

The Arm of the Lord - Part 9

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the significance of the cross in the recovery of God's testimony and the importance of love and suffering with Christ in the church's testimony.

Duration: 54:37

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-56

Topics: "God's Work"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's power of resurrection. He encourages believers to not rely on themselves but on God, who has the ability to raise the dead. The speaker also highlights the significance of being a minister and having knowledge of the mighty power of resurrection. He explains that believers are called to impact the world and cannot ignore it, as they are here to make a difference. The sermon also discusses the transformation that occurs when the cross becomes a reality in believers' lives, leading to a shift from barrenness to fruitfulness, shame to honor, and affliction to comfort.

Transcript

There are quite a few people here this morning who have not been with us in the earlier part, the earlier three days of this conference. And some of you who were with us on Friday and Saturday were not able to be with us yesterday. So a little word by way of linking up will be necessary.

We are in this time occupied with the question in the first verse of the prophecies of Isaiah chapter 53, to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed. We are putting it more in the present tense, to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed. We are circling around this matter of the arm of the Lord.

That is, the Lord coming out in power, in the behalf of his own interest, as bound up with a people of his own choice. Now we occupy much of the early time with the whole of that chapter of Isaiah 53, as we show that in it the cross of the Lord Jesus, in all its comprehensiveness and in all its details, is God's way of securing ground upon which he could show his arm. The cross is the ground and the way, the only ground, the only way by which the Lord will reveal his mighty arm.

Of course in the first place the answer to the question is found in the Lord Jesus himself. It is to this one described here in all the terrible details of his cross that the arm of the Lord has been revealed, and is still being revealed. But we have seen that this is carried over to the Lord's people and made the foundation

upon which the Lord shows himself mighty.

The only ground, that is, in so far as they stand in to the good of Christ crucified. The cross of the Lord Jesus, in so far as that is made a reality in their life, individually and collectively, just so far does he reveal his arm. There is no other way.

Well that occupied us for quite a time, all day on Friday really, and a bit of Saturday. And then yesterday, I may say to the friends who missed yesterday that you only missed one part of this, and I can give you the sum of it in a very few words. Yesterday we passed over on to the resurrection side of the cross with Isaiah 54, and saw there the eight features of resurrection life, when the cross is an accomplished and established fact.

In that chapter we have these eight features of resurrection, movement from barrenness to fruitfulness, from straightness to enlargement, from shame to honor, from forsakenness to fellowship, from wrath to mercy, from affliction and desolation to comfort and glory, from oppression to security, from reproach to vindication. That's all resurrection ground into which the Lord's people are brought if, if this great reality of the cross has become their own spiritual experience. Now this morning we are going on further.

We are going to move into this next chapter, having, as I have said, moved from the death side or aspect of the cross on to the positive resurrection side, the constructive side of the cross. We find that one thing comes very much into view in these following chapters of Isaiah. Of course it would have been very helpful if you had had notice and had been reading these chapters from Isaiah 53 on to the end, and it is quite impossible for us to read the chapters through.

You will have them before you, and with a rapid glance down these pages you will recognize what I am saying to be the case. There is one thing that comes very much into view after the cross on resurrection ground, and that is the recovery of God's testimony in the city and in the nation. That really is a key to these chapters of Isaiah from 53 or with 54 onward.

The whole matter of the recovered testimony of the Lord in the city, because Zion is so much in view here as you notice. You just run along and circle that word Zion and Jerusalem, you will see that that is the center, the focal point of the testimony. But again the nations are very much in view.

That will come out more and more fully as we move on through this day. We have one particular thing for the present hour. As you notice when you come to chapter 55, there are two things which are marked by that chapter.

Verses 1 to 9, the release or the freedom and the abundance of grace coming to the people of God on this ground, this resurrection ground. Free and abundant grace. O everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the water.

He that hath no money, come ye. Buy and eat, yea, come by wine and milk, without money and without price. And so on.

This is free and abundant grace which we find on the other side of the cross, on resurrection ground. How much of the New Testament we could just crowd into that space. The other thing from verse 10 to verse 13 is the sure word.

My word shall not return unto me void. God's sure word in verse 11. Now, by the way, we usually appropriate that promise when we're going to preach.

We lay hold of it when we're going to give a message. My word shall not return unto me void. Well, of course, the principle is our general application.

We are not right or not wrong at any time in taking hold of that if it is really the word of the Lord that we have to deliver. We cannot just put it upon any word that we're going to say and call it the word of the Lord. If it is really the word of the Lord, then the principle of this promise applies.

But what I want to point out is that there is not here the particular meaning of the statement. You will notice in the 11th verse. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.

It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please. And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it forth. He doesn't stop there.

Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. Mountains and the hills and so on. Now, the immediate meaning of the promise of the sure and effective word is this people, this people have been promised by God deliverance.

They have been assured that the Lord was going to bring them back from captivity. He had given his word that they should go out with joy and peace. And in these conditions, that was the word and that word was not going to fail.

Well, that is just parentheses. That is by the way. When you come to chapter 56, you find that everything centers in the house of prayer for all people.

There are seven, even them will I bring to my holy mountain. And to make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar.

For mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. You see, you are moving in relation to the recovery of testimony, the Lord's testimony. And it is to be found in his house.

My house of prayer. You pass into chapter 57 and here you have some further warnings to the Lord's people against any recurrence of that which had destroyed the testimony before. It seems necessary always for the Lord to say and say again, just be careful of the coming back of those old things which wrecked your testimony in the past.

The things which, to use Jeremiah's phrase, from the potter's house marred the vessel. This chapter has to do with warnings and with admonitions concerning the perils that are ever present to again mar the vessel and spoil the testimony. Then as you notice in verse 15, the ground of the Lord's presence and committal is mentioned.

Thus saith the Lord, the high and the lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble, to revive the heart of the contrite ones. The conditions of the Lord's presence in which his testimony will be reconstituted.

Chapters 58 and 59 are full of more warnings, more admonitions, and more instructions by way of clearing the sky of the clouds that would obscure the testimony. Notice verse 8 has to do with the shining. Then

shall thy light break forth as the morning.

It's the question of this testimony that is governing everything with the Lord. These warnings and admonitions are in order that the clouds that are lingering about the sky and trying to obscure the shining shall be removed so that there shall be the clear shining. All that then leads us to chapter 60.

It is preparing the way. It is always this in view. Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Here then we come to this matter of the recovered testimony, the shining light of the Church in the midst, as you see, of a dark world, of very dark conditions. For darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness of people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee. It is the Church's testimony, the Church's light in the midst of dark, dark conditions.

That is the thing I repeat which is uppermost in this last section of Isaiah's prophecies. Here then the testimony is restored. Verse 1. The nations are affected by it.

Lift up thine eyes round about and see. They all gather themselves together. They come to thee.

Thy son shall come from far and thy daughter shall be carried in thine arms. Then thou shalt see and be enlightened and thine heart shall tremble and be enlarged because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee. The wealth of the nations shall come unto thee.

When the testimony is clear, when the shining is undimmed, when God has in his house, in his people, conditions that answer to the cross, to all that the cross means, then you have this effect all around. This effect all around. The nations are affected.

Peoples are touched. Something happens and there comes back to the church a wealth, an enrichment, a fullness, if the Lord has seen according to his mind. Or in other words, if he really does have his testimony without clouds, without shadows, in fullness, undimmed, in the midst of his people, in the vessel of his house, then the nations feel the effect of that, the impact of that.

And the church itself is greatly enriched. Surely the isles shall weep for me. Ship the Tartish first to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them.

For the name of the Lord thy God and for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. The enrichment of the church. Now this we know is Old Testament prophecy.

We recognize that the prophet was saying more than he knew. But there were two things in this. There was history that was in the making so far as Israel was concerned.

But you see all the way through this, pointing on as in chapter 53, to the Lord himself, the Messiah, to the cross, and on into what follows in resurrection. There's that other side of this, that spiritual side which the Holy Spirit always saw and had in view in history. There was the temporal and the passing.

But there was the spiritual and the eternal. And so we are in every connection as we have seen so far, in every connection we are handed on, so to speak, by these prophecies to the New Testament. The counterpart of what we have been saying is found particularly in one letter in the New Testament.

It is the second letter to the Corinthians. That is the counterpart of all this about the Recovered Testament. The great issue in both of the letters to the Corinthians was that of the testimony of the Church in the city and in the world.

When we read those letters, of course we become very much taken up with all the details. In the first letter, the miserable details. The many things that are being dealt with, it's not a happy and pleasant letter to read.

And perhaps you've given it up many times before you've got to the end. Not understanding much and not liking a good deal more. It's like that.

But you've got to stand back from it and say, what is it all about after all? Let's not trouble ourselves about all the details for the moment. They all go to make up some one particular issue. What is the issue? Well, the issue of Corinthians is the Lord's testimony in the Church, in the city and in the nation.

Make no mistake about that. You see, there is very much said in that letter about the world and how the Church in Corinth was failing to overpower the world because the world had already overpowered it from the inside. The testimony was destroyed on the inside and therefore there was no real impact upon the world.

The natural and the carnal man had found his way into the Church and the Church therefore had lost its testimony. It will always be like that. If anything of a natural man and the carnal man makes inroads into the Church in any locality, you may say goodbye to the testimony in that Church.

And in that locality, in that city, and so far as that company is concerned in relation to the world, the testimony goes out when the natural man comes in. In the first letter then, it was the whole question not merely of local conditions, but of local conditions destroying the testimony of the Church in the city. But in the second letter, this comes out on the positive side.

The first letter, all those conditions destroying testimony have to be dealt with, have to be mentioned, exposed, uncovered and brought to the cross, Christ crucified. Between the two letters, something has happened. Something has happened.

Change has taken place. May I pause there and say this again. What we have here in 1 Corinthians is Satan's second great strategy toward paralyzing the Church's testimony.

His first strategy, of course, is open persecution. That's his first line. That was his first line with the Church.

Open persecution to try to destroy, obliterate the Church's testimony in Jerusalem, in the city, and in the nation. It failed. It failed.

But Satan comes back again along a second line of strategy, and that is to bring in men, according to his own mind, right onto the inside of the Church. The natural men, the carnal men, carnal elements. They serve the devil's purpose so well.

They effect this very thing that the devil is after, which he cannot, cannot succeed in doing by open persecution. But he comes around, as it were, to the back door, and he gets carnal and natural elements in people in through the back door, and that's done it. Testimony goes out.

It's destroyed. But, as I was saying, between these two letters, something happens. You look at chapter 7, the second letter, and you see, For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret.

The apostle has quite a bit to say about what had evidently taken place after his first letter. There was repentance. There was judging of themselves and of the conditions.

There was, as he says, a clearing of themselves. There was a real distress and exercise about their condition. It had taken place between the two letters.

We may say that they had brought it to the cross, or they had brought the cross to it. Something had happened which had changed the situation. And now, now the things had been dealt with on the inside.

The whole matter of the testimony to the world in the city could be reconsidered, and a counterattack could be made by the church upon the enemy and upon the world. And that is what is in this second letter. The recovery of the testimony in the locality and out to the world.

Paul brings out into very clear relief the constituents of effective testimony. Or, to use Isaiah's word, clear shining. Clear shining.

And in this letter you see some of the things that he says about those constituents of effective testimony. Chapter 2, verse 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears, not that ye should be made sorry, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly to you. That is a constituent of effective testimony and clear shining.

What is it? The value of triumphant love. This clearly has its two sides in the apostle. For if ever a man might have found his love exhausted, the apostle might well have been that man where these Corinthians were concerned.

For he did say, the more I love you, the less I be loved. Well, that's enough to put any man off, isn't it? All his outpouring and outgoing and giving in love only means that less love and less love comes back. Love is being withdrawn.

And what a situation. What a situation has to be. Yes, his love triumphed.

His love triumphed. But it seemed to have had an effect in them too. And something of what he had written in his first letter, chapter 13, seems to have come about.

Yes, the triumph of 1 Corinthians 13 can be traced in this second letter to some very real degree. The love that suffereth long and is kind, and so on. The constituent of triumphant love.

That is, we might very well say, the first and primary factor in effective testimony. The Lord Jesus said that. By this shall all men know, if you have love one for another.

This is the testimony. This is how it will be known, if ye have love one for another. Dear friends, it does matter very much whether the world is affected by what it sees.

It does. We cannot close the doors on ourselves and say, oh well, the world in any case is always inimical. It's always hostile.

It's always unsympathetic. Why take any account of it? Let's shut ourselves in and get on with our jobs. You can't do that.

You can't do that. You cannot ignore the world. You are here.

We are here to affect the world. That is the only reason why the Lord leaves us here, unless it is to train us for the hereafter. But certainly it is a very, very real reason for our being here.

Not just to live here, cloistered and closed in, ignoring the world, indifferent to the world, and saying, well, the world doesn't want us. Let it get on with it. We'll just live our lives to ourselves and get on with our business.

No. Our business is to affect the world. We cannot separate and detach ourselves from the world.

And the world is going to find out in some way what's happening inside the church. The world will know the condition of the church. Make no mistake about it.

What's happening in your local assembly, you cannot close doors and windows on that and keep it in. All around will know. It will be known.

And I say it's the most important thing that the world could be affected by, not what it hears us say, but what it sees in us. And the only thing that it can really see that will affect it will be the mutual love which we have one for another. By this, shall all men know, if ye have love one for another.

See, one of the most effective ways of testimony is not preaching, it's loving. It is. If that is there, it will do far more than our preaching, but it will give a tremendous backing up to our preaching.

All our preaching must be supported by this one thing behind, a strong, triumphant love in the midst of the Lord's people. Triumphant love is the first constituent of recovered, established testimony, or the clear shining. The second thing in testimony is the value of suffering with Christ.

Notice here, if you look at chapter 1, and there is much in this second letter about this matter. Chapter 1, verse 4, Who comforteth us in all our afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ.

The tremendous value and potency of suffering with Christ. First of all, the return that it brings in our discovery of the consolations of Christ. It's a very important thing in a world like this that we should have some comfort in it.

Yes, there's a lot, a great need of comfort. In the church and outside the church. A great ministry of comfort.

We come back to Isaiah, comfort ye, comfort ye my people, bless the Lord. The ministry of comfort, but you can't fulfill a ministry of comfort just in nice platitudes. Getting alongside of difficult and troubled situations and saying nice things.

If somebody is really in trouble and in distress and you begin to talk to them, the first thing they have a right to say to you is, well, what do you know about it? Have you ever been in my position, my condition? Have you ever had any deep, deep sufferings? What do you know about it? Perhaps it's one of those

sovereign, providential ways of God, purposes of God, in allowing his people to know much suffering that they might derive this wonderful value of the consolations of Christ in order that they may have that with which to comfort others. See, after all, the testimony is that, isn't it? The testimony of real comfort to the suffering, to the sorrow. And what have you got to give? Well, that we may comfort with the comfort for which we ourselves have been comforted of God.

And what have you got to give? Well, that we may comfort with the comfort for which we ourselves have been comforted of God. If there is anyone here today who is having a difficult, painful, suffering time, going through a dark patch, might I try to transfigure it for you by saying to you, just look at it in another way. Say, I can make a discovery of the Lord in this which will be stock in trade for future service.

I can find some comfort on the Lord in my distress and trouble, which is going to be of tremendous value to somebody else or to some others in the future. That is how ministry is made, dear friends. Man or a woman who is ambitious to minister, to be in the ministry, to be speaking and taking meetings and going about doing that sort of thing, who has not gone through the depths and found the Lord in the depths and has something which has been brought up from the depths of some pearl of great price, that man or that woman's ministry is merely professional.

It's artificial. It's not real. The true minister of Jesus Christ will be taken down to the depths to discover there, right down there, these pearls, these precious things to bring up for the sake of the Church.

Did you notice that phrase in Isaiah? The abundance of the sea shall be turned unto you. The abundance of the sea. Yes, but the sea can be a very deep place, you know, and a very dark place.

A very terrible place. But there are treasures there. That is a way of testimony.

But then notice in verse 8 of this first chapter, For we would not have you, ignorant brethren, concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia. We were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life. Yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.

This is how ministry is made, when you've got a real experience of and testimony to the power of His resurrection, when everything seemed hopeless. Everything seemed hopeless in your own personal situation. Everything seemed hopeless in your company of believers.

And the providence of God led you that way, to make a discovery of the power of His resurrection. You should not trust in yourselves, but in God, that raiseth the dead. And this, this constitutes the ministry.

You've gone that way, you're a minister, all right. You need not take the name, you need not be set apart for anything. You're a minister if you know the power of His resurrection.

You've got something that is most, most greatly needed, the knowledge of that mighty power of resurrection. Number three, in chapter four, this first section from verse seven to verse eighteen, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side, yet not straightened, perplexed, yet not unto despair, persued, yet not forsaken, smitten down, yet not destroyed, always daring about in the body, the putting to death of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death worketh in us, but life in you. So on to verse eighteen, and you'll notice that this section has as its real message the value, the tremendous value of the quality of brokenness and weakness.

We perhaps don't put much value on brokenness and weakness, but here very much value is put upon that. We have this treasure in vessels of fragile clay. What the apostle says in that section, in effect, is this, that we are broken, broken men.

We are weak vessels. The one thing about us, more than anything else, is our capacity for being broken. It seems that we've just been made to be broken.

Yes, he's speaking about brokenness, about weakness, and then he's saying that there's an infinite value attached to that. In the first letter to the Corinthians, the Church was not broken. It was not broken.

It was hard. It was trying to hold itself intact. It was proud.

It was judging. It was cruel. It was unkind.

Anything but broken. But now, look again in this second letter, and you'll find that the softness about the Church, it's broken, it's melted, it's soft. And you can talk about ministry now.

You can talk about testimony now. Couldn't talk about that before. No, no.

Until the vessel is broken, there's nothing to flow out. It all flows out when the vessel is broken. That is the way.

Well, the apostle is saying that that was how it was with him personally, and of course he is, by inference, passing it on to the Church at Corinth and saying our weakness and our brokenness is of tremendous importance and value. It's only then that the real treasure comes out, shows itself, manifests itself. You talk about the testimony.

Have you got a phraseology of testimony? You talk about ministry, good ideas about ministry. My dear friends, the Holy Spirit is saying to you and to me this morning that testimony and ministry is only real when it comes from broken men and women. Make no mistake about it.

I know it's the hard way, but it's the only way. You have no right to minister. You have no right to talk about the testimony or about the Church, the vessel, or any of this sort of thing unless you know something of this brokenness and this weakness.

You see how true it is to what we recognize. The Lord says in my house of prayer, my house of prayer shall be a house of prayer for all nations, but thus saith the Lord, the High and the Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, also I am with the one who is of a broken, a contrite spirit. You find him at converted Corinth, chastened Corinth.

You feel in this second letter the unction of the Spirit, don't you? The beauty of the Lord, something new is here. You missed in the first letter, oh yes, the Lord is here now, because they're brutal. And it is very true that that unction of the Lord is only found with men and women who really have had a breaking, and an emptying, and a weakening, and have lost all confidence in their own flesh, all their own self-strength.

That is the way of the shining, that is the way of recovered testimony. So we look just at this verse in chapter 6 and verse 11. Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians.

Our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straightened in us, but ye are straightened in your own affections. Now for a recompense in like kind I speak it unto my children, be ye also enlarged.

What was the cause of the loss, the broken-down testimony in Corinth? They were too small. They were too little. They were too peevish.

Paul said that they were like babes. He had to treat them like babes. They're peevish.

Children can be like that, can't they? Just like that. They're too small, too little, too petty. Little things are far too important.

He says, be enlarged, be enlarged. Let your heart be enlarged. Be bigger people.

Really be bigger people. Be too big to come down, to stoop to those mean things of one Corinth. Don't be contemptible.

Without self-importance and self-inflation, have big thoughts. Have big feelings. Have a large heart.

Love, love. What does love do? Rejoice it, not in unrighteousness, but in the truth. Love, believe in all things.

It's a large heart to do that, isn't it? Never ready to believe the wrong report, but always prepared to believe that there's something, even in a wrong report, that may be set off against it. Maybe another explanation. Love, rejoice it, not when the one who has done the harm suffers for it.

Oh, that's portrait. This is where even David is such a rebuke to us, isn't he? Look at him. What a life Saul gave him during those years.

What a life. Hunted him, as he said, like a pig, like a partridge. Chased and pursued him from rock to rock and cave to cave through the wilderness to get him and destroy him.

Gave him no rest and no peace, day nor night. Determined, determined that David should die. The day came when in one of these pursuits, Saul with his armor bearer and his army, his army to catch a man, arrived at a certain place at night and lay down to sleep.

Not knowing that David was so near. Right on the spot. Don't know that he would have slept if he had known.

He lay down and his armor bearer lay down and they all went to sleep and David came with his men and looked. Looked on them. And David's man said, now is your chance.

God has given him into your hands. If you can only get divine support for something, that's all you want, isn't it? You want somebody to say, it's the Lord's will and how you'll go for it if it serves your own interests. It's something that you naturally would very much like if somebody says, well the Lord would have you do that.

It's a very, very strong temptation, isn't it, when it's supported by the Lord. And so this one said, the Lord has delivered him into your hands, now is your chance. Let me smite him and I won't have to smite him

twice.

One blow and I'll finish the whole thing for you. David said, no. God forbid that I should touch the Lord's anointed.

That's a big miss, you know. To his own hurt. Yes, to his own hurt.

He knew not how many more years of suffering he would have. He accepted them. He could have ended all that with one blow.

He said, no, no. I must not touch the Lord's anointed. He said, the Lord's anointed may be wrong.

He may be doing the wrong thing. I may be in the right and he may be in the wrong. Nevertheless, it's not for me to touch him.

I leave him with the Lord. I mustn't speak against him. I mustn't lift my hand against him.

God forbid that I should touch the Lord. I say, that's a big miss, isn't it. That spiritual greatness.

Oh, in a life of recompense, be ye also enlarged. The Lord make us big people in this spiritual sense. Well, to sum up all this.

All this as to the constituents of recovered testimony. Testimony in any locality. Testimony in the world.

It must be born out of these things. First of all, what we know of divine comfort in suffering. Then, what we know of resurrection when all has seemed to be hopeless.

That is individual. That is collective. That is local.

Then, what we have learned of divine love through our own failure. I'm sure that was a great factor in Corinth, you know. Oh, their recognition of their failure.

They went down, right down in the dust. Under the sense of what a miserable failure they had been as a local company. Down in the dust.

And they discovered love. Pouring through this apostle. Pouring from the heart of God to them.

They discovered love. When they discovered and realized what a failure they themselves had been. And that constituted their new testimony.

That discovery. Then what brokenness and enlargement of heart has come through the consciousness of weakness. I suppose if any people ought to have had a consciousness of their own weakness, it was those people at Corinth.

There are indications in this second letter that they themselves came almost to the point of despair about themselves. This consciousness of their own failure, of their own weakness, of their own untrustworthiness. I think it overwhelmed them.

It overflowed them. But through that, they came to this enlargement of heart. An enlargement of heart.

That's the way. You and I are smitten with the consciousness of our own failure. We are not going to be petty and mean toward other people's failures.

We're going to be larger of heart where other people's wrongs are concerned. Very much more patient. Very much more understanding.

We're going to say, well, they have failed where I have had to walk very carefully. And there goes myself, but for the grace of God. That's largeness of heart, you see.

Through brokenness. And then finally, I think that is what arises here. A sense of tremendous responsibility for the honour of the Lord.

I'm quite sure that if that were not present, then all the other means nothing. It must have been brought home to them that they were letting the Lord down. In the city.

In the locality, they were letting the Lord down. Their situation was just bringing dishonour to Him. And that provoked a sense of responsibility.

Oh, oh, we cannot afford to let the Lord down. Whatever it costs, we must put things right amongst ourselves. For the Lord's sake.

For the sake of the name of the Lord. Much in Isaiah, later chapters, about the name of the Lord in Zion. When recovered.

It's just that. The name of the Lord. And so this sense of responsibility for His name and for His honour in that vicinity, in that city, and in the world, produced an utterness, a new utterness for the Lord.

We come back to our question. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Well, to those, to some. It's like that.

You see, this is all the outcome, the outworking of the cross. It all comes out of Isaiah 53. This all follows.

Recovered testimony of this kind is the result of the cross. The cross is always the basis of everything, and in the everything, of testimony. The testimony of our life, the testimony of the Church, locally and universally.

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