not only received what he offered me, but I, in turn, have surrendered what I had to him. And this is a thing that it took me two years to learn as a Christian. I was saved at 15.

It was not until I was 17 years of age, one day reading the 12th chapter of the Epistle of the Romans, where St. Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies or compassions of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable or intelligent service. A living sacrifice. And I didn't even know how to go about it.

I asked a fellow Christian, baptized the same night I was, whether he knew how to do this, and he didn't even, I don't think he even knew the verse was in the Bible. I asked another one, and likewise, he didn't know how it was done. He'd read it.

But it wasn't until I went to an older Christian. I said to Mr. McCallum, I've been reading in God's word that God would have me present my body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is my reasonable or intelligent service. I said, Mr. McCallum, how do you do that? Well, he said, I don't know that there's any standard way of doing it.

But he said, I'll suggest a way of doing it. And he suggested that I go to my room with my Bible, close the door, lock it if necessary, so I wouldn't be disturbed. Open it at Romans 12 and 1 and put your finger on the text and say, Lord, I want to do this today.

And I thought, this is so simple, I could hardly wait to get home to do it. But you know, when I got down on my knees and put my finger on that text and said, Lord, I want to do this now, I began to think of what was involved. Why, this means my brain.

This means my eyes with which I look at things. This means my ears with which I listen to things. This means my mouth and my tongue with which I give utterance to things.

This means my hands with which I do things. This means my feet which go places. This means my heart.

I tell you, by the time I went down that lift, that cold sweat was out on me. But I thank God that I never left that room that day till that transaction was done. That's a good many years ago now.

I've never regretted it. Oh, it's a tremendous, tremendous transaction that makes good the words of the Savior when he says, Thou art mine. He claims me as his preacher.

He claims me as one who's redeemed me. And now he's got me by surrender. Oh, friends, to be his in this threefold way tonight.

Wonderful. I want you to think of these words tonight and ask yourself again the question, Can I really from my heart say this? The Lord saying, Thou art mine. Yes, you say I'm his preacher.

I'm redeemed by his blood. But have you ever made that complete surrender? But you'll notice that something goes after this. And I'm so glad to point out the sequence here.

You'll notice in the next verse, God doesn't say, well now I'm through with you. This is fine. You've reached that point and this is it.

But he realizes that we live in a world which is hostile to us. And in the next verse in this 43rd chapter of Isaiah, we get some expressions which I think cover just about all of human experience. When he says, When thou passest through the waters, those things that are likely to overwhelm you, I'll be with you.

I'm not going to give you a rowboat so you can row across, but I'm going to be with you. Just like he was with his people when they left the land of Egypt. God was with them.

And then there are those experiences which consume us. When he says here, And when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned. And how those three Hebrew children of which you read in the book of Daniel, how they prove this thing to be literally true.

But it isn't necessary to have a literal experience like this to prove the truth of this. Oh, how many things there are dear friends, which are likely to consume us. But God in his marvelous grace says, you can go right through it.

And as the apostle Peter puts it in his first chapter, his first epistle, that the car you'll take, which is much more precious than the gold that perishes, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Just think of having God as your companion to all the experiences of life, no matter what they may be. I pass over the next verse or two because I believe they have special application to Israel, but I want to come to verse four where I think I have something which again I can claim as a Christian.

He says, Since thou was precious in my sight. You know, he waited until now to say this. Of course we were precious in his sight.

You know, if we weren't precious in his sight, he never would have sent his son into this world to die for us. Or we don't know the value of a soul. The Lord Jesus put the question, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul? I don't think we realize the preciousness of a soul, but God does.

He says, Thou was precious in my sight and honorable, and I have loved thee. And mind you, he uses these same words to the church at Philadelphia in the third chapter of the book of Revelation. He says, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship at thy feet, and they shall know that I have loved thee.

Oh friends, I can hear my wife's grandmother, dear old Scott, she loves me. Aye, she says, that's something that warms the cockles of your heart. And it does.

To know that God loves you. I have loved you. But one more thought, and I must take them to a close here.

You notice God isn't through yet. In verses five and six, he promises them that there's going to be a day of gathering. He says, Fear not, for I am with thee.

I'll bring thy sheep from the east. I'll gather thee from the west. I'll say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back.

Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the end of the earth. Everyone that is called by my name. First he called them by their name.

Now he says, everyone that is called by my name. He's given us a new name, you see. And it doesn't matter what part of the world we come from, the four points of the compass are all mentioned here.

Years ago I heard a dear friend of mine in Chicago, Dr. William Thomas, who was Baptist in Paul's Union Church there for many years. He was speaking about the gates to the city in the book of Revelation, and pointing out that there were three on the east side, and three on the west side, and three on the north side, and three on the south side. And he suggested a reason for this.

He suggested that those gates on the east side were for people in the sunrise of life. Little children, perhaps who hadn't even reached their teens as yet. Then he turned to the west gate, and he says that's for those old sinners that have left it all till 70, 80, and some of them 90 years old, and they just come in in the sunset of life.

How much they miss. And then those coming in from the north, those cold, almost immovable people, that can sit under the most moving ministry and never twitch a muscle, you know. You never know by looking at them.

They're so unresponsive. But God has some of them too. And then these folks in the south.

Warm hearted. Say amen once in a while. Hallelujah.

He gets them in too. Yes, he brings them all in. And while I know that this refers primarily to the gathering of Israel, as I said to you a little earlier this evening, but ah dear friends, this is what we're looking forward to.

It's going to be a great gathering one of these days. You know I haven't given up yet believing that I'll never lie under that gravestone that they got my name on up there in Elmhurst, Illinois. They put it there when they made the gravestone for my dear wife.

They put mine on one side also. But there's only one date on it so far. That's 1889.

Only one date so far. And I don't expect another one to go. Because you know friends, we have signs all around us that it must be very near.

I believe the Lord is coming. I'm one of those who's waiting for God's son from heaven. And he may come tonight.

What a wonderful change it'll be. But what a wonderful gathering it's going to be. Oh, think of all the redeemed from all parts of the world coming together to prosperate themselves in the Savior's seat.

And to say, not only He is mine, but I am His. I wonder if we could sing in closing that hymn, I Am Thine, O Lord. Is that in this hymn book? 23? 183? You can see I need to go home because I'm getting worn out.

But I love this tonight in connection with this. I had another hymn picked out, but this came into my mind as I was finishing up just now. I Am Thine, O Lord.

I have heard Thy voice, and it told Thy love to me. But I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to Thee. Number 183.

I Am Thine, O Lord. Oh, blessed Lord, we bow in humble adoration at Thy feet at times of sanctity that Thou was willing to take up those who were so worthless in themselves, so rebellious. And the deep interest that Thou hast in us, not only because Thou hast made us and formed us, but, oh Lord, how wonderful that Thou hast redeemed us.

Thou hast loved us, and Thou hast learned to gather us. We thank Thee for these wonderful truths. We pray that somehow this passage may find a lodgment in our hearts tonight, and especially these three words that we've been emphasizing, Thou art mine.

Help us to make Thee good, Lord, in our lives. And if there be one here this evening who is not yet able to say, I am his, and he is mine, we trust, Lord, before this night is over, there may be that full surrender to Thee, bowing at Thy feet to receive, first of all, the pardon of sin, and then the kiss of reconciliation. To this end, we commit Thy word and all who've heard it into Thy loving hands and pray that Thy great Lord Jesus, Thy love, our Father, and the comfort of Thy Holy Spirit may abide with us till Jesus comes and forever.

Amen.

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