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[0 : 0 0] is true what is beautiful. And Lord, we pray that as you are holy and beautiful in your holiness, that as a people, not just as individuals, that we would adorn ourselves with a holiness that would be attractive.

Father, we confess that just as it was said of the Israelites long ago, that your name is blasphemed among the peoples because of them, that you've got a bad reputation because of us and how we've twisted and distorted your name.

But Lord, as you take away the sin, as we are clothed with the fruits of the spirit, we pray that instead of your name being blasphemed, that people, even if they do not know you, would acknowledge a goodness, an attractiveness to our lives and to our community.

Father, we're not there yet, but we know that there's nothing more powerful to renew the heart and to transform a community than the act of worship. And so we pray that this worship would be transformative, that no matter how many times we've sung the hymn or the psalm, that as the old hymn says, sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings, that we'd be surprised again by old and familiar truths, that they sparkle afresh to us.

And Lord, that we might walk out of this building different and changed from the inside, beginning to work its way outside because of the time that we spent in worship with you.

[1 : 2 9] Lord, we just ask you to bless us, to strengthen us, that we could have all that we need to engage in this time that's set apart for you. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. All right, well, I think this is when, do the children come up or do you stay where you are? They come up. They come up, okay. And I think I've got an image.

Do I have an image? Something to show the kids. Okay, it's a little bit hard to read. As you all find your way forward, I don't know if you've ever, raise your hand if you've ever read something from the Old Testament.

So most of this Bible is the Old Testament. Have you ever read anything from the Old Testament? If you've not read anything from the Old Testament, you will someday. And sometimes when you talk about the Old Testament, people talk about God getting mad a lot.

They talk as if God gets angry a lot. And that God likes to judge things. And sometimes when people read the Old Testament, they have a hard time understanding when God is judging people or judging peoples.

[2 : 4 3] And I want to talk a little bit about this image. I was visiting someone in the hospital, not Inverness, in Edinburgh, a week or two ago, and I came across this image, and I thought it was really interesting.

And I think it can help us understand the Old Testament, not just children, but adults. So who can read the very top line from that picture? Can anybody read the top line? What's it say? Be kind. Be kind.

Okay. So I'm going to ask you all a question. Do you all think it's a good thing to be kind? Yes. So you're telling me that if I see someone on the street and they say good morning, I shouldn't punch them in the face.

No. No. Okay. Okay. So don't be mean. Everybody's in agreement. So just raise your hand. If you think it's good to be kind, raise your hand. Okay. So that's a good rule.

Okay. We're all in agreement. Now the next line, it's in, who can read that? It says, treat us with dignity and respect.

[3 : 4 4] Respect. Respect. Those are kind of big words. Dignity and respect. Does anybody know what dignity is? Does anybody know what respect is? What's respect?

So you have to, you have to, it's, it's a hard, I know how, I, you know what it is. I know what it is. It's hard to describe.

It is. No, it is. You know, it means to treat people with dignity and respect is to look at somebody and say, hey, they have value. Would you walk up to someone and say, you know what, I like your shoes and push them over and take their shoes away?

Would that be treating them with respect? Would it be nice to walk up, and I know this sounds terrible, but to just, when someone says hello, spit in their face? No. That would be an awful thing to do.

It wouldn't treat people with dignity and respect. And what this sign is telling us is that, you know, people, they have worth, and it's because that they have worth that we should be, what? Be kind.

[4 : 43] Okay. Now, there's a bottom part of the sign that's really interesting. It's in red, and the lettering is white. Anybody can read that for me? Okay.

Okay. Anybody see that? What is this? It says, abuse will not be tolerated. So, here's the picture. This is at the hospital. And I want you to tell me if you think this would be a good thing.

Okay. So, they're saying abuse is not tolerated in the hospital. So, if I walked into the hospital, and I'm not going to do this. This is not what ministers are meant to do. But if I walked into the hospital, and took a chair, and just threw it, and if I pushed over a nurse, and if I started yelling at a doctor, and if I started raising my voice, and pushing people around, what do you think would happen?

You'd get kicked out. You'd get kicked out. You would. And here's my question. Would it be a good thing if I got kicked out? No. Well, it wouldn't be good for me.

Would it be good for everybody else? Yes. Yes. That's the right thing. If somebody is being abusive, it shouldn't be tolerated, should it? That person should not be allowed to be in the hospital.

[5 : 59] Now, when you read the Old Testament, I want you to realize that this is a lot like what we see in the Old Testament. God, He gives us really good rules. He tells us things like, be kind to one another.

Don't lie to one another. Don't steal from one another. But it's not just that He gives us these rules. These rules, they're all based on something. And they're based on the idea that people are made in the image of God.

They've got dignity. They're worthy of respect. And what I want you to know is that when you read the Old Testament, God doesn't like to judge. He doesn't get pleasure from judging people.

But He's such a good God. And He's such a righteous God. That when somebody refuses to follow the good rules that He's given, guess what He does?

He doesn't tolerate it. And that's a really good thing. Because that shows that He cares about how we treat one another. Now the marvel of the cross is that He's found a way for those of us that have not kept the rules to be forgiven our sins.

[7 : 05] And that's a wonderful thing. But what I want you to realize, if you ever hear somebody say that the God of the Old Testament, that He's always judging people, I want you to realize they don't understand the Old Testament.

But actually, it's a lot like this. He gives us good rules. They're based on the idea that we're made in His image. And the only time that you ever see God judge is when people have done something that deserves that judgment.

And so that's something that can help us understand God and why He's just and why He does these things. Well, let me pray for you. And let's just pray about some of these rules. Father, we praise You this morning that You are a God of justice.

That You're not a God that has looked upon our planet and just turned the eye and decided that it's okay for us to be evil. Lord, we thank You that there is the promise of judgment.

That You will set things right. That sin is not tolerated. But we also thank You that You, in Your mercy, have judged our sin in the person of Jesus, Your Son.

[8 : 16] Such that there's forgiveness and grace. So that we don't have to fear that judgment. But that we can have a relationship with You. Lord, I just pray for these kids. I pray that as they enter into a world that wants to say that You are a God that delights in judgment.

That You are a God who gets mad easily. I pray that they'd know the truth. That they'd be able to detect the lie. And that they'd be able to see the goodness of Your justice.

As well as the goodness of Your love and Your mercy. Lord, bless and protect the minds of these youth. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Okay, well we are going to sing again.

And we are going to sing from the Psalms, Psalm 19. And this section of the Psalms, it reminds us of how good God's law is. That His law, it really does give us good rules. It gives us good principles that lead us on the paths of righteousness. And so it begins, God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies. God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise.

[9 : 22] God's law is perfect and converts the soul God's law is perfect!

The best of God is complete and moves a simple wise.

The statute of the Lord our right and do rejoice the heart the Lord's command is pure and of light to the eyes impart on spot it is the fear of God and God endured forever the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous all together they born and born gave much fine born to be decided are than honey honey from the comb that drop the sweet heart more over may thy servant warn how he his mind should frame a great reward provide it is for them not keep the same who can his errors understand understand oh cleanse the me within from secret force thy seventh keep from all resumptuous sin amen amen amen all right if you have a bible we'll go ahead and do our reading and we'll read the whole of chapter one of isaiah so isaiah chapter one starting verse one the vision of isaiah the son of amaz which he saw concerning judah and jerusalem in the days of uzziah jotham ahaz and hezekiah kings of judah hear oh heavens and give ear oh earth for the lord has spoken children have i reared and brought up but they have rebelled against me the ox knows its owner the donkey its master's crib but israel does not know my people do not understand ah sinful nation

a people laden with iniquity offspring of evildoers children who deal corruptly they have forsaken the lord they have despised the holy one of israel they are utterly estranged why will you still be struck down why will you continue to rebel the whole head is sick and the whole heart faints from the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness in it but bruises sores and raw wounds they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil your country lies desolate your cities are burned with fire in your very presence foreigners devour your land it is desolate it is overthrown by foreigners and the daughter of zion is left like a booth in a vineyard like a lodge in a cucumber field like a besieged city if the lord of host had not left us a few survivors we would have been like sodom and become like sodom and become like gomorrah hear the word of the lord you rulers of sodom give ear to the teaching of our god you people of gomorrah what to me is the multitude of your sacrifices says the lord i have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts i do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats when you come to appear before me who has required of you the trampling of my courts bring no more vain offerings incense is an abomination to me new moons and the sabbath and the calling of convocations i cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates they have become a burden to me i am weary of bearing them when you spread out your hands i will hide my eyes from you even though you make many prayers i will not listen i will not listen your hands are full of blood wash yourselves make yourselves clean remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes cease to do evil learn to do good seek justice correct oppression bring justice to the fatherless plead the widow's cause come now let us reason together says the lord though your sins are like scarlet they shall be as white as snow though they are red like crimson they shall be become like wool if you are willing and obedient you shall eat the good of the land but if you refuse and rebel you shall be eaten by the sword for the mouth of the lord has spoken how the faithful city has become a whore she who is full of justice righteousness lodged in her but now murderers your silver has become dross your best wine mixed with water your princes are rebels and companions of thieves everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts they do not bring justice to the fatherless and the widow's cause does not come to them therefore the lord of hosts the lord declares the mighty one of Israel ah i will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes i will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy and i will restore your judges as at the first and your counselors as at the beginning afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness the faithful city zion shall be redeemed by justice and those in her who repent by righteousness but rebels and sinners will be broken together and those who forsake the lord shall be consumed for they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen

for you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers in a garden without water and the strong shall become tender his work a spark both of them shall burn together with none to quench to quench

them this is the word of god the word of god we're going to sing again we're going to sing from the gallic psalter next a couple of verses from the start of psalm 42 which really speak of the thirst the spiritual thirst that hopefully is in our heart as we come to god's word looking for him to satisfy a need that we can't find satisfaction for anywhere else so let's sing this praise to the lord we're going to sing this praise to the lord Thank you.

[19 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[21 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[24 : 34] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

don't know how to reconcile these truths. And again, it leaves us not sure how to answer the kind of questions we may face. My hope is that as we look at this chapter one of Isaiah, that really the question you leave with is, how could anybody bring an accusation against such a loving, but also such a righteous God? To put him back in that position where he is the one who is just and holy, and we are the one that must answer to him.

Now, I want us to look at this passage. If you have a Bible, it will be helpful to keep it open. Isaiah chapter one. Now, I remember my first time trying to read through Isaiah. I was probably a teenager. And I'll be honest, it's a little bit like living in Edinburgh. I've been to the art museum.

And when you see some of these modern paintings, you know, you're looking at something on the wall that honestly, if it came out of the Sunday school classroom, you would think, oh, that looks really great for a bunch of six-year-olds. And somehow it's found its way into the National Gallery.

[26 : 58] Now, that was a little bit of my approach to Isaiah. I just couldn't make sense of what was going on. And I bet there's more than would be willing to admit the truth that when you read these prophets, you struggle as well. And so let's just try to make sense of this chapter, first of all.

You need to realize that as you come into Isaiah chapter one, that what this is, is it's a lawsuit. And it's a suit that God is bringing against his people, Israel. Again, it's not the modern picture.

It's not God who's answering us. We are being brought to trial by God. And the prophet, and this is true really, once you get from Elijah on, the prophet plays the role of a prosecutor.

The people, they've broken covenant with God. The job of the prophet is to bring the accusations, the charges, and hope that there is repentance among the people of God.

And one of the interesting things about this passage, if you just look at verse two, is the way it begins with, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. The reason the heavens and earth are being spoken of is that they are the witnesses to the trial.

[28 : 12] And they're witnesses in one sense because they represent the majesty of God. Who is God going to bring in order to validate the charges coming against his people? Well, he can bring the heavens because he made them.

He can bring the earth. He made it as well. But there's also that sense that nothing is hidden from the heaven and earth. You think Google has a lot of data on people?

Well, the earth and the heavens have a lot more. And so it's not been invisible. Is that not the truth with our sin? We think it's invisible. It's not been invisible. The heavens and the earth, they've been paying attention.

They've been witnesses to our crimes. Now, what you have in this passage are really three different charges against Israel. Let's look at them. The first charge is a flagrant rebellion against God.

And in some of these really powerful images, what we see, one thing we see is just the unnaturalness of sin. Their sin and our sin. You look at verse 2 and verse 3.

[29 : 22] God says, The fact is that those of you that have sheep, your sheep are actually more intelligent than we are.

They've got some sense of whom they belong to. So many people in the world today, they've got no sense of whom they belong to. But it's not just the unnaturalness.

What we see is the insolence, the rudeness of sin. Look at verse 4. Sinful nation, people laden with iniquity. Offspring of evil doers.

Children who deal corruptly. They have forsaken the Lord. They have despised the Holy One of Israel. They are utterly estranged. The picture here, if you think of the worst moment of adolescence, is what we see in the parable of the prodigal son.

We probably all have memories ourselves. Where you looked at your parent. You looked at your mom or your dad. Maybe the words didn't come out of your mouth, but they were right there on your countenance. You are dead to me.

[30 : 33] I mean, the person who'd been feeding you, clothing you your whole life. You're dead to me. That's the attitude of the people. But it's not just the unnaturalness. It's not just the insolence.

It's the extent of the sinfulness. And again, that's that image, verses 5 and 6. From the bottom of the foot to the top of the head, there's nothing sound in these people.

But it's even worse. It's the pig-headedness of their sin. That what you find is that actually God, he's been giving all of these indications. He doesn't want to bring the hammer. And so he's been trying to get their attention.

And if they would just open their eyes and recognize their circumstances. They're like a besieged city. And yet they can't recognize that God, he's trying to get their attention.

The flagrant rebellion of God. If you want a picture of this, you know, just think of Putin. Just think of Russia right now. Or maybe you think of a place like North Korea where you just can't knock sense into their heads.

[31 : 36] That's the attitude of God's people. Now that's just the first charge. The flagrant rebellion against God. The second charge we see in this chapter is a total abuse of the love of God.

Now you see this if you look at like verse 10 and verse 11. Look at verse 11, God saying, you know, what to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? I've had enough of your burnt offerings of rams, the fat of well-fed beasts.

I do not delight in the blood of bulls, of lambs, of goats. Maybe you read that verse and think, wait, what are you saying? Was it not God who was asking for these things? Why does he say he doesn't want them anymore?

What you need to realize is what Israel has done is they've reversed the whole structure of their relationship with God. The way relationship works in the Old Testament, it begins with relationship. God redeems for himself a people. Now once there's the relationship, there's an ethic, there's a way of life that comes out of that relationship. Now the icing on the cake is the ritual.

[32 : 47] And the ritual was not just about atoning for sin, but keeping up the relationship. Now functionally what Israel had done is they said, look, we don't want the relationship.

We certainly don't want the ethic and the way of life. But man, the ceremony, that's kind of fun. We'll keep that bit. If you can imagine, I think to give a picture to all of this, just imagine if there was a man and he was having an open affair with another woman, everybody knows about it, the wife knows about it, but he comes home and he wants to give his wife a kiss.

I mean, how just brazen, how ugly would that attitude be? Look, just overlook everything in my life. I just want to be able to embrace you right now. And this was the idea with God.

They wanted to keep the ritual, but all the more fundamental stuff they didn't care about. They were willing to totally disregard his holiness. I mean, you look down, verse 13, I cannot endure iniquity in this solemn assembly.

I mean, the hands that they're lifting up in prayer, he's saying, look, they're full of blood. These people, they don't know anything about God. The things that he really cares about, it's not the ritual.

[34 : 06] What he really cares about is justice. He cares about protecting the oppressed. These were things that they were totally ignorant of and they didn't care about.

That's just the second charge. There's a third charge that you see in this chapter. And it's that these people, they were actually rejoicing in a culture of evil.

You got to get down to like verse 21 when you see this. One of the things that's interesting about this chapter is it tells us that it's possible for faithfulness or righteousness to dwell in a city.

That what God had intended was for there to be a godly culture that promoted his ways among his people. But what had actually happened is instead of building a culture of godliness, they built a

society of evil.

evil. That's why there's that picture of them being a whore is what is said. And socially, it's so bad that the silver, it's become dross.

[35 : 16] And by the time it's dross, that means it's useless. That the wine, it's been diluted with water. Evil has penetrated every part of the society. And what we need to realize is the problem back then, again, it mirrors so much the problem that we have right now.

This weekend, I've been speaking to various ages on this whole issue of pornography. What we have to recognize is that this really is an issue, that we've created a culture where content that people used to have to go to special places that were embarrassing to walk into, that now you just pick up your smartphone and it's accessible to anybody whether they're age 5 or 85.

That's the kind of depravity that God was dealing with back then. It's the kind of depravity that surrounds us right now. Okay, so there are the charges. I want to ask you a question.

I want you to imagine something. This is not something that God does. He does not seek counsel from us. However, it's helpful for you to understand this passage. If God came to you and if he brought these charges and say, what should I do with such a people that have given themselves to evil, that have flagrantly rejected me, what should I do with them?

What would your counsel be? One of the things I find really interesting in our world, we love to be critical of God's love. But what's interesting, think about the notion of love in the 21st century.

[36 : 50] you can drive down to England and get a no-fault divorce, which isn't that different from Sharia law. Literally, you can wake up in our culture and you can tell somebody, look, I'm tired of you.

I know I made those vows, but you bore me. Or you don't help me in my life plan. And so you know what? I'm letting go of you.

I'm moving on. It happens all the time. Think about if God took our modern standard of love, the one that all relationships are based on with young couples today, and if He used that model of love with His people, given these charges, what would He do?

In fact, we can even raise the stakes higher. In Isaiah, you can go to chapter 6. You can read about how God is treated in heaven. His holiness is such that even sinless creatures, the seraphim, they're covering their eyes.

And then you drop from heaven down to earth and what do you find? Utter disregard for His holiness. Even by the select people that He's redeemed to Himself to reflect His character.

[38 : 08] Now, what do you think God should do with such people? I mean, if we just applied our human standards, what He would do at a minimum is He would reject them and have nothing to do with them any longer.

At a maximum, He would crush them and judge them and vent all of His anger upon them. Now, what's interesting, look at this passage.

What does He, in fact, do? Look at verse 16. Well, the first thing He does is give them the invitation to wash themselves.

That opportunity for all of the filth to be removed. I grew up in Louisiana. Mississippi River goes through Louisiana.

Basically, we are the sewage system of the whole of the United States. Everything drains through my state. By the time water gets to Louisiana, it's not very clean. To make matters worse, not only did we swim in the rivers, when I was a kid, we swam in the ditches.

[39 : 10] It was really hot wherever there was water. I can remember sometimes getting out of, you know, certain ditches and certain bayous and rivers and He just felt disgusting.

It's almost like you could feel the parasites just going through your back. Then you take a shower to come out and to be clean, to be washed from all of the filth.

That's what God's inviting us. It doesn't matter where you've been swimming, you can wash yourselves and be clean. It goes further. You look at verse 18. He says, Come now, let us reason together.

I always think that's such an interesting comment. Reason by what standard? This is not reasonable, what he's about to say. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they are like a crimson, they shall be as wool. What he's saying there is that there is a complete pardon. In the same way that Barabbas, if you've ever thought about Barabbas, what it

would have been like to be in prison, to think that you're facing crucifixion and suddenly to hear that you've been forgiven or if not forgiven, at least you've been released.

[40 : 17] That there's this invitation that anyone can come and have their sins pardoned and they can come out dyed like scarlet and they can walk away white as wool.

These are passages in which we see the real heart of God, his love. I was looking at a hymn with some guys last week, the first stanza. Let me read it to you. Charles Wesley, Thy ceaseless, unexhausted love, unmerited and free, delights our evil to remove and help our misery.

That's the God that we see in this passage. He delights to remove our evil. His love, it's ceaseless, it's unexhaustible, it's totally unmerited, and it's freely offered to anyone.

Now, I know there's somebody in this room who if you're a careful reader of this chapter, you hear all of this, but again, there's a question in the back of your mind and it's something that we've got to bring from the back of your mind to the front of your mind because the truth is a lot of people have it.

You know, you hear me maybe talking about this loving God, what's in your mind is, okay, well, if he's so loving, explain all the judgment that's actually in this chapter.

[41 : 40] I mean, we love to quote verse 18, verse 19, but look at verse 20. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword.

Look at verse 24. Therefore the Lord declares, the Lord of hosts, the mighty one of Israel, ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.

Look at verse 28. Rebels and sinners shall be broken together. Those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed. Somebody here is asking the question, explain to me if this is a God of such love, how do you get those kinds of phrases and statements from him?

So let's talk about it. To understand this, you need to note three things in this chapter. The first thing is you need to hear the tone of the voice of God.

You need to acknowledge that this chapter, there's a lament and a tone of lament through it. Look at verse 4.

[42 : 49] Ah, sinful nation. Look at verse 5. Why will you still be struck down? Go all the way down to verse 21.

How the faithful city has become a whore. One of the things that we hear from the tone of this passage, it reminds us that God does not take delight in judgment.

the great old Puritan Thomas Watson, he talks about like a bee, God's nature is to make honey. He only uses the stinger when he needs to.

What he finds joy in is making the honey. That's what we hear in this passage. But there's something else that you've got to recognize. And what we see in this passage is the way in which God's love must work according to righteousness.

Look at verse 27. Zion shall be redeemed by justice. Those in her who repent by righteousness.

[44 : 05] righteousness. The problem of Isaiah 1 is the problem of the whole of the Bible which is how can God give mercy while upholding his justice in doing glory to his holiness?

And if you read between the lines you can see how he does it in this chapter. We can see in verse 2, right, that he had these rebellious children. Children I have reared and brought up but they have rebelled against me.

What is the plan of God? What does he do? We decide he's going to send another child. He's going to send his beloved son to go and be his people.

Look at verse 4. You know, there's this problem that these people they're laden. Literally they're burdened with iniquity. Well, what does God do? When the person of his son he comes and literally he carries their iniquity on his own shoulders.

Verse 5 and 6. It's hard to get a more transparent window into Jesus hanging on the cross than these verses.

[45 : 19] From the sole of his foot to his head there was no soundness in him but bruises, sores, and raw wounds. This place of utter desolation.

Verse 9. If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors we would have become like Sodom and become like Gomorrah. There was the sense even as God had judged Israel in Isaiah's time he still withheld some of his judgment but on the cross we see that Jesus was made like Sodom and Gomorrah.

The fire and the brimstone rained unrelenting upon him. And all of this happened because going back to that verse 27 God's people needed to be redeemed by justice.

That it was only through righteousness that repentance could lead to forgiveness. And so what we see in this passage is a truth of God he's not a God that can just turn the eye and ignore evil.

That for there to be grace there has to be justice as well. And that both justice and mercy are both expressions of the same love holy love which is the very center of who he is.

[46 : 40] But there's one other thing that you need to see in this passage if you want to understand the hard language of judgment. there's this invitation in this passage those who repent can receive full pardon.

And it's true here today if there's anybody who feels like the rebellious teenager who's struck down with guilt the same invitation is for you. But let me ask you the question what will God do what must God do with those that refuse to acknowledge their sin and turn from it?

Do you guys not remember the image I showed you? Which even the NHS put up at their hospitals? They said abuse will not be tolerated.

And even the children were able to give testimony that that was a good thing not a bad thing. And what you need to recognize is God needs to bring his judgment in order to remove the cancer from our planet.

Look at what he says verse 24 therefore the Lord declares the Lord of hosts the mighty one of Israel I will get rid I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.

[48 : 12] What would happen if God let unrepentant sinners into his kingdom? They'd be utterly spoiled. And so those who refuse the invitation those that persist as the rebellious teenager and who say God you are finally dead to me and I don't want your mercy.

There's only one thing left for love to do. A God who loves his people and a God who loves his creation and it's to call sin what sin is evil and to give it its due worth which is final condemnation and judgment.

it. And friends that's what this passage reminds us. God is so loving. He's so righteous. And it's because of his love and because of his righteousness that on the one hand he gives this invitation to forgiveness but when it's refused ultimately he brings condemnation and judgment.

it. And that's not a bad thing. It's part of the good news of the gospel that he is going to rectify the fallen state of this world.

He is going to produce a new world where there is no sin there is no injustice and having forgiven us our sins those that put their trust in Jesus will be able to live forever in a world without injustice evil in all the things that have spoiled this world because God will have dealt fully and finally with them.

[49 : 52] Let's pray. Father so often when we read this passage it reminds us of ourselves.

There's a lot of that teenage rebellious mentality in our own hearts. we're pretty quick to point the finger and bring our accusations against you.

We're quick to judge your judgment and to second guess your purposes. Father we're sorry for that mentality we confess it as evil and we just thank you that you are so slow to anger that you are so merciful and that you have done the unimaginable for people such as us you've offered a free pardon for our sin in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Lord if there's someone here that's never received that love Lord might today be the day when in humility instead of facing you with their back that they'd face you face first and that they'd fall in humility they'd confess their sin their need of your grace and have the joy and the relief of forgiveness Lord for those of us that live in a world that brings incessant accusations against us help us to not countenance such thoughts and to not live with any anxiety but to know that you are a God fully worthy of every ounce of worship that we have perfect in righteousness perfect in wisdom and perfect in love and Lord we pray that as we acknowledge these things that our hearts will just fill with joy that we know you that we get to walk with you and that we'll get to share eternity with you bless your word to us today we ask it in

Jesus's name amen we're gonna respond to the word today by singing the hymn just as I am a hymn that really reminds us of the importance of responding to the word of God believing on the Lord Jesus Christ but the joy the relief that comes from knowing our sins forgiven through the blood of the lamb we'll sing this to God's price just as I am without one we but that thy blood was shed for me and that the which become to thee to thee oh lamb of

[53 : 09] God I come I come I come just as I am and waiting not to rid my soul of wonder of wonder
plot to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot O Lamb of God O Lamb of God I come I come just
as I am though tossed about with many a conflict many a doubt I dimes with it and fears with
hand

O Lamb of God I come I come just as I am poor wretched blind sight riches keeping of the mind yea
yea all I need in thee to find O Lamb of God I come I come just as I am thou wilt receive with
welcome with welcome pardon and cleanse relief because thy promise
I believe O Lamb of God I come I come just as I am thy love unknown has broken every barrier
down now to be thine thy love O Lamb of God I come I come I come now to him who is able to keep
you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to
the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority
before all time and now and forever
Amen Amen