

Gods rescue of Israel from Babylon, our rescue from sin and satan by God.

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Preacher: Craig Dyer

- [0 : 00] A warm welcome to the service this evening. It's been a long time to see a number of visitors with us again this evening. Some from other congregations and some who are visiting Harris over these next few days.
- So it's good to see each one and we pray that the Lord will bless us as we seek to worship him in this hour. Once again we're thankful for Craig Dyer being with us.
- We've much appreciated your ministry Craig over the last few days. So on behalf of the congregation I'd like to thank you for all that you've shared with us. It's been a real blessing and we pray that you'll be blessed this evening.
- And we will be too as you open God's word and that you'll be a blessing also. As you continue in the work of Christianity exploring. One or two intimations is to remind you of the fact that immediately after this service.
- There will be a time of fellowship, tea, coffee, cakes etc. will be served and you'll hear something of Craig's testimony. I've heard a personal word about the Lord's work in his life over many years.
- [1 : 07] And so please stay behind me if you're able to for that informal fellowship time. There's a retiring collection at the end of the service tonight. And the money that is given and received will be passed on to the Challenger bus as a mission that's been very active and blessed over the last few years in these parts.
- The deacons court meets tomorrow at half past seven. Just a reminder of that. And in the course of the week as usual, first group fellowship, ladies fellowship, road to the company prayer meeting all at the normal times and the normal places.
- The service is next Sunday morning is at 11, conducted by myself. And the evening service at 6, Mr. Merwin France, who is a regular visitor here, will be leading the service next Sunday evening.
- So these, I think, are all the intimations. And we seek now to worship God. And we begin by singing to his praise from Psalm 40.
- Psalm 40. And we will sing in Galat. So we'll remain seated to sing this item of praise.
- [2 : 23] The verses that we will sing are verses 1 and 2. And then verses 12 through to 13. So that's four stanzas in Galat.
- I waited for the Lord my God. And patiently did bear. At length to me he didn't climb. My voice and cried to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty clay. And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.
- And then at verse 12 to 13. For ill's past reckoning compass me. And my iniquity such hold upon me. Take and have. I cannot lift my eyes. They more than hairs around my head.

Thanks is my heart dismayed. Be pleased, Lord, to rescue. Lord hasten to my name. We heard how these verses were instrumental in Shona's testimony, which she shared last night.

And the verses that we very rarely sing. So we're going to sing these verses tonight. And the words are on the screen. I ask the Reverend Andrew Cobb, please, to come and meet us on the screen.

[3 : 27] Thank you. Let us pray. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We do thank you. We thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. together from all different places, Lord, and parts of the South Island and visitors from elsewhere. We thank thee, Lord, for this thy own holy day and for all that have been undertaken in it here in this place. We thank thee for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and for the remembrance of thy death, even as we rejoice, O Lord, in thy resurrection.

We rejoice, Lord, that thou was put to death for our sins but raised for our justification. And so, Lord, we rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of the Sabbath. And so we pray now, Father, raise up thy holy name amongst us. Come amongst us while I spill and give us that sense of thy nearness and of thy holiness this night. We thank thee, Lord, that thou art not constrained or confined by any structure or man-made building anywhere in creation.

We know that wherever we meet them, whether by many or by few, Lord, thou hast commanded to be in the midst of thy people. And so we pray that thou wouldst come amongst us and sanctify our gathering this night and enable us, Lord, to lift up our hearts to thee and to adore thee, holy trinity, knowing that there is no God beside thee, the Father, or the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

We ask thee, Lord, to forgive us for all our great unworthiness and our sin, for all the ways that even in this time of day we have gone astray for thee, or forgotten thee, or transgressed against thee. We know that we may have put together as lightly or easily by thoughtless words in this past week. Perhaps, O Lord, we may have not uttered with our lips, but have perhaps thought evil things against our neighbour, perhaps even against our brother or sister in Christ.

[5 : 39] And we have perhaps taken also needless and oversensitive offence at things said or done to us which may have been done in innocence. Lord, thou knowest the nature of our hearts.

Thou knowest, O Lord, how prone we are to sin, how ready we are to set up the idol of our own selves upon a throne that should be reserved for thee alone. And though we may not carve drama images, yet we know that self is the idol of which we are so often guilty of, adulterous and idolatrous worship. And so we pray thee, dethrone us, Lord, from that place which should be occupied by Christ alone. And do thou come and reign in our hearts. And as thou hast take charge of our lives, and as the Lord thou hast set to rise the things which are wrong and astray in us. We pray that thou wouldst give us hearts to confess now readily those things that we can remember of which we are guilty and to ask his special forgiveness for the multitudes which we have forgotten because they are so much part of our human nature. But we pray thee to nonetheless wash and cleanse us throughout in the blood of Christ our Saviour, that which we have remembered its shedding of this morning in his bliss, his broken body and his shed blood.

And as we thank thee for all who have proclaimed and declared the unsearchable riches of Christ over these last days. We pray thy blessing also in thy servant, our brother, who thou hast brought amongst us again this evening. We pray that thou wouldst be with our brother, praying in health and Lord, give him utterance tonight, give him my strength and grace that thou wouldst settle any anxiety or nerves or concern, and just give him peace, Lord, in thee and in thy spirit, and that thy word and thy truth wouldst pour forth from his lips, and that that word may find in our hearts a receptive soil, a well-prepared and good soil in which the good seed of thy word may embed and take root and bring forth a harvest.

Lord, we ask thee, Lord, to bless and remember this congregation of thy people. We pray that thou bless and encourage their Lord in their week by week and day by day witness for thee.

In this place and in all places where the different groups meet, the harvest studies, the fellowship meetings, and the road to recovery and all that is for the Lord. We do pray that more would be brought into each and every one of these gatherings and to the Lord's day services in all of our congregations.

[8 : 16] We pray especially that thou was given strength for the long haul of the renovation and requerishment of the building which thou hast now given into their hands. We thank thee, Lord, for that wondrous anticipated change from worldly and secular use now to holy use, honouring to thee.

And we pray, Lord, that as people come in to this parishion, on the main road from whichever direction, that the presence and witness of a church right there on the main road may itself be a witness and a shining example of the Lord in the midst and at the forefront of everyday society.

So we pray thy blessing on the work of this congregation and in all our congregations round about. We rejoice, especially, Lord, with our brothers and sisters in New York, and pray for them that their new minister, Mark, can be asked to bless his ministry and his labours there in the years to come.

So do thou unite us so, Lord, in the love of Christ Jesus from wheresoever we may come, and by whatsoever means thou hast brought us together tonight.

We pray that thou hast you make us in the love of thy name and of one another, that we would love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and love one another also, our neighbours as ourselves.

[9 : 38] Bless thy word tonight as we read it and sing it and think upon it and all the praises of thy name, and all that is offered up in music and song to the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Continue with us, Lord, and grant that thy spirit and thy word together be a wondrous means of converting and bringing to thee many more sons and daughters to righteousness.

Transform our lives, we pray. Transform our nation by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ as king and hell, not only of his church, but of the nations also.

Come, O Lord, and be the king of Scotland again. Come and be the king of our nation and our land. Take over, O Lord, the institutions of power, of education, of business, of politics, of everyday life.

Restore the sanctity of the family we beseech thee. Protect the unborn and all who are vulnerable to attack in our society and land. We ask that you continue with us now.

[10 : 38] Remember the poor and needy of the suffering. Remember, O Lord, those who are persecuted in other lands in this for righteousness' sake. Strengthen thy people everywhere and unite us tonight in the Lord and in his spirit.

And bless O Lord, I serve thy brother over this congregation and continue with him, his wife and his family, and their going after their coming in and all their labours in this place.

Continue with us now and forgive our sins. For we ask it all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Amen.

one intonation that I've limited to give is to remind you of the fact that tomorrow morning at half past 11 there'll be a gala Thanksgiving service here in the community centre and that service will be conducted God willing by the Reverend Murdy who was previously in the environment sky so please come along if you're able to tomorrow for that Thanksgiving service we're now going to hear God's word and I'll invite faith to come and hear God's word for us Thank you David Good evening everyone Thank you once again for the huge privilege of being here this weekend and thank you for all your encouragement and support over the meetings, it's been a joy to be here with you I genuinely need that, it's been a real privilege and a real joy to get to know a little of what God is doing here and I'm absolutely thrilled that three friends of mine have just walked in, they've driven down from

Carlway and we have David and Norman and Gary Carmichael who worship with us often at Harper in Glasgow and David's sister and brother-in-law are prominent in the work there and his sister Lynn texts me to say he might be coming down so that's a real joy and I know you'll make them welcome later and they're looking forward to some I've told them that the food is unbelievable so I think that's probably what being 50 miles or so worthwhile but it is lovely to share that together before I read are you able to flick up that last verse that we sang there just for a moment we sometimes sing that lovely hymn at Harper and this is just a wee suggestion you might not want to take this up but rather than us singing repeatedly lie silent in the grave what we do is we flick the order of the verse round so we begin by singing when this poor listening stammering tongue lie silent in the grave then in a nobler sweeter song I'll sing your power to save and the repetition the repetition is on

[13 : 22] I'll sing your power to save I'll sing your power to save then in a nobler sweeter song rather than lying silent in the grave works for me might not work for you take it or leave it do with it what you like put it in a bin whatever you think I just wanted to mention it in the passage to you if that was helpful well we come to the last in our short series in the amazing book of Isaiah and it has been somewhat an arbitrary choice in the way through but we're going to read this evening breaking in at the middle of Isaiah chapter 51 and into the beginning of chapter 52 we'll read from verse 17 of Isaiah chapter 51 and we get to a really exciting part in God's dealings with his people as we were singing Psalm 40 at the beginning about the Lord rescuing us and about us being in a desperate place Israel were in a desperate place and God came mightily to their rescue and that's what we're going to be looking at tonight how he's done that for us who's trusted in it and how he can do that for people today

Isaiah 51 verse 17 wake yourself wake yourself stand up O Jerusalem you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath who have drunk to the dregs the bowl the cup of staggering there is none to guide her among all the sons that she has borne there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons that she has brought up these two things have happened to you who will console you devastation and destruction famine and sword who will comfort you your sons have fainted lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net they are full of the wrath of the Lord the rebuke of your God therefore hear this you who are afflicted who are drunk but not with wine thus says the Lord the Lord your God who pleads the cause of his people behold I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors who have said to you bow down that we may pass over and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over awake awake put on strength put on strength

O Zion put on your beautiful garments O Jerusalem the holy city for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean shake yourself from the dust and arise be seated O Jerusalem loose the bonds from your neck O captive daughter of Zion for thus says the Lord you were sold for nothing and you shall be redeemed without money for thus says the Lord God my people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there and the Assyrians oppressed them for nothing now therefore what have I here declares the Lord seeing that my people are taken away for nothing their rulers wail declares the Lord and continually all the day my name is despised therefore my people shall know my name therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak here am I how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news who publishes peace who brings good news of happiness who publishes salvation who says to Zion your

God reigns the watch the voice of the watchman they lift up their voice together they sing for joy for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion break forth together and to sing in you waste places of Jerusalem for the Lord has comforted his people he has redeemed Jerusalem the Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God depart depart go out from here touch no unclean thing go out from the midst of earth purify yourselves you who bear the vessels of the Lord for you shall not go out in haste and you shall not go in flight for the Lord will go before you and the God of Israel will be your rear guard this is the word of God and we thank you we sing again to God's praise and we sing this time for mission praise 458 458 man of sorrows what a name for the son of God who came ruined sinners to reclaim hallelujah what a savior let's pray for a moment our heavenly father we thank you for the truth that we have been saying we thank you for the truth of the death of Jesus Christ your son our savior we thank you for the full atonement that was purchased through that death we thank you for his resurrection for his victory for the fact that the work that he came to do he finished in order to save us in order that the justice of God would be met and the grace of God would be offered and Lord we thank you for the prospect of his return when he comes our glorious king all his ransom home to bring then anew this song we'll sing hallelujah what a savior enable us

Lord we pray to remember that to anticipate that enable us we pray to live each day that remembering the death of Jesus as if it had happened yesterday and remembering the resurrection of Jesus as if it had happened today and looking forward to the return of Christ which may come tomorrow or even before tomorrow enable us we pray to be ready and Lord we ask now that as your word is opened to us once more we pray that once more we would see Jesus and Lord that we would each be able to say as we go from here hallelujah what a savior we pray that he would be our savior and that we would know his blessing and his security upon our lives so hear us help us be especially with your servant Craig and continue to speak through him as you have done over these last few days bless him equip him as you have called him and minister to us in the power of the

[21 : 03] Holy Spirit for we pray these things in Christ's name Amen Thank you so much David I think David and I met in London at a conference that's when we first met a number of years ago at evangelism conference and it has been a great personal pleasure for me to count on a friend and to get to know him and pray for the ministry and see how God is using him and just to see him fitted into the culture you're with marrying the family is a huge joy and we thank the Lord for what he's doing and we stand with you and we love you in the Lord and we stand with you and we pray for you and want to see the Lord continue to work amongst us well let's flip back please in the Bibles it's a huge help to me if I know you're looking at the text you know I'm not making stuff up and it's there and that's where the power lies in the word of God itself and I wonder did you notice I wonder how dozy you are this Sunday night have you had a wee sleep this afternoon or are you full of roast beef and unbelief or what is the situation with you but I wonder how sharp you were did you notice that there are three sets of repeated words in the phrases that I read tonight in the passage that I read verse 17 of chapter 51 wake yourself wake yourself verse 1 of chapter 52 awake awake and then verse 11 of chapter 52 depart depart that's unusual in Isaiah's writing and it draws our attention it draws the eye it's like what's going on here and Isaiah's words come here with the urgency of the the soldiers blast call the trumpet blast calling the weary soldiers who've all but given up hope of being rescued to awaken to revive themselves to get themselves ready for the final rescue that's suddenly upon them

God is on the move in these chapters for his people Israel and unsurprisingly God's historical rescue of his people that we're looking at tonight his historical rescue of his people from Babylon looks and feels to us as we read it very like his eternal rescue of his people from the world and the flesh and the devil you know the Lord Jesus Christ you will see in this passage and understand something of the experience of Israel you'll find similarities in your own experience if you're saved and if you're not a believer in the Lord Jesus if you're not one of his if you're not saved then I'm praying and maybe even in your heart you want to pray now and ask God to open your eyes to these amazing things and tonight we need to do in this final session we need to do what Isaiah says we need to wake up to some realities and there are five points tonight as we finish number one we've got to wake up and see the ruin we've got to wake up and see the ruin that's what the people of Israel have been doing for as long as they've been in captivity in Babylon their history and their pedigree as Israel as the people of God might have led them to believe that they could cope in that circumstance that they would have the inbuilt wisdom to guide them and strength to protect them but have a look there at verse 18 of chapter 51 there is none to guide them meaning Israel among all the sons she's born among all the children she's raised all the young people that they've educated all the ones they've put through the equivalent of university all the brains in the world but there's none to guide her there's none to take her by the hand among all the sons that she's brought up these two things have happened to you who will console you and here are the two things devastation and destruction famine and so on who will come for you daily the people of

Israel walk to the inconsolable misery of their situation and the language is uncompromising look at verse 23 your tormentors it's a horrible to have a tormentor isn't it somebody who just makes it their business to goad you at every opportunity somebody who never gives you a minute's peace your tormentors verse 23 they've said to you bow down that we may pass over and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over in Glasgow we would say they've walked right all over the tabia they've just treated them like a piece of tarmac and walked over the people of Israel devastated destroyed disgraced and the root of this horrific suffering was the realisation that Israel had brought all of this upon themselves that's what made it so much worse what they were experiencing wasn't just

Babylonian brutality what they were experiencing you see was God's just wrath unleashed on them because of what we've seen even over this weekend because of their consistent willful rebellion against him so this ruin that they're experiencing that they're waking up to this ruin is from the hand of the Lord we see that in 51 17 wake yourself wake yourself stand up oh Jerusalem you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath who have drunk to the dregs the bowl the cup of staggering it is as though the people of Israel were drunk but verse 21 says not with wine they were stone cold sober but staggering like drunk men under the awfulness of God's wrath it's a terrible description of what it means to be hopelessly inescapably in in in in in in in in places it's a horrible thing to talk about but we have to begin here because the fact that

God rescues his people is only properly understood as stunningly good news when we see it in its proper context the news that God is a God of love is meaningless unless we understand this the news that he rescues rebels is meaningless until we see ourselves in this position and the proper context to be amazed that God's power to rescue us is the understanding of his absolute right to destroy us.

[28 : 34] I don't know if you've come to terms with that, but that is what we deserve. Israel in this misery could not complain. There was nothing they could say about this being unfair. They knew the consequences of walking away from the living God, and now they were feeling the pain and facing the truth. So the first thing is, wake up and see the room.

The second thing is, wake up and hear the news. Christopher Nolan's new film, Dunkirk, I don't know if any of you have seen it, encapsulates the events of May 1940 when, in the Second World War, Germany had advanced into France, trapping the Allied troops on the beaches of Dunkirk. And the film, as far as I can see, faithfully captures the hopeless misery of the troops prior to their rescue there. They were like sitting ducks on the beach during wave after wave of enemy aircraft attack.

They were watching the rescue ships that their previous platoons had managed to get themselves on. They were watching them being sunk within full view of the beaches full of soldiers. And at one point we see thousands of exhausted soldiers collapsed on the beach when word begins to spread and circulate among them that rescues it out.

A fleet of hundreds of little boats, mostly pleasure craft, were in sight and they'd come to take them home. And you capture something of the wonder of that.

The troops, exhausted, depleted in energy, totally discouraged, fearing the next wave of enemy attack, thinking they're not going to survive, thinking they're never going to see their loved ones again.

[30 : 28] Suddenly the news of rescue comes and they awaken and they spring up to see if it's true. And as they look out and see the flotilla approaching, Dunkirk, the cheers go up.

At the end of this heroic mission, 330,000 French, British, Belgian and Dutch soldiers were safely evacuated using every serviceable naval and civilian vessel that could be found.

That moment when use of rescue was heard brings us very close to the scene in Isaiah 51 and 52 today. The only difference is, of course, that the soldiers had done nothing to deserve it, whereas Israel had brought themselves into this problem.

But the people of Israel were every bit as beleaguered as the Allied troops in Dunkirk Beach. And can you imagine what it would be like to be in that situation? Can you imagine what it would be like and waking up to this news that rescue was on the way?

Let's take it in reverse order to get the awesome sense of the news breaking. Chapter 52, verse 8. The voice of your watchmen, they lift up their voice. Together they sing for joy.

[31 : 48] For eye to eye they see the Lord. They see the return of the Lord to Zion. So they've been like drunkards under the weight of his wrath, but now with crystal clarity, they see the Lord coming back to redeem and rescue his people, and their experience is about to be utterly, radically, gloriously transformed.

Their lives are about to be utterly transformed. So no wonder 52 begins, Awake, awake, put on strength, O Zion.

Put on beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for there shall no more come into you, the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake yourself from the dust and arise. Be seated, O Jerusalem.

Literally, be enthroned. Loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus says the Lord, you were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.

They were about to be awakened. They were about to be strengthened, made beautiful, purified, protected, dusted down, enthroned, liberated.

[33 : 01] Total transformation was right in view. And we get a sense of how welcome this news is in the famous verse 7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news.

You can imagine in these days, because you live in similar terrain, you can imagine very well that the runners who brought the news, they didn't have mobile phones, obviously, they didn't have television, aials and masks and that kind of technology.

If you wanted the news, the runner had to bring the news. And can you imagine someone running from Stornoway, over the hills, taking the so-called quick road? Can you imagine the runners bringing the news, arriving tired and worn out from the heat and the dust and the hardship of their journey?

Do you think that their feet would be particularly attractive? Of course, they ran barefoot. Do you think their feet would be particularly attractive to look at? No, they would be narrowed, filthy, stinking, just like my feet would be if I had to do that.

But in the picture, Isaiah paints here, the feet that carried this news across the mountains are beautiful feet, not because of the exceptional way these feet have grown, but because of the exceptional news these feet have brought.

[34 : 31] So Isaiah says, look at the bloke who brings the news of salvation. He's worn out. He's fit to fall on a heap and fall fast asleep.

He's destroyed. He's absolutely wrecked after the run. And as we look at his feet, we're afraid to get too close, but we say, these are beautiful feet to me because these are the feet that brought good news.

That's the meaning of what is going on there. How beautiful, look at it, upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, you're God's rage.

Can you imagine that news landing on the ears and minds and hearts of devastated, hopeless, helpless Israel? Well, you don't need to imagine it if you're a believer because it came to you in exactly the same position that they were in.

If you, like me, know the Lord Jesus Christ tonight, you know that, like Israel here, we deserve nothing but to drink the dregs of the bowl, the cup of God's staggering wrath on our sin.

[35 : 54] If you're like me tonight, you know that you deserved nothing of his goodness. Like Israel, there's no humanly generated wisdom to guide us. No words to comfort us.

Like Israel, I was just like an animal trapped in a net, a net into which I had willfully walked and I couldn't free myself. But as we hear the gospel, we wake up and we begin to process the news.

And it's good news of peace. It's good news of happiness. Oh, nobody, I tell you, in the culture in general, in Scotland, nobody believes that.

If they want happiness, they would never, ever think of going to a Christian meeting place. I don't know how we've managed to persuade people that the gospel is not about happiness.

It is about the profoundest happiness. It's news of rescue. And the crux of the news is in the spite of all appearances to the conscience, our God reigns.

[37 : 04] That's the crux of the good news. And he has come. And he is coming again for his people.

We know, don't we, that the world is full of bad news and full of fake news. And I've been thinking about this, and this is a striking thing to say in a world where any one of us can receive terrible news in a minute.

But I want to put it to you this way. No bad news you can ever receive can take you to the equivalent depths of the heights that this news can take you to.

When you've heard the news that your God reigns over everything, that he is sovereign over every detail of your life, that he has worked a plan to bring you into peace with him, that he has worked a plan to bring you into eternal and ever-growing happiness, the knowledge of his reign takes us to heights that no bad news can ever counter in terms of the depths that it might take us to.

This news changes everything. Your God reigns. You're the object of his love and he acts to rescue you from his wrath. Don't forget that little bit.

[38 : 35] You know when we talk about being saved and I was saved in 19 canteen or whatever it was and that's a great thing to say. Not mocking that for a moment. But you know when I was saved, what is it you're saved from?

You say, well I'm saved from my sin. 100% correct. But actually, you're saved from the consequences of your sin. Actually, the consequences of your sin is facing the wrath of God.

So actually, when you close all that down, God saves you from God. That's the gospel. That's what these people are hearing.

God has found a way to save his people from his own wrath. God, this is good news. But it's bad news for those who are God's enemies.

Have a look at chapter 51 verse 22. Thus says the Lord, the Lord your God who pleads the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering, the bowl of my wrath.

[39 : 41] You shall drink it no more and I will put it into the hands of your tormentors. Now we know through Isaiah that the Lord had used the Assyrians and he used the Babylonians to discipline his people.

But all the way through we can see that these nations didn't do what they did to Israel in order to honour the Lord. These nations just went on doing what they were doing and went on disciplining the Lord.

Even as they did, they served God's purpose towards Israel but they didn't do it from any joy in him. They didn't do it to honour him in any way. And now, says this prophet, they will have to reckon with God.

Now they'll have a taste of the medicine that they've been dishing out as the cup of staggering is to put into their hands. It's put into their hands. Your God reigns is the message.

He reigns over everything. Tonight, across planet earth, your God reigns. He reigns over everyone. He reigns even over those who live in the most determined rebellion against him.

[40 : 53] And there are millions of people who come into that category. Many live in ignorance of him, but some live in determined, willful, inventive rebellion against God.

And God is sovereign over them. evil. And he has purposes in tolerating evil for a season. But the gospel is that in the end, he will make those who refuse to repent, drink the eternal cup of his wrath.

Here, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 24, then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and every power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. We sang about it this morning. We read about it tonight. Our God reigns.

And that means that you will either build your life on that rock that our God reigns, or you will smash yourself to pieces against that rock our God reigns.

[42 : 06] The good news of rescue for those who receive God's grace is bad news of judgment for those who persist. in rebellion against him. Wake up and see the ruin.

Wake up and hear the news. Thirdly, wake up and know the Lord. I said a moment ago that the crux of the good news is that our God reigns.

And now we find that the crux of what it means to be rescued, the crux of what it means to be rescued is to know this God he reigns. to know him.

Isaiah records the Lord in verses 3 to 5, recalling what his people had lived through. Have a look at verse 3, chapter 52, verse 3. For thus says the Lord, you were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.

For thus says the Lord God, my people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them there for nothing. Now therefore, what have I here? Isn't that amazing?

[43 : 10] Have you many times have you said that in your life? Oh, what have we here? Here is Almighty God looking at history and saying, now what have I here? declares the Lord. Seeing that my people are taken away from nothing, their rulers wail, declares the Lord, and continually all the day my name is despised.

we know the history to which these verses refer, but it's fascinating to see how God reacts to his people and to his name being treated with zero value, such as it is today.

There God was reigning in supreme and sovereign power all through these grim years, but his people having long since ignored his word, in the midst of their misery, had also now begun to despise his name.

His people Israel had begun to forget his glory and his power. So the question is, how will their reigning Lord actually rescue them? How will he do it?

How will he awaken them from that stupid? What is it God decides to do to save his oppressed soul for nothing people whose leaders are wailing in desperation?

[44 : 27] Well then it is in verse 6. Therefore, my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I, it is I who speak.

Here am I. I hope I'm making this clear to you tonight. I'm maybe struggling to do that, but what I'm saying to you is that the crux of being rescued is knowing God.

And that's what he does for people. He brings us to know him. Do you remember the famous verse in Jeremiah chapter 31?

God is laying out the terms of the new covenant man. And he says, no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and his brother saying know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more. And right at the core of that covenant is individuals knowing this astounding God who reigns.

[45 : 36] For God to rescue his people takes more than just bringing them out of Babylon. He has to get Babylon out of them. And the way that he does that is by them knowing his name, meaning knowing his character, knowing his person.

And you might be thinking, but they've known the Lord for centuries by this point. They've known his name for centuries by this stage. Correct? What they needed, what we need, is not new revelation of mutual, but a new fresh revelation of existence.

To know this God, to know him was essential to being saved for Israel. To know him personally is essential for our rescue.

That's how God expresses it here in 52 verse 6. And that's why his son Jesus said in John 17 verse 3, and this is eternal life that they, can you finish it?

This is eternal life that they know you, the only true God. Isn't that amazing? Somebody had asked you to give a definition of eternal life.

[46 : 54] What would you have said? Well, when you ask Jesus, that's what he says. As he talks to his heavenly father before he goes to the cross, he says, this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God.

Number four, wake up and hit the road. That's not exactly how Isaiah puts it, but not far off it. Verse 11, depart, depart, go out from there.

I said earlier that the Lord was rescuing his people by getting them out of Babylon and getting Babylon out of them, and it's amazing, isn't it, to see how Babylon has come to stand in the whole Bible, not just for a country in the Middle East at that time, but for a world of people down through history who live in outright rebellion against God.

You'll find Babylon mentioned in the book of Revelation, as a representative of exactly that, a domain of total rebellion against God. And that's why we're reminded here that salvation depends entirely upon the Lord as he, verse 11, bears his holy arm.

That means he, literally, it means he rolls up his sleeve for the whole world to see the salvation he works. And the sign that we are among the saved, the sign that we are among the rescued is that in relation to Babylon, in relation to open defiance of God, we hit the road.

[48 : 32] We flee and we follow him. Verse 11, depart, depart, go out from there, touch the one queen thing, go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.

The Lord, you see, was and is in the process of decontaminating his people. And knowing how frail we are, and how prone to love our sin we are, he calls us to make every effort to live up to who we truly are in him.

and to get clear of everything in this world that is an open rebellion against them. And we find exactly the same emphasis in the New Testament in Acts chapter 2, at the end of Peter's preaching in the day of Pentecost.

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promises for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone who the Lord, our God calls to himself.

And with many other words he bore witness and continued saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation. It's exactly the same emphasis, isn't it?

[50 : 11] Hit the road. It doesn't mean literally move away to somewhere so remote that you never come into contact with people. And we can't escape this world until the Lord takes us home, or until he comes again, but we can make sure that as far as we can, we stay clear of it.

We stay clear of these things that are part of the open, defiant rebellion of the Lord, our God. So we hit the road, we flee.

Verse 11 and verse 12 we follow, for you shall not go out in haste, you shall not go in flight, for the Lord your God will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your God.

He goes ahead of us, he goes beside us, and he goes behind us. It's a beautiful picture, isn't it? Verses 11 and 12 give us an amazing picture of the essentials of the Christian life.

When we have known that rescue work in our lives, we flee from everything that's in rebellion against him, and we follow him, and he goes before us, and he goes behind us, and he walks beside us.

[51 : 29] Fifth thing, and then we close, wake up and trace the grace. If you've tracked with me, you'll probably have questions that I haven't answered about the passage.

Well, I want to close by posing a few more questions to whet your appetite for Isaiah 53, to which we will not go. God had been working to remove his wrath for their sin from them.

That's what these verses are about. How did he do that? Well, we know that he passed the cup of his wrath onto the enemies of Israel, but that doesn't really answer the question.

That's just moving it from one set of deserving sinners to another set of deserving sinners. the big question is on what grounds can a just and holy perfect God put the cup into the hands of the guilty and that be right and then remove it from them and that be right.

how does he justly forgive them and remove his curse upon sin and sinners?

[52 : 59] have a look at chapter 51 verse 22 thus says the Lord the Lord your God who pleads the cause of his people and you should be asking yourselves well to whom does the Lord our God plead the cause of his people and the answer is he takes the cause of his people to the highest court in the universe which is the one where he himself sits as judge and he pleads for his people before his own court of justice that's what I mean by tracing the grace of God in this chapter see this means and if you've got tired we're really near the end there so do wake up and focus with me and think about what this means it means that his longing to love and to forgive and save rebels does not override his longing to uphold justice his longing to punish the unbearable offence of our sin against him lots of people see

God like that that he has this pure hatred of sin hatred of evil will punish it but he's just got a little bit more love and grace and therefore it wins out now that's not the way to think of almighty God whatever he does is legally approved whatever he does he does with legal perfection when he removes the cup of his wrath from sinners he's not acting out of character it's not that he makes the odd exception it's not that he decides to have a concession for certain people when he removes the cup of his wrath such as we see him doing in Isaiah 51 tonight he does it with immaculate legal procedure so that both his love and his justice are perfectly satisfied how does he do it how will he redeem his people with what will he pay if not with money verse 3 who will drink the cup of

God's wrath to satisfy his demand for justice the answer is his servant his perfect son the Lord Jesus who took the cup and though willing his father to let it pass from him that was refused and on the cross he drank to the dregs the cup of God's wrath for our son that's how God did it and when we read in verse 4 you shall be redeemed without money we know very well don't we from the new testament the language that says we're not redeemed by money not by silver or gold but you can finish it with the precious blood of Christ trace the grace that runs through these amazing verses as we think of this stunning rescue guilty rebels deserve it guilty vile helplessly spotless love of God was he we sang

Charles Wesley captured a brilliant in his hymn I don't think you know of it but let me quote it to you as he thinks of the cross Wesley writes tis finished the Messiah dies cut off for sins but not his own accomplished is the sacrifice the great redeeming work is done tis finished all the debt is paid just as divine is satisfied the grand and full of totally made God for a guilty world has died he goes on the types and figures are fulfilled exacted is the legal pain the precious promises are sealed the spotless love of God is slain the reign of sin and death is over and all may live from sin set free

Satan has lost his mortal power to swallow them in victory save from the legal curse I am my savior hangs on yonder tree see there the meek expiring lamb is finished he expires for me that is the awesomeness of what chapter 52 of Isaiah begins to point us to and that's why Isaiah cannot wait to get to chapter 53 where we're not going if you can read it tonight in glory in the person of the Lord Jesus suffice to see verse 10 of chapter 52 the Lord has bared his holy arm he has rolled up his sleeve he has worked an amazing one and on the center cross the

[59 : 08] Lord has bared his holy arm as the arms of his son were stretched out upon that cross and nailed there he was lifted up and it happened before the eyes of all the nations verse 10 and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God how will that happen well it will happen as you become a messenger carrying this good news across the mountains across the sea across the street across the room across the coffee table so that others might wake up and hear the news and see the effort that you made to communicate it with them and say of your feet how beautiful are the feet who bring good news who publish peace who bring good news of happiness who publish salvation who say to

Zion you're God great asking for the gracious help and power of your Holy Spirit to bring this illuminatingly to our hearts that the lights would go on that blind eyes would be opened to see what our Savior has done for us to set us free from the total misery of being cut off for you for eternity to see the majesty of what you did when you rolled up your sleeve and bared your holy arm to see the accuracy and the perfection that no court in the universe could ever find our

God unjust thank you Lord that the message of the gospel to us tonight is good news of happiness news of salvation of rest news of peace because you're the God who reigns and we long for the increase of your reign in our lives and in our churches and in our families and in our communities and in our nation and in our nations of the world so bless your word to your heart may it encourage those who know Maria and may some of these pictures from Isaiah fasten themselves into the hearts and minds of those who may not yet be trusted and by the grace of our God who raised may it pass from death to life and from the power of Satan to God we ask it for the glory of your great name

Amen we're going to stand and sing together Psalm 67 as we close Psalm 67 I'm sure the beautiful Psalm Lord bless and pity us shine on us with thy face that the earth thy way and nations may know thy saving grace we stand to sing now to him who is able to strengthen you according to the gospel and the preaching of Christ Jesus according to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith for the only ways God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ Amen