

Yarib: Defender of the People

by Neil Rhodes

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confronting unbelief and actively responding to God's promises for transformation and deliverance.

Duration: 48:32

Scripture: Isaiah 51:7, Mark 9:22, Mark 9:24

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Overcoming Fear"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the issue of fear and passivity in the hearts of believers. He emphasizes that the root problem is the innate fear of being confronted by someone who appears bigger than us. The preacher highlights the power and greatness of God, reminding the listeners that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth. He encourages the audience to trust in God and not fear the reproach or revilings of men. The sermon concludes with a call to embrace the joy of the Lord and believe in His miraculous power.

Transcript

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Keep your finger right there, and we'll come back to it after I read a couple of other scriptures this afternoon. And I've titled this message this afternoon, Yarab, meaning Defender of the People. It's just a Hebrew word for this, and you'll see this in the verse of Scripture later on today as we get to it in the book of Isaiah 51.

Very, very powerful portion of Scripture in Isaiah. Now Father, I thank you this afternoon. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

God, thank you for incredible joy of the Holy Ghost. You said you would not leave us comfortless, but you would come to us. And Lord, you've given us your Holy Spirit.

And Lord, he resides within us, ever giving us power to live for you, ever giving us joy in the midst of tough times. Father, I thank you. Now Lord, take this word.

I know that you birthed it into my heart. I ask that you now bring it to your people in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Carter, and then last week, Sister Teresa, mentioned a verse of Scripture that I've been pondering on all this whole week, in fact, for the last two weeks. And it's Mark 9, verse 22.

It says, But if thou canst do anything. Here is a man who has a child who is deaf and dumb, and he comes to Jesus and says, If thou can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Jesus said to him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief. Now in Matthew, there's another Scripture in verse 2. It says, And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, or if you are willing, you can make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will.

Or in other words, I am willing. And immediately, and he said, Be thou clean. And immediately, his leprosy was cleansed.

Now, when you take a look at this Scripture in Mark 9, there has pervaded in the church this sense that leaves us with a very passive style of Christianity. I believe, but there's also unbelief. I believe God, I believe everything that's preached, but there's an inactiveness on my side that leaves me in a sense of a passivity towards the things of God.

So I sing the songs, I listen to the word, I get excited, but it leaves me passive. It's this I believe, but help my unbelief. It's this area that's in my life that has never been confronted by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And see, this is, we heard a message this morning, it's to not only pray and believe, but it is to act upon that belief, it's to make that decision for God. And see, this is what Jesus is saying, he said, if you understood the heart of God, he said, not only am I willing, not only do I want to do this, you've got to understand the heart of God, he says, I want to touch your life. He says, I want to do it, this is my heart, I'm willing to do it.

And he goes on to say, not only am I willing, but I want to do it. Be thou clean, he said, and so we understand that this is the heart of God. If you can believe, then all things are possible.

You see, God, this man brings his son, and he sees the problem. And see, this is, when I was looking at it, this is what takes place in our heart. This man saw the problem as being the devil binding his child.

And that's what we do so many times, we see the devil is my problem. Or we see a sin or a particular thing that we are involved in as the problem. It's the devil.

Or it's this thing that I've got involved in and now I'm hooked on drugs or whatever the case might be. That's the problem. And God, Jesus comes to the man, he says, no, that's not your problem.

I don't see that as the problem. Jesus says to him, he says, no, that's not your problem. Unbelief is your problem.

That might be a work of the devil, and I'll deal with it, but that's not your problem. And see, that's where the passivity comes in, is we're looking at the wrong situations. He said, if you will believe, all things are possible.

So that's how God sees it. He sees it from a different perspective. Now, we see the same things being communicated to the children of Israel throughout the book of Isaiah.

In Isaiah chapter 40, in fact, from Isaiah 40 onwards, you begin to see the whole tenor of the message from Isaiah. It begins to change as he starts communicating to the people of God that this is the heart and the desire of God to be reconciled to his people. And that you start seeing amazing chapters, incredible chapters of God's faith and truth and power being revealed to his people to say, bondage is not what I have for you in mind.

I don't like you being in bondage. He says, I have in mind for you liberty. And so when you see Isaiah chapter 40, he says to the people, he says, Isaiah says, God speaking to Isaiah, and he says, cry to her.

Cry out loud to the people of God that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned. This is back in chapter 40. You see, it hasn't even taken place yet, but God is way ahead.

He's already spoken something that hasn't even taken place yet. He said, I want you to understand the true heart of almighty God. He said, I want you to understand that I'm speaking in advance something to you that you can lay hold of, that the warfare has already been completed.

I'm already ahead. You might not have even gone into it, but I want you to understand that I've already gone ahead and told you that the warfare is already completed and that your iniquity is pardoned. See, that is the heart of God.

But we see people are so, they have an understanding, but it's mixed with this unbelief. Look at Isaiah chapter 50, ten chapters ahead, and we take a look and see, this is what Isaiah speaks to the people in verse 2. They come and God is speaking. He says, Wherefore, when I came, was there no man when I called? Was there none to answer? He says, How come there's, when I came and I called, how come there's no one to answer? Why is there nobody to respond to my message, respond to my word? Where is the person who will hear the word of God and say, that's me, and respond to it? So he's saying in 50, he says, I come to you.

I came and I called. Was there none to answer? Wasn't there any person in all of Israel who would hear my cry and answer it? And say, God, take my life. Was there nobody when God looked, was there nobody that he could find that would answer the call? Then he goes on to say, Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness.

And it goes on, verse 3, I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering. He says, This is the almighty power of God. He says, When I called, when I spoke to you, wasn't there anyone who would believe my report? Am I not the God who speaks one word and the waters part? Am I not the God of the miraculous? So when I called and when I looked for someone, how come nobody responded and said, God, I believe? You see, the church has come into this place of passivity because, well, we believe, we believe in God.

But the Bible also tells us in the New Testament that the devil also believes, but he trembles. So there's this sense of, I believe, but I've got this unbelief. And as long as that unbelief resides in my heart, there will always be this sense of passivity, this apathetic notion of going forward with the things of God.

And so there's this mixture of understanding. Oh, I understand God is an almighty God, but I don't really believe that he can do this for me. In fact, when you go to chapter 51, verses 9, 10 and 11 are all a response of God's people back to God.

See, they want to believe. This verse is 9, 10, 11 is exactly like the man that I read to you in the book of Mark who says, I believe, but help my unbelief. There's a situation here.

You see, beloved, we've got this problem. If we will acknowledge this in our hearts that there are definitely times that this is why we're here in the house of God. I do believe, but I've got this sense of unbelief that God will actually do it in my life or do it through me.

Now, that's where I'm leading you this afternoon to deal with that area of unbelief so that we can respond to God. So when he calls, we can raise our hand immediately and answer the call and say, here I am. Use my life.

Take me. And so we've got this situation. Look at this.

This is the answer back to God in verses 9, 10, 11. And the people are saying, OK, they've heard this from chapter 40 and then 50 and they've heard this tremendous report. And so look at the exclamation that they make.

They say, well, God awake. Why have you been sleeping? Why are you taking so long to deliver me? Put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake, as in the ancient days.

And this is their response. All right, God, I believe it. Yeah, I hear the message.

Then awake. Do something for me. This is what they say.

Do something for me. Do something like in the days gone by and generations of old. Art thou not it that cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea and the waters in the great deep and hath made the depths of the sea away for the ransom to pass over? Aren't you that one that has done these things in the past? Then God, why aren't you doing it? Why aren't you working in my life? Art thou.

It goes on there in verse 11. Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion. Now, we sing this as as a very powerful song.

And everlasting joy shall be upon their head. But you know what they are saying here in verse 11? They're saying that if this is true. That if everything that is declared about you.

That you are this almighty God. That you can do these great things. God, awake.

Do these things. If it were true, then I would be on my way out of bondage and singing the songs of the redeemed. In other words, they are back.

They are exactly at the place on the other side of the Red Sea where the children of Israel were before they crossed. That's exactly where they are at. And they're in the same place.

And they said, it's the same thing. They've got the right song, but they're on the wrong side. They're standing on that side.

And they're saying, well God, if you're the same God that opened up these Red Seas. If it were true. Then I would be marching through this Red Sea right now.

And I'd be singing the songs of Zion. Can you see what they're saying? They're saying, God, I believe you. I believe that you are the one that did these things in the past.

But I don't really see it taking place now in my life. I believe. But help my unbelief.

And so Isaiah takes them straight into, you know, verse 1. And listen to the crowd. This is like a three-way conversation. There's God speaking and Isaiah is hearing it.

And then he's speaking to the people of God. They're responding back. And he's going back to God and speaking to the Lord.

And coming back and speaking to the people of Israel. And I love the responses. We just go through a few scriptures here in Isaiah 51.

And Isaiah says, Harken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord. Look unto the rock from whence ye are hewn. And so Isaiah is saying to the people of God, If it is in your heart, if you are an honest seeker of the things of God.

So he's not talking to the person who is game playing. He's not speaking. So God is coming back.

Now he knows that in the midst of all of these people, there are the game players. They put on a good show on the outside. But they have no intention on serving God.

You'll see them praising. They look good on the outside. But in their heart, they have no intention of changing their direction.

They have no intention of responding to the call of God. But they'll show. They'll give you a show.

And so God is appealing here. He's bypassing the game player. And now he's speaking to a people.

And he says that if it is in your heart, if you are somebody who has a genuine desire. You've got to understand, this is the message that he's coming. He's appealing to the person that says in his heart, God, I believe you, but I don't see you acting.

There's this unbelief in my heart, but I want you. I need you. It's that kind of a person that God is now addressing as he begins in chapter 51.

He's speaking to the person who has a heart for the things of God, but is powerless to walk it out. And there's this apathy. There's this sense, I don't have the strength to rise up and conquer my enemies.

I just don't see it. So God is going to appeal to that person. And he says, I'm not going to bypass you.

I understand your struggle. I understand the things you're going through. And I'm not going to bypass you.

I see the cry of your heart. You need to answer the cry, though. That's where we're going to end up.

You need to answer the cry. But God says, I see it, and I'm going to speak to it. I'm going to deal with it.

So he says that if you are ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord. And so he uses an illustration. He says, look hence unto the rock whence thou art hewn.

So in other words, he's using Abraham as the example. And he says, I want you to take a look back, way back. You are the result of a man who believed God.

And this is called Abraham, or Abram at the time. And so he's using Abraham as this example. And he says that when I found this man Abram, there was nothing about his life that I needed.

There was nothing about his life that I could take and say, okay, I can do something with this man. I didn't need his wealth. I didn't need his upbringing.

I didn't need the status of society that he may have found himself in. It didn't matter whether he was in the gutter or if he was in high society. There was nothing about this man.

What God is saying in this illustration, he says, I went to this mountain. And I took out of this mountain, I took a stone, I took a rock. And this rock isn't a pretty thing.

It's all jagged. It's broken. It's all, it's not cut right.

But I hewed out a stone out of this mountain. And see, this is what he's saying to the people of Israel at this point. He says, this man, you know why I could use this man? Because he believed me.

He believed me. When I spoke, all I needed was a man, a look for somebody. And when I found a person who would believe my words, then I can take him out of that rock, and I can begin to mold and make something out of that person, because he would believe God.

It didn't matter what anything said, what the circumstances were. It didn't matter what situation in life was. I found a person who said, I will believe you.

And so he says, that's where you've come from. That God can take any person, hew you out of the same rock. And so he's using this illustration to bring you to the same place and say, that's exactly what I've done with you.

I've gone to the mountain, I've taken this rock out of this mountain. Now, if you believe me, I will make something out of your life. Look at verse 2. He says, look unto Abram.

So now he's telling you who it is. Look unto Abram, your father, and to Sarah who bare you. For I called him alone and blessed him and increased him.

And so he says, I took this one person. You've got to understand, beloved, throughout the Bible, Abraham is the father of faith. And it says that, through this one man, he says, I'm going to bless all the families of the earth.

So God is giving this man a promise. And when he uses this word, look, in verse 2, it's exactly the same verb that is used in Genesis chapter 15, verse 5, when God said, he took him out. He took this man, Abram, and he took him out into the starry night.

And he said to Abram, chapter 15 of Genesis, verse 5, he says, Abram, look up. Take a look at all these stars. See these stars? You see the whole constellation? You see all these little twinkling stars throughout the whole universe that you can see with your naked eye? He said, Abram, he said, that is a picture of your descendants.

He says, that's what I'm going to do with you. I am going to so multiply through your life that your descendants are going to be as the stars in the sky. Now, beloved, I have a problem with that.

I tell you my problem. If it was me, I don't know if I'd believe it. I believe, but help my unbelief.

But see, God found a man who said, God, I'll take you at your word. I'll take you just at your word. If you said it, if you've made a declaration that that's what you are going to do, then God, I'm not going to fight with that.

I'm not going to struggle in my life with what you want to do. I'm not going to have this battle raging on the inside because if you've made a declaration, who am I to stand up against God and against his declaration? He says, you've said it. So I just stand and believe.

See, in my own heart, I know that I've looked out in the starry skies. You know, I grew up in Africa. You get some awesome view in the southern hemisphere and you see all these different stars in the constellation.

I've looked at the thousands. And I tell you, beloved, it boggles my mind to think that that's what God said to Abram. I will take one man.

And so now he's coming back with the same thought. He says, I took this one man who said in his heart, young people, if you've said it, I will believe you. And you will cause and work through me everything that you have promised.

That's what he said to them. And now he's giving the same thought to these people. And he says that this is where you've come from.

This is exactly what I will do for you. So he goes on in verse 3 and he says, For the Lord shall comfort Zion. Now, this is what he says he's going to do.

He says, And he shall make her wilderness. Now, you've got to underline the word her because this is the doing of the people of God, what they were doing. I will take her, excuse me, comfort all her waste places.

Now, the waste places mean that which is broken down, the rubble, the life that has become ruined. He says, You know what I'm going to do? He says, If you will believe, if you will just look in faith the same as Abram did, this is what I will do for you. I will take all the waste places, that which has become rubble, that which is broken down in your life.

And he says, and goes on here, I will comfort all her waste places. And then he says, And he will make her wilderness, all that expanse of passivity and nothing, like Eden, and her desert, all those dry areas of your life, like the garden of the Lord, joy and gladness shall be found there in thanksgiving and the voice of melody. He said, This is what I want to do for you.

He says, But you've got to believe that this is my word. You've got to lay hold of it. He says, This is what I want to do.

If you will stand like Abram and say, God, if you've declared it, you will take the rubble of my life. You'll take all the empty places of that passivity and you'll change it. You'll take all those dry areas of my heart and my life and you're going to make it just like the garden of Eden.

He says, And there's going to be such thanksgiving and the voice of melody in their hearts. He says, This is the voice of the Lord. In verse four he goes on and halfway through the verse he says, And I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

Now that word judgment there is, it's called mishpat. And it literally means the judicial, the legislative, the executive, all in one. God is saying that he's not democratic, he's theocratic.

He's one almighty powerful God. And so in other words he says, This word judgment doesn't mean that I'm going to give you a set of rules and laws. It's not a legalism.

This is what he's trying to get across to the people. He says, You've got to understand that my rule in somebody's life isn't just a bunch of rules. Do this, do that and things will happen.

No, he said this word is an indication of when God says, When I rule in somebody's life, I work according to the creative principles of Genesis. That when there was chaos over the then known world, the Bible calls it darkness, but the Hebrew calls it chaos. God says, Where there is chaos.

He says, When I come and I rule in any situation, I take that which is chaotic and I make order. I take that which is out of order, that which is nothing and I begin to make something. He says, So when I rule in your life, if you will allow me the government of your heart and your life.

He says, It's not going to be a bunch of rules and regulations. Do this, do that and these things will happen. He says, No, when I speak to you, every word that I speak into your heart, I operate from creation principles.

In fact, I begin to work. So when I speak something to you, it's not a regulation, it's life. It's the power of almighty God that comes to change your life.

He says, That's what I do when I speak. And so the person who responds and says, God, yes, this is what I want. I believe your promises are for me.

And we take that step and we say, as we take that step with God. He says, When I speak to you, then everything that I speak into your heart and your life and you embrace it, it will become a creative work of almighty God. All the chaotic areas of your life begin to change.

Waste places begin to blossom and bloom. The dry areas that you once thought that you could never be used of God, begins to flow with fresh springs of living water. Things begin to grow.

Life begins to happen. Beloved, this is the God that we serve. This is the appeal that he is making to the children of Israel when he speaks to them.

But when he speaks that word of faith into their heart, he says, The problem, though, is in verse 7. 51 verse 7. Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. And so he says, If you've embraced it. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revivence.

See, if all I have in my vision are those who are oppressing me. If all I have in my vision. So this is what he's saying.

He's speaking to them and he says, You've got a problem. The problem is that there is fear in your heart of what men are going to say. There's a fear that if I step out in faith, the world is not going to understand it.

If I trust you and I respond to you, God, there's a fear. There's a living fear that when I go into the workplace, my tenement building, when I go into any situation. And so Isaiah, God is touching the very root of why there's passivity.

So we can preach the power of God. We can preach that God says, I'll take you out of the rock. I'll make you.

I'll bless you. From your life will come blessings to families beyond what you'd ever think and understand. If I govern you, I'll change your life.

I'll govern you. He says, you can preach that. But it's still going to leave people in passivity.

And you can say, Oh, that's the kind of God I want to serve. And we can have an altar call after preaching like that and respond to it. But never deal with the real issue at the core of what's creating the unbelief.

And he touches it here. In fact, he brings it up three times. He says, I've got to deal with the fear of men.

You're afraid. You're afraid of what is going to happen to your life. You're afraid.

In fact, let me read the scriptures to you in verse 12. It says here, I, even I am he that comforteth you. So he's saying to them, he says, look, I'll comfort you.

I'll be the one who will be with you. Who art thou that shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die and of the son of a man which shall be made as grass? He says, why are you so afraid of these people who are going to end up dead anyway? They're going to die. So why are you so afraid of this person that comes into your face? See, that's the root of the problem, why there's passivity in your heart.

You can respond in church to a powerful preaching of a supernatural creative God who's going to change your life and produce a garden instead of a wilderness. We love that kind of preaching. But we walk out of the house and we're still passive in the things of God.

And so he's touching the very root problem is that deep down inside of us that there is this innate fear of being confronted by somebody who looks bigger than us. And so he goes on to say in verse 13, he says, this is the real reason. He says, verse 13, and forgettest the Lord thy maker that stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth.

He says, this is what happens is that you get confronted. And in the moment of that confrontation, you've made a decision. Oh God, use my life.

And you've made the decision, you've stepped forward. And now as you're going ahead with God, suddenly there comes a confrontation. There's a reviling.

And in the midst of that reviling, you forget me. You forget God. But if you go into that, so what he's saying is, if you go into every given situation with the cognizance in your mind that God is always with me.

Don't forget him. Don't leave him out of the equation. He says, the problem why there is passivity and inactivity, it's because that there is the sense that you fear man and you have forgotten God.

He says, look, he goes on to say, and has feared continually every day. Not just one day, but every day. Every day you get up, you go to work.

Every day you go around those streets and there's a fear. Every day you get on the subway, there's a fear. Every time that you get into the business arena, there's a fear.

I want to serve God. I love being there on Sunday. I love coming to church.

But when I get into that business arena, something takes place and I become afraid. And God says, this is going on every single day. Continually, there's this fear of man that has gripped your heart.

And then he goes on to say, as if he were ready to destroy. He says, fear, that's where it comes from. You believe that your life is going to be destroyed.

That you're going to be somehow annihilated. You're going to be somehow, as we heard this morning, so powerfully to live as Christ and to die as gain. If we were to die, it's only our gain.

To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. And so he says that we live as though they were ready, that this world is ready to destroy us. And then he says, and where is the fury of this oppressor? He says, where is it? He says, when you've got only the oppressor in your vision, then you only have one option in life, to be ruled by fear.

That's all it is. If that's all you can see, if that's all that you have every day, then you will be governed and you will be ruled by that fear. You see, beloved, the cry to God was, deliver us.

They were looking at the problem. They were saying, this is my problem. And God says, no, no, no, that is not your problem.

Your problem is you've forgotten me. That's not your problem. I can deal with your foes in a moment of time.

Where is the oppressor? What can he do to you? I'm God. I created him. I'll take out his life.

This is what God says. He says, I'm over all people. I can do anything that I like.

So we're dealing with man and you're living your life so filled with fear that this person can just do something to you without my knowledge, without my letting go, understanding. He can't do that. The only reason that you're in bondage is not because of the oppressor.

You see, the message that Isaiah was trying to get across to them is that they have inside of their brain that this oppressor was bigger than God. I'm in this predicament, not because of my sin, but because the devil took me captive. And God is saying, no, it's not the devil.

It's because you have left off serving me. You serve me, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. You've got no oppressor.

You've got no enemy that can come against you. He says, that's the real issue here is that your life, you haven't sold out 100% to me. You sell out 100% to me.

You have no oppressor. Nobody can get a hold of your life. You don't go into captivity because of your sin.

And this is the message that Isaiah is trying to get across. Where is the oppressor? That's the question that God comes back in verse 13. He says, you live as you're going to be destroyed by this devil who's going to get a hold of your life and destroy you.

I've told you so many times how many times people come to me and in their mind their faith in the devil is bigger than their faith in God. They believe that the devil is stronger and voodoo and all those stuff. That's why I make those statements to you.

To bring you out of that thinking that, listen, the devil can only take a hold of somebody if God allows it. He can't do anything. And when he does that it's because somewhere along the line you've allowed the devil into your heart and life.

And so God is coming back and He's saying, the real reason that there is passivity in your heart, beloved, is the bottom line is you haven't sold out to God. You sell out to God. You give Him everything.

You make a decision and say, Oh God, I'm selling out to you. I'm selling out to you. I'm telling you the day that you make the declaration in your heart that I'm selling out to God, irrespective of what we see, the inadequacies in my life, but the day you make that commitment and you stand up and say, God, here I am.

I want to be counted. The day you make that commitment, I'm telling you on the authority of God's Word there is no oppressor that can come against your life. Nothing.

And when something takes place on the workplace or whatever happens, it is God who's working all things together for your good. And you'll suddenly see that because of these situations, God has opened up a whole new world to you. A whole brand new style of living unto you.

But He's coming to the place where you've got to make that decision. You can't keep sitting in the house and saying, Great word, great word, great word. And then going into the workplace, Oh, I can't say anything today.

I've got to pray about this some more. I hope this prayer and fasting is going to just set me free. But it's the fear of man.

It's that thing inside of your heart that you regard the power of a man or a woman as something bigger than the God who made them. But when our hearts are committed to Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords, I'm telling you, buddy, there is nothing to get a hold of our hearts and our lives. Amen? I'm selling out.

I've sold out to God. I keep selling out to God because I keep finding areas that I need to sell out to God in. When word is preached, it convicts me, and I'm standing there equally along with you, saying, God, I give it.

I want to go ahead with you. Hallelujah. So verse 14, he says, The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed.

He says, if you understood the power of the word of God, he said that you will hasten to be loosed. If you understood it, and he goes on, he says, you won't die in the pit. He says, if you understood exactly what I was speaking to you, you would hasten.

There would be no delay in your heart. If you grabbed and took this by faith and said like Abraham, I believe it. I believe it.

I believe that whatever God has spoken, I'm going to lay hold of it. My life is going to change. He's going to use my life.

He says, when you lay hold of that word, he says, then something will take place. You will hasten to be loosed from that which is holding you back. The very second you make that decision by faith, I'm telling you, you start running towards being loosed and forever free from the fear of man.

And he goes on to say, And that he should not die in the pit. He says, you're not going to die in that. You're not going to end up in that pit that's got a control of your life.

He says, you won't die there. You put your trust in me. Only you will come out of this thing so powerfully.

And says, nor that his bread should fail. He's not talking about hunger here. He's not talking about that you should starve and you won't pay your bills.

And if I make a decision and they fire me from my job, then I'm not going to have bread. And then I'm going to be in a deep pit. Then what's going to happen? Can you see the unbelief that is speaking? But when we sell out to God, he comes and he says, what are you saying here? He says, you won't die in a pit that the devil tries to dig for you.

The very pit that he digs for you, he's going to fall into it himself. He says, he'll fall into it. And he says, you won't die for a lack of bread.

He says, in other words, God is saying, my word will not fail you in the time of need. He says, you won't lack. He says, in the time of need, when you need my word to come through for your life, God is saying, it's going to come through powerfully.

It's going to come through in your life. You're going to have a word in your heart. You're going to speak it.

And the devil is going to flee. And you're going to come through powerfully and victoriously. And this is the promises of God that he gives to his people.

And in verse 16, he goes on and he says, I have put... Actually, the conversation changes now. And most commentators agree to this. It's almost like the father in heaven turns to the son.

And he says to the son, he says, in verse 16, he says, but I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth, and say unto Zion, thou art my people. And so, it's almost like he's talking to the son and he's saying, son, they may not believe me, but I know that you're going to believe everything that we're doing about this, what we're saying. And he says, when you go, this is my words going to be in your mouth.

But see, that's the promise that Christ gives to us. When he gives us a promise, listen to Corinthians. He says in Corinthians chapter 1, verses 19, for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea, and then tomorrow, nay.

No. But in Him, always yea. For all the promises of God, in Him are yea.

And amen. So be it. Unto the glory of God by us.

So you ask the question, can I be free? The answer is, yes. Can you use my life? Yes. Can you save my family? Yes.

Can you give me joy for sorrow? Yes. Can you remove the bondage? Yes. Can you heal me? Yes.

Can you supply? Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. See, God's answer to those who respond to Him, the answer of God to you, when you respond to Him, is always, yes. Is this possible? Yes.

Not in your strength, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. So he stirs the people, he says, this is what is in Christ. Every single promise in Christ is not, yes, one day, no, the next.

It's always, yes, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Always a yes in Christ. And so God says, awake yourself.

In verse 17, He says, awake. He says, stand up. Stand up, O Jerusalem, which is drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of His fury.

He says, stand up. He says, the time is over. It's time to stand.

Stand. Make that decision. Make the decision.

Stand. Awake. It's not me that needs to awake to help you.

You need to awake to me. You need to come awake and alive to my word and my promises for you. And if you should arise and awake and say, you know what, something is striking into my heart that these things are true.

And that God will deal with our enemy, that fear of man. And then look at verse 23, and I close with this. But I will put into the hand of them that afflict thee, which have said to thy soul, bow down.

Everything that is said to you over all the days of your life, bow, buddy. You bow down. You bow down to this, and you bow down to that, that we may go over.

And thou hast laid thy body as the ground and as the street to them that went over. God is saying, when you have bowed in the past to the enemy, he says, never again. Never again.

What the enemy has done to you, you are going to do to the enemy. As he has caused you to bow, so he will bow in the name of Jesus. As they have caused you to be bowed down and bowed over by their oppression and by whatever has succumbed in your life, God says, when you lay hold of me, your choice, you see, your choice isn't, God, will you deliver me? That's not your choice today.

Your choice is not an altar call to say, God, deliver me. No. Your choice is single today.

It's one single choice. You only have one choice in life. I choose Christ.

And the very second you choose Christ in his name, immediately everything that caused you to bow, it begins to bow because the Bible says that every knee shall bow unto Jesus Christ, our Lord. Hallelujah.

And that's what he says.

But it's going to come as a choice. Now, you can say great preaching or bad preaching. It doesn't matter.

You can make any decision in your heart. But unless it is followed up by a decision, I serve Christ. I serve Christ.

I'm coming to Christ and I'm going to serve him with everything that I have. Beloved, that's the person that begins to see God's authority and power begin to work in and through their life. Chapter 52, verse 1. And this is my altar call for you.

Awake, put on thy strength. In other words, come take on Christ. Arise, come put on Christ.

O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, put on his righteousness. O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. The very second that you come and say, I'm putting on Christ and his righteousness, he breaks the power of the oppressor of that which is unclean.

Immediately. Not secondarily, not... Immediately, the unclean thing in your life is broken in Jesus' name. And then he says in verse 2, the second thing, shake thyself from the dust.

Arise and sit down on Jerusalem. In other words, sit in authority. Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

He says, I've done it for you, but you have to respond. Take it off. You arise, put on Christ.

The unclean is gone. Shake the dust off. And then take off the yoke.

You're free. That's the altar call. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's stand together. Father, this is your word.

Your call has gone out this morning and again this afternoon. And Lord, the call is single. It's a call to serve you with all of our heart.

Now Lord Jesus, we just open up this altar for all those who say, this is my heart and desire in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, mighty God.

Lord, we just wait in your presence. Lord, I just sensed this afternoon that for some people here at this altar, this is one of the greatest decisions that they're making because you have spoken. And God, they're responding from the very depth of their heart.

And Lord, we just open up to your Holy Spirit right now. God, our commitment is not to a church or to a people. Our commitment is to you.

Lord, you've opened our hearts this afternoon. You've opened our hearts to you. And now Holy Spirit, I ask that you come and fill us.

Fill us with the confidence that can only come from God. Fill us with an assurance that can only come from your word. Lord, I know that we have touched a root, that God goes so deep into so many people's lives.

And I don't think that by just a man we can just yank it out or just by commitment. This has to be a work of your Holy Spirit. This has to be a deep-seated work.

Lord, there are spouses who are fearful to go home because of a person who abuses them. And they're saying, I'd rather fear a boss who yells than a husband who beats me. Lord Jesus, there are people here who are in such very difficult situations.

But you've opened our heart today by the word of God. And Lord, it's not about my commitment that I just make, but it's by laying hold of Jesus. You are my commitment.

You are everything to me. And Lord, as the scripture commands, we arise and we come and put on Christ. Now beloved, I know it's a very sensitive time, but just pray this prayer honestly from your heart.

Don't worry about the feelings. Don't worry about if things don't immediately change on the outside. You need to know one thing, that God is saying to you today, where is the oppressor? He's not there.

I'm going to set you free. As you embrace me, there will be a new grace and strength in your life. Pray this with me.

Lord Jesus, I thank you this afternoon that you've touched a deep root, a strong city that I have not been able to get the victory over. But today, I embrace you. You are my victory.

You are my power. You are the creator of the universe. And when you speak, things change.

Now Lord, speak into my life and let my life today be forever changed. I sell out to you Jesus. I embrace you as my Lord and as my God.

And Lord Jesus, where you lead me, I will follow with all my heart and in your confidence and in your grace and in your strength I will see my enemies melt before me. In Jesus' name. Now Lord, let your word find its mark.

Let faith arise and our lives be changed. In Jesus' name. Amen.

God bless you, beloved. This is the conclusion of the message.

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