

The city

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[0 : 00] Amen. So let me just say to everybody here, what is it that God says to people?

If God is speaking, what sort of things does he say? What is his sort of introductory comment as he meets people? Does he say, is this a true representation of what God says to people?

You are just such wonderful people. You are such wonderful people. You just need to realize that I love you because you're so wonderful. And is it fair to represent God as saying, I'm just waiting to richly bless you.

And by that I mean I'm waiting to pour out wealth to solve all your financial problems. If you become a Christian, you won't have any financial problems. I'm waiting because I'm going to find you the spouse that will fulfill all your needs.

And that's what will happen if you become a Christian. I'm going to help you to feel really good about yourself. I know you don't always feel good about yourself, but I'm going to make you feel really good about yourself. And I'm going to say that if the God who is supposed to say all those things to people in general is not the real God at all.

[1 : 44] The God who is said to say those things is an idol made up. It's an imaginary God. How does God actually address people? What does he actually say?

What does he actually promise? We really need to know that, don't we? Otherwise we'll be believing a lie. And I don't want anybody to go from this building believing a lie.

I want to speak the truth. And I want to speak the truth. And I would like to pray to God to put it in every hearer that that was true.

That's actually what God says. What does God actually say to people? So we're going to look into chapter 1 of Isaiah and see what he actually says to people. Now boys and girls, I'm going to use a word called impassioned.

All right? Impassioned. Impassioned. I don't know if you know that word. Let me just get rid of my keys so I'm not jangling around all the time. And what I mean by impassioned, is there any football going on?

[2 : 44] Can any of the boys and girls tell me any football going on at the moment? Is there? Really? Okay. Well, what about that?

Euro 2020 finals. And do people get excited about the Euro 2020 finals? Have any of you got excited about it?

Okay. So when you get excited, have you been watching and you go, Or something like that? And if somebody, you get excited?

No. I have a little bit. I have a little bit. And if somebody does something wrong and a horrible foul, Do you go, Like that?

Do you do that? Look at that! Do you do that? You can get excited about all sorts of things. You get excited about good things. You say, And you can get excited about bad things.

[3 : 41] Like that. Yes? And that's what I mean by impassioned. So it's not just saying, Oh, that was rather good. Sort of English style.

Or, Oh dear. But it'll go, Like that. Okay? Impassioned. So I'm saying God, In this chapter, Is impassioned. Okay? He's an impassioned God.

And I wonder if you've ever been on the receiving end of somebody impassioned. So it's not unusual. Well, I'm not going to put ideas in anybody's heads. But mum and dad come back and find that a little child has written on the walls in filtip pen.

That's never happened in any of your houses. That's never happened in any of your houses. And mum or dad would say, What are you doing writing on the walls?

Okay? Have you ever been on the receiving end of that? Something like that? Writing on the walls? Whoops. Oh, a minute. That's all gone clicky wrong. Or if you'd kicked your friend at school, You would never do this.

[4 : 43] Or you would never pull your sister's hair or your brother's hair. You would never do anything like that. But imagine somebody who actually did that. And mum or dad says, What on earth are you doing pulling your sister's hair?

What on earth are you doing kicking your friend when they weren't looking? That's awful. And maybe you've been on the end of something like that. Because people get impassioned about things like that.

And maybe if you've run into the road by accident, Maybe when you're smaller, you run into the road, A mum or dad or whoever's looking after you would say, Get out of the road! Get out! Like that. Would they do that? I think they would. They wouldn't say, Ah, ah, excuse me, there's a lorry coming. Um, I mean, if it's okay with you, If it's okay with you, Would you just mind a little bit moving?

Something like that. And they go, Get out of the road! That's what they do, wouldn't they? Okay. Because they care. Things that you get impassioned about. Things that you get excited about.

[5 : 48] Things that really, ah, make you get excited. And I put there another thing about a holiday. Might be getting really excited. We're really looking forward. We're really looking forward to going to Seaford holiday.

Or whatever it is. Okay. So, some things about getting impassioned. Now, we're going to look at this part of the Bible because I think God gets really impassioned in this part of the Bible.

I want to try and take us through that. I just want to say it's about God's city. So, boys and girls, if you've got a Bible there, it says, first verse, The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah, son of Amos, saw.

It's a vision about a city. And in verse 26, it says, You will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. And in verse 27, it says, Zion will be redeemed.

Zion is another name for Jerusalem. So, what have I got here? This is way back, 760 BC. It is about the city, which was a failing city.

[6 : 48] And God was seeing his city, Jerusalem, his capital city, his headquarters on earth at that time. And it was failing. So, there's a city failing. You can see that there.

And this is about turning the failing city into a faithful city. And that's what this chapter is about. God wants his failing city to become a faithful city.

And as I read right at the beginning, this doesn't get completed until heaven, because heaven will be that city. And that's what Christians are looking forward to when God's heavenly city is built and everybody, we're all there.

Heaven will be that city. Okay. So, here are my points. Number one is an impassioned accusation. Number two is an impassioned refusal.

Number three is an impassioned invitation. And number four is an impassioned promise. And I'm going to ask how the promise works. So, see, boys and girls, if you can remember those words, because you can test mum and dad on them later, or whoever it is that's looking after you.

[8 : 00] Accusation. An impassioned refusal. An impassioned invitation. An impassioned promise. Okay. Have you got those? Because you're going to test mum and dad, or whoever it is looking after you at home, on these, number one, accusation.

Yeah. Number two, refusal. Number three, invitation. Number four, promise. Okay. Okay. Well, let's do them one at a time. So, first of all, an accusation.

And I'm looking, everybody, at the first few verses where God says, Hear, O heavens, listen, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I reared up children and brought them up, and they have rebelled against me.

The ox knows his master, the donkey, his owner's manger. But Israel does not know, my people, do not understand. Oh, sinful nation, people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption.

They have forsaken the law. They have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. So, it's like in a courtroom where God says, Listen, heavens and earth, listen to what I'm going to say to these people.

[9 : 09] Okay. It's like a courtroom. Listen, heavens and earth, I want you to hear this. And it's like a finger pointing. Have you ever been at home and you've done something wrong and somebody's pointed a finger at you and said, You just wrote in viro on my favourite pullover.

Or something like that. Have you ever had a finger pointed at you like that? Well, sometimes people get fingers pointed at them.

And God says, He points the finger at His people and He says, You are so stupid. You're more stupid than animals, verse 2.

The ox knows where to get food. The donkey knows his owner's manger. But you, Israel, you people are so stupid. You don't even know what's good for you.

You don't even know what's good for you. And He says, They are ungrateful. I reared up children and brought them up and they rebelled against me. And God says, I looked after you.

[10 : 20] I fed you. I taught you. I comforted you. I showed you the right way. Like if you're a boy or girl, like your mum or dad, whoever are looking after you, how they look after you, and God says, I've done that and you have rebelled against me, you go, meh, to God.

And it says, they've rejected God. This is the accusation. Ah, sinful nation. Notice the word ah there. It means God really cares about this. Oh, you sinful nation.

People loaded with guilt. You brood of evildoers. Children given to corruption. You've rejected God. You've forsaken the Lord and turned your back on the Holy One.

Have you ever been at home and you're being told off or something and you turn away and you say, and somebody says, don't turn your back on me while I'm talking to you.

And God says, don't turn your back on me while I'm talking to you. And that's what these people have done. They've rejected their God and they've refused help.

[11 : 32] Verse 5 and 6. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured. Your whole heart is faint. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness, only wounds and bruises and open sores.

Not cleansed, not bandaged, not soothed with oil. How much of them is ill or not very well? How many things, boys and girls, are not very well with them? Some of the things that are not very well? Everything. Okay, from the top of their head to the bottom of their feet. And it's not that they're ill, it's that they're getting beaten. And they just go back and say, can you beat me again?

Can you beat me again? And God says, what's that so stupid? Why don't you actually listen to me? And then you wouldn't get beaten. You're finding it difficult because you're fighting me.

And they stubbornly refuse help. Despite the self-inflicted damage. And God is accusing his people. Your country is desolate, your city's burned with fire, your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you.

[12 : 38] This is what's happening to you. And God accuses them and says, you're so stupid and you're so naughty and you...

Why are you like this? And it's God's accusation. And God isn't saying, oh, you're so wonderful. He's saying, you're so bad.

He's not saying, you're just great, I just love you as you are. Oh, wow. He says, why are you so stupid and bad? Are you so corrupt? What's the matter with you?

And God is meeting them as an adversary. And actually, this isn't just those people. It's everybody. If you have never met God as your adversary, you have never met God.

If you've never heard God say to you, this is wrong in your life. You have never heard God speak to you.

[13 : 52] If you've never heard God say, look at you. Look at what's going on. That's your fault. Why are you doing that?

If you've never heard him say that, you've never heard him speak to you. It's the same for everybody. And if you don't get this, you have not got Christianity.

If you can hand on heart say, you know, I'm really a good person. I know, I make one or two mistakes, I'm basically a good person. You have not understood Christian faith.

Not at all. It doesn't start there. It starts with this, accusation from God. As you begin to get to know God, you will change from thinking, I'm actually a nice, generous, good sort of person.

I know I have a few faults and sins, but, you know, basically I'm good, to thinking, actually, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I am deeply, deeply flawed.

[15 : 06] And there is sin deep within me. God help me. If you've never said that, you've never been a Christian.

Until you say that, you can't be a Christian. You're a Pharisee. You don't understand yourself. You don't understand God. You haven't understood at all.

This is what God says. You haven't yet realized that you are, in essence, ungrateful, unkind, spiritually stupid, spiritually stubborn, and it's no one's fault but yours.

Until God has convicted you and convinced you that that's who you are, you haven't started the Christian life. Okay.

And I want to say, it's very humiliating to be a Christian. We're going to, God willing, come around the Lord's table before the summer for August.

[16 : 19] And as we come around the table, it'll be the most humiliating thing because everybody who comes around that table says, I'm a rotten sinner who needs forgiveness through Jesus. That's the only way I can hold up my head in this world through the blood of Jesus.

It's the most humiliating thing and it's the most elevating thing to come around the Lord's table. But anyway, I move on. So that was the impassioned accusation.

So number two, now boys and girls, I want you to help me with this. This is an impassioned refusal and it's in verse 10 and onwards. Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah.

Now then, I want you to look in verse 11 and tell me what sort of things the people are doing. Okay. So, appreciate all the help I can get on this.

Don't make me ask the adults. Verse 11, what do they bring? It begins with S. Yep.

[17 : 25] And you were going to say, okay, they bring sacrifices. Okay. And verse 12, where do they go? Look at verse 12.

Where do they go? They go somewhere. The people go somewhere. Was there a hand up somewhere?

Verse 12, where do they go? They go somewhere. Where do they go? Yep. Courts. Courts. Yes. Do you know what it means by courts?

Anybody know what it means by courts? Sorry? He doesn't know. He doesn't know. Okay. It means the bits of space around somewhere or the rooms around somewhere.

And in this case, it's the rooms around where or the spaces around where. Anybody got any idea? Might have to ask an adult. A bit of a shame, isn't it? Peter? Places around God.

[18 : 40] Yeah. Yep. That's correct. And in particular, the temple. Yeah. They're going into the temple and they're offering sacrifices and they're all turning up in the temple.

And verse 14, they celebrate what? What do they celebrate in verse 14? Verse 14. New Moon Festival.

New Moon Festival is good. I think a little round of applause because I don't know that. Yeah. Well done. New Moon Festival. Anything else? Like it?

Anything or not? I don't hear that. Sabbaths.

Okay. Yeah. Let's go with that. Yeah. Sabbaths. Yeah. Yeah. Well done. Well done. Well done.

New Moon Sabbath. Well done. Yeah. That's good. And it says convocations which means getting everybody together.

[19 : 45] So look, boys and girls, they all went to church. They all, well it wasn't church in those days, it was the temple. They went there and they brought the sacrifices. Here's the lamb, killed the lamb, there's the lamb and they all turned up.

How are you today? Oh, nice to see you. How are you? Nice to see you too. How's your sister doing? They all turned up and they celebrated the new moons and the Sabbaths and in verse 15, they take time to do something P, R and then two more letters.

They take time to do something P, R and two more letters. Pray. Anybody else? What were you going to say? You were going to say pray. Any advance on that? Those are correct.

A little round of applause. Well done. Yep. They go and pray. And God says, God says, what does God say about all the things that they're doing like this?

They're killing animals. Everybody's getting there. What does he say? I hide my eyes. I? I hide my eyes. Thank you very much.

[20 : 52] A little, that's the answer. I hide my eyes from you. And they're all coming, they're saying, look, we're very religious, we're doing all the church things, we're doing everything like that, we're

turning up.

And God says, do you know, I'm not even going to even bother to watch that. I'll hide my eyes from you.

And in verse 14, what does he say about right down deep within him what he thinks about it? What does he say right down deep within him about what he thinks about it?

Is that a hand or a stretch? It's a stretch. Okay. Verse 14, what does he say that he really thinks about it in verse 14?

Is that a stretch or a hand? A hand, right. It says, I hate with all my being. Thank you. I hate with all my being. Well done. Or, in mine, it says, my soul hates.

[22 : 00] And God is impassionately refusing to watch, listen, take any notice of what they're doing. They're offering sacrifices and they are praying and God says, I just hate that.

Just go away. Just go away. You come and you trample around in my courts and I just hate it. it's just rubbish.

It's really surprising, isn't it, that God should say that. Really surprising. We're praying and God said, I'm not going to listen to your prayers. Verse 12, who's asked this, who's asked you to do this?

Verse 13, I can't bear it. Verse, end of verse 13, your new moon festivals, my soul hates it, says God. It's really impassioned, isn't it?

Verse 15, even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Okay, very surprising that, isn't it? And, can you see why God won't listen?

[23 : 09] There's one little bit right at the end of that. End of verse 15. That's right, your hands are full of blood.

He says, you are coming to me and you're stretching out, yeah, that's right, yeah. You're coming to me and you're stretching out your hands in prayer like that. And actually, as I see it, says God, you've got blood on your hands.

And, I'm not going to listen. Because you're trying to be religious. but, you don't really care.

You don't really care, says God, you don't really care to know what I'm like. You don't really care to really know me. You don't really care about the things that I care about.

And you don't care about one another either. If you cared about me, you'd care about one another. If you loved me, you'd love one another. And God says, it's just rubbish. I'm not going to bless that.

[24 : 18] I'm not going to bless that. They don't really care about God. I had a story about a friend of mine from Sri Lanka who went to a Sri Lankan congregation in Switzerland.

And it was, if you're a Sri Lankan and you go to Switzerland, because you're in a foreign country, you'd probably like to get together with other Sri Lankans and you can go to church and meet them. And they called it a church. And my friend was preaching because he was a preacher. And he was telling them about God. and there was a teenage girl on one of the rows and as he told them about God, she had chewing gum in her mouth and she was going and blowing bubbles.

And my friend was so shocked. This is supposed to be a church. You're supposed to care about God.

You're supposed to listen when God talks. And your best response is to look at the preacher and blow bubbles. What do you think God thinks of that? They don't really care about God.

[25 : 33] And God says, I can tell you you don't care about me because you don't care about other people, do you? He says, learn to do right.

Seek justice. Defend the cause of the fatherless. Plead the case of the widow. In verse 23 he says, you don't defend the cause of the fatherless. The widow's case has not come before them.

They're rebels and thieves. Verse 23, they love bribes and chase after gifts. You don't care about people. You just care about money. You just care about yourself. And that is a sure indication you don't care about God.

And God says, I'm not interested in you. I'm not interested in what you call your religion. I'm not interested in that. Just go away. It's very sobering, isn't it?

God is not saying what wonderful people they are. He's saying, you can't stand it. And these people are saying, who cares as long as we can get away with it and so on and so on and so on.

[26 : 37] So God refuses. So he's accused them. There's an impassioned accusation and there's a refusal. I'm not going to listen to you. So that was the same thing, a refusal. Number three, an invitation.

Because he says in verse 18, come now, let us reason together. So an impassioned accusation. I was going to invite Eden Rose to my next birthday party, but she's not here.

So I should imaginarily invite her. Eden Rose, please come to my birthday party. And she's going to say no. And I'm going to say, Eden Rose, please come to my birthday party.

And she's going to say no. I said, oh, Eden Rose, please come to my birthday party. And I was hoping she might say yes. But that's an impassioned invitation, you see. Come. And God has an impassioned invitation.

He says, come. Verse 18, come now, let's reason together. Let's talk about this. It doesn't have to stay like this.

[27 : 42] And that's really good news, isn't it? God accuses, and then he says, but let's, once we've got real about this, it doesn't have to stay like this.

Let's reason together. So there's two word puzzles there. Can anybody get any of those? The first one is not in the text, as that word, but it means to turn round.

And the second one is in the text. So, R something, P something, N something, something. Now, you know this word.

I'm sure you'll, you will have heard this word in church or at home, and it means to turn. So that's one word. And then the next word is in the text. R something, A something, O something.

Right, what have you got? You've got repent. Hold that thought. Anybody else? No advance on that.

[28 : 46] Well, that's correct. So that's what I had in mind, repent. So I think, well done. Repent, that's the turning word. And the next word is in the text. He says, reason.

Any advance on that? Reason is correct. Well done. Yep. So God says, this is the invitation.

Come, come, come. Turn away from where you were going. Turn around. Stop turning your back. Come back to me. Start turning back to me. Repent.

And reason. We'll talk about this. We'll talk about this. Repent and reason. And he says, there's some stuff you've got to stop doing. Verse 16. Wash, make yourselves clean.

Take your evil deeds out of my sight. Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right. Seek justice. Encourage the oppressed. He says, there's some stuff to just stop. Stop.

[29 : 46] That evil stuff. Stop it. And unlearn it. You don't have to do that. Stop it. We'll reason together about this. Turn around.

And start doing things the right way. Learn. And there's two words here. Which actually turn out to be very important in Isaiah. Mishpat and tzedakah. Which mean justice and righteousness.

I just put that in for the grown-ups. Because that's going to pop up later. It's one of his really favorite things. Oh, we could do things the right way. The way that God loves things to be done. Mishpat and tzedakah.

Justice and righteousness. That's what we want to see in the city. So, turn and stop doing the evil things. Turn to me and start doing things right.

Repent and reason. And he says, let us reason. And this goes with the repenting. He says, what I can do, I can wash you. I can wash you.

[30 : 47] And I can make you absolutely clean. Which is an amazing thing. Because if you have begun to realize how bad badness is inside human beings.

You think, how can that ever be got rid of? And God says, I can wash you. He says, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as wool. Though they are red as crimson.

I'm sorry. They are white as snow. Though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient. And if you want to become a Christian. Then this is the thing to start doing.

To say, Lord, I want to do. I want to be willing. I want to do it your way. I can see the wrong in my life. And I want to turn from it. Just help me to stop.

Help me to pick things up the way you want them. Wash me. Cleanse me. Help me. And God makes this promise.

[31 : 49] This invitation to the tender hearted. To the penitent. To those willing to change and wanting to be changed. Come. And we'll make it right.

I think these are just wonderful promises, aren't they? That no one else can make these promises. You know, you can have all sorts of therapies and ologies and so on. And they might well help to a certain degree.

But there's nothing that can take away sin in our lives apart from the power of God. Nothing that can wash away our sin apart from the blood of Jesus. So, and he says, don't do this one.

Now that one is in verse 20. Can anybody fill in those? Anybody? Under 30.

Not resist and rebel. Anybody else? That's right. Not resist and rebel.

[32 : 49] Okay. Hold on. Yeah. And that's an invitation that God makes today. He says, come to me.

I'll sort this out. No, Jesus epitomized it, didn't he? Come to me. All you who are labor and are heavy laden. I'll give you rest for your souls. He says, the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

I can forgive your sins. The leper, if you are willing, you can make me clean. And Jesus said, I am willing. I can make you clean. From Hebrews, if the blood of bulls and goats could cleanse outwardly from ceremonial defilement, how much more will the blood of Jesus cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?

He can make us clean. His blood can wash away our sins. The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Gone, gone, gone, gone. Yes, my sins are gone. As far as the east is from the west. That so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Wash me and I shall be clean.

[34 : 03] And that's what he does. Amen. We've got one more little bit to do. Let's sing this song before we do that. Is that okay if we sing a song and then we've got one more little bit to go?

There is a Redeemer. Jesus, God's own Son. Please stand.

One, two, three, four. There is a Redeemer.

Jesus, God's own Son. Precious Lamb of God.

Messiah, Holy One. Thank you, O my Father, For giving us your Son.

[35 : 33] And living your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

Jesus, my Redeemer. Name above all names.

Precious Lamb of God. Precious Lamb of God. Messiah, love for sinners slain.

Thank you, O my Father, For giving us your Son.

God's own Son. And living your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

[36 : 31] God's own Son. The Lord's done in glory, I will see His face.

There I'll serve my King forever in that holy place.

Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son.

And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.

So just to close this off, there is an impassioned accusation, there's an impassioned refusal, there's an impassioned invitation.

[37 : 44] And there's a promise. And it's a promise about this city. And the promise is that God will take this failing city full of sinful people and change it into a beautiful, faithful city.

And I'm just asking, how does He do it? You get it in verse 26. Afterwards, you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

And in verse 27, Zion will be redeemed with mishpat, justice, and her penitent ones, her turning ones, with tzedakah, with righteousness. And I'm just saying, that's the promise.

God says, how can I do that? I'm not prepared to let the sin of my people stop me from saving those people.

I'm going to do it. And I'm just, I don't know how. See, there's something impassioned about this determination. I'm going to do it. You know, Jesus saying, I will build my church.

[38 : 56] The gates of hell won't prevail against it. God's saying, I will save my people. I'm not going to leave it to chance. I'm determined to do this. This is the will of the Father. That of all those He has given to the Son, He will not lose any, but raise them all on the last day.

But I'm going to do that. This is God's sovereign determination, His deliberate choice, and this is what He's going to do. Nothing's going to stop Him. Now, it won't save everybody, because it talks about the rebels in verse 28.

Rebels and sinners will be broken. Those who forsake the Lord will perish. And they'll be, it actually says they'll be burnt up, verse 31. The mighty man will become tender in his work, a spark, and both will burn together.

So it's not going to save everybody. There will be a burning up, whatever that may mean. Sounds pretty awful. Doesn't give a lot of detail, but something awful.

If you're really going to set yourself against God and refuse Him and reject Him, there's consequences to that, which last forever. And God says that there is an awfulness to it.
[40 : 00] But I will have a holy people. And I say, how will that happen? Because in verse 24, He says, I will have vengeance.

Where are we? In verse 24, I will get relief from my foes and have vengeance on my enemies. Now, that's, you know, what's that? God is saying that my people are like my enemies. And I'm going to fight them in some way. And I'm going to treat them as my enemies. And I'm going to get this right. So that's a strange thing, isn't it? And it says in verse 25, I will purge away your dross and remove all your iniquities.

Does any of the boys and girls know what dross is? Dross. Rhymes with candy floss, but it isn't candy floss. Anybody know what dross is? I might have to tell you.

Dross. I think what it is, is when you're making metal, and you get metal from crushed stones, obviously the right sort of stones, you crush them up, and you get it so that the metal gets purified.

[41 : 13] Do you know what you have to do to the stones, the crushed stones, to get the nice pure metal? Do you know what you have to do? Yes, young lady.

You have to make it really hot and refine it. You have to refine it. You have to make it really hot with a fire, and melt it all down, and the lovely metal comes out, and the gummy stuff that's left is the dross.

And this is what God is saying. I'm going to do something that involves a lot of crushing and burning, but in the end, we're going to have the impurities taken away.

I will remove your impurities. And things will be turned and changed. Verse 26, I will restore your judges as in days of old. There's another turning word.

I will turn my hand against you. Verse 25. God says, I'm going to do something really strong and powerful, but at the end, the city will be pure.

[42 : 16] And I'm just thinking about this. I'll redeem. That's another word there. I'll redeem. And I think what he's saying is this. So up on the screen, I've got the failing city, and I've got the beautiful city, but first it becomes the burning city.

That it only gets from there to there via this God's judgment on the city. And actually, that's what happened.

The city did get burned. And then it got rebuilt. But in a more profound way, to become the redeemed city, it must first become the ruined city.

It must be treated as an enemy. It must be purged through fire. And I want to say that this is what Jesus did. That he became the ruined city.

He became the place where the fire of God's judgment fell. He was the one who was treated like an enemy. He was the one where God says, I will avenge myself on my enemies.

[43 : 26] And God did that to Jesus instead of us. And he did that. And Jesus was like the ruined city. He went outside the city, of course. But he was treated like an enemy.

And he was under the wrath of God that burns against sin. And Jesus, having taken all of that, all of that flame and fire and judgment, Jesus took it and he...

He rose again from the dead. Triumphant.

Dealt with that. And all is sorted out. Went through the cross, came out the other side, unscathed, unscathed, glorious, full of new life, redeeming power.

That's our Savior. He came through it. That's how the faithful city... Sorry, the failing city can become the faithful city. That's how God redeemed his city.

[44 : 37] And I'll just... He did that for us. Do we say an amen? He did that for us. Amen. Amen. This is what we said, boys and girls, an impassioned accusation.

See if your dad and your mum can remember that. God's saying, you are actually sinners. You're not just people who accidentally commit sin. There's something deep within you. You are deeply ungrateful.

You are deeply rude to me. You are deeply rebellious. There's an impassioned refusal. God says, don't expect me to bless and hear your prayers and approve of you while you're in that state.

There's an invitation.

He says, come. It doesn't have to stay like that. Get things right in your life. Start now. Turn towards me. Turn away from your sin. Turn to me. I can make you whiter than snow.

And there's an impassioned promise. I will have a faithful city. I will do it. I will build my church. I will save my people. I will make them holy. And how?

[45 : 32] By Jesus, bearing the wrath of God for us, successfully, gloriously, brilliantly, triumphantly. And I just say, where does that leave us this morning?

People, yeah, well, we've got praise and we've got thanksgiving. And if this is not you, make it you.

Turn to the Lord. Before we, before you even leave this room, turn to the Lord.

Let's sing, um, about that city. There's a place where the streets shine with the glory of the Lamb.

No, let me just make sure we've got some words up here.

And then we'll sing this to close. Let's sing. Okay.