

Reacting to stress

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[0 : 00] What do you place your trust in? What is your strategy for dealing with it? Where do you place your hope? What are you aiming for as you go through this stress? What will count as coming out at the other end? Where do we get our security? We are creatures in a huge universe. What's the solid rock under our feet? Where do we get our security?

And what does that look like in the nitty gritty of life? What does that look like in the workplace, in the family, when the kids don't sleep and when the boss is difficult and when things go wrong and when a car gets a puncture and all four tyres at the same time?

How does that work out? Well, I hope that we'll get a bit of a glimpse of that by looking at how these people reacted or should have reacted in the book of Isaiah.

And you may, we looked at this last week, how did they react to the stress on them, the stress being the threat of this huge aggressive power, Assyria, as we'll see in a moment.

What they said was, well, we're going to link up with, we're going to form a covenant with Egypt.

And as Isaiah puts it in his rather sarcastic way, you've made a covenant with death. You've made lies your refuge, have you?

[1 : 27] So let's just do the history again, just to remind ourselves, particularly if you haven't seen this before. This is Mediterranean and this is Egypt and this is Jerusalem, God's headquarters in the time of the Old Testament.

It's not the same now. Egypt is the place from which the Israelites escaped. Egypt was the place which brought them into slavery and in the book of Exodus, Moses brought them out of slavery and they came into what would be known as the Promised Land.

And Egypt at the present time, at the time of the writing of Isaiah is saying, oh well, we're not, don't send us as a threat, we can help you.

So there's Egypt and then here's Assyria, a rising aggressive superpower, which to begin with offered security, but actually at this part of the story is like a tide sweeping across that area and swallowing up everything that it comes across as a deadly enemy.

In Isaiah, it actually tells us a little bit later on about how the Assyrian king got right up to the city walls of Jerusalem.

[2 : 54] The 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. If you go to the British Museum, you can see actually some of the tablets commemorating this.

You can see the account of it in the British Museum. The field commander of the Assyrian forces got to the outside of Jerusalem and shouted up to the walls, you know, we're going to get you. And he says to them, look, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it.

And that's what the Assyrian field commander thought of Egypt. He said it's like a stick that you lean on and you put the sharpened end at the wrong end, and the sharpened end is at the end where you put your hand, and as you lean on it, it splinters and digs into you and wounds you.

That's what the Assyrian field commander thought about depending on Assyria. Okay, let's see if we can work our way into the passage.

[4 : 12] So rather than go through it line by line, I think there are three topics that I would like to try and bring out from those chapters. First topic is what happens now, the reaction to stress now.

There's a description of that, description of what the leaders were doing. There's actually a passage on the behavior of women, which I'm not going to do more than mention. There's something quite specific that pops up about God's word, and there's something about how it all works out in the end.

So that's the first thing we'll look at, the reaction to stress now. And then there's quite a bit about perspective for the future, and apparently Isaiah thinks that this is important for those people to have.

And if Isaiah thinks that, it's because God thinks that, and if God thinks that, it's important for us too. What is the perspective for the future in the long term and the medium term, although not necessarily in the short term?

So we'll look at that perspective as the second thing. And then the third thing, there is, throughout these three chapters, a call to the hearers to do something now, a call to respond in the actual present moment that they're listening.

[5 : 36] So those are the three things that we'll look at. Those three things, the reaction to stress now, perspective for the future, and the call to respond in the present.

So let's take a look at those. So let's have a look at the reaction to stress now. So in 30 verses 1 and 2, what they're doing is they are linking up with Egypt.

And God says to these leaders, woe to the obstinate children, declares the Lord, who carry out plans that are not mine, by forming an alliance, not by my spirit, heaping sin upon sin, who go down to Egypt without consulting me.

Now let me just say, let's put this really into context. It's not a sin to go for a holiday in Egypt. It's not a sin to literally go down to Egypt. But in this case, these leaders, it was a sin for them to link up with Egypt.

They're not just any old leaders. They're the leaders of the nation formed by the grace of God and the promise of God and the power of the God who brought them out of Egypt to be his people.

[6 : 55] And in doing that, God formed a particular bond with these people. And the Bible word is covenant. And that put them in a particular position with particular responsibilities and particular resources.

Now the stress is, as we've seen, that they are threatened by the aggressive power of Assyria. And what they're doing is, despite the Lord's promises, they turn to Egypt for help.

And that's what the Assyrian field commander said. On what are you basing this confidence of yours?

You say you have strategy and military strength, he says. But you speak only empty words. Look now, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff that pierces a man's hand and wounds him as he leans on it.

You depend on Egypt for chariots and horsemen. And he's describing the situation that the leaders have got themselves into.

[8 : 08] Well, it's an extreme situation. And we look at their reaction. And we might be thinking, what decision will our leaders come to?

What will they bear in mind? Will they look back into the past to see what God's done for our nation in the past, for example? Will they trust the promises that God has given for the present situation?

Of course, it's okay to ask that question of them, but we should ask the question of ourselves, shouldn't we? If it had been us, or in whatever situation we find ourselves, how do we react?

Do we, situations like bereavement, which will come to all of us in some April form, won't it? Loss. We can't hold on to everything in this life.

Things will be taken from us. We will lose to one degree or another at some point in our lives.

Financially, maybe God will spare us from financial crisis, or maybe, maybe he won't.

[9 : 27] When we've got trouble at work, or trouble in the family, or trouble in the church, how do we react? What do we reach out to?

And these people are reaching out to Egypt. What would we have done? I suppose that's also really the question of how do we live each day in the little mini crises that we face all the time?

Seems to me, correct me if you think I'm wrong, that the way we react to a big crisis that comes up is really a product of how we react to all the little crises that we face day by day.

How do we, how do we live? How do we cope? Well, these leaders were reacting wrongly. Let's just look at what wrong thing they were doing.

Chapter 30, verse 1, they carry out plans, but they're not my plans, says God. So there's a thing about thinking and planning.

[10 : 38] And he says that they form an alliance, or more literally a covering, but not by my spirit. So there's a covering over their lives, but it isn't from God.

They go down to Egypt, verse 2, but literally, not by my mouth. God never told them to do that. God never gave them an indication that that was a good thing to do at all. Not by my mouth. Same thing is there in chapter 31. 31, verse 1, woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many.

You get the feel of this? They're thinking, we're stuck. God won't help us. What we need is to buy in a huge amount of military hardware. We'll trust in chariots that are many and horsemen that are strong.

But, says God, what you're exactly not doing is looking to the Holy One of Israel or seeking help from the Lord.

[11 : 51] You've done all that. You've planned all that. But you never, never, never asked me, says God. You never sought me. You never looked.

You never asked me or inquired of me for my help. You just went to your human resources. And it's so emphatic here. Verse 3, The Egyptians are men and not God.

They are Adam. They are not El. Their horses are flesh and not spirit.

What's flesh? Bashar, is it? Samuel? Their horses are flesh. They are not spirit. And he says, where am I getting that from?

Yeah. He's making this stark contrast between where their help comes from. He talks about their plans, their strategy, their intelligence, their wisdom.

[13 : 05] is it a merely human strategy or is it something that comes from faith in God? It talks about their power. Is this just human energy, human ingeniousness or is it something relying on the spirit and the power of God?

And this is the two options for living that he gives here. Which way do they expect to live?

How do they expect to walk? Same question for a Christian, isn't it? The Apostle Paul would say, the life I live in the flesh, I live in faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

And there's one particular instance where this comes up which is the instance of our own sin. How do we deal with our own sin?

And if we come into the New Testament, the Apostle Paul would say, yeah, those same two ways are there. The way of the flesh and the way of the spirit. And how does that work out?

[14 : 22] Well, in Galatians he'd be quite, he'd expand on that a lot. He'd say, flesh, there's a whole sort of religious methodology to do with human, the flesh.

So he says, well, one prime example of it is circumcision, of course, which in some religions and particularly as we're thinking here in Judaism is actually cutting off a bit of flesh.

So that's a very clear example of trusting in flesh. Or you can expand on that and trusting in flesh in the sense of what human beings can achieve with their moral attainments or their self-discipline or their rigor of living.

So Martin Luther, I can't remember the quote now, but he worked so hard in his own strength to get right with God. And that was the way of the flesh.

And the New Testament brings this into shining clarity and says, actually, the way to be right with God is not to do with the human flesh of trying and working and observing and disciplining and everything.

[15 : 33] It's the way of the spirit. And the way of the spirit is the way of faith. And he gives the example of Isaac, the child born by the spirit, born by faith in the promises.

And he says, that's what Christians are. They're children born not of the flesh, but of the spirit. And their life is life trusting in the promises of God.

And that's a particular example of those two ways. Which way do you deeply feel that God accepts you? Do you deeply feel that God accepts you because you're a good person, or you've done your best?

Or do you deeply feel that God could never accept you on that way, and you would, as it were, rather die than trust in the flesh? The thing you're trusting in is the promise, a promise that says Christ died for your sins, and trusting in the promise is the way of life in the power of God, life in the spirit of God.

Well, let's just go a little bit further with the description of the fault. He has quite a bit about the sin of women, or the fault of women, in chapter 32, verse 9, you women who are so complacent, rise up and listen to me.

[16 : 58] So I deduce from that there are particular sins that women can be capable of, but I'm not going to go into that. I'm going to say that one particular thing that he puts his finger on is the relation of these people to the word of God through the prophet.

Just follow with me, if you would, the number of times this sort of thing is mentioned. So in chapter 28, and it's not verse 2, it's verse, I think that's verse 9, chapter 28, verse 9, where the people listening to Isaiah say, who's he trying to teach?

To whom is he explaining his message? What does he think we are? Kids? Children? Those who have just been taken from the best? What's he saying to us? That's what it sounds like, that's what he has to say.

People thinking that the Christian message or the message of God is childish. You would have met people like that, won't you? Who think that a sophisticated person couldn't possibly listen to the Bible for an instant.

In a sense, more fool then, actually. chapter 29 verse 10 around there, the Lord has brought over you a deep sleep, he has sealed your eyes, the prophets, and covered your heads, the seers.

[18 : 37] There's no longer a communication from the prophets. There's no, their mouths are gagged, I presume that's what he means by covering their heads. And in 29 verse 11, for you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll.

And if you give the scroll to someone to read and say to him, please read this, he will answer, I can't, it's sealed. This whole idea that whatever God says, what's that all about? I don't get that at all.

30 10, they say to the seers, see no more visions than to the prophets, give us no more vision of what is right. Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions, leave this way, get off this path, stop confronting us with the holy one.

And people are saying, we don't want what you're saying, you prophets, tell us something nice, tell us how much God loves us just as we are, tell us something positive, don't confront us with anything, stop telling us this stuff.

And here's the reactions to God's words. And it's quite a theme if you care to look through. It's a relevant theme, isn't it? Because when the churches today close their ears to the word of God, and when the church closes her mouth from speaking it, then they're in exactly the same terrible condition that these people were in.

[20 : 08] It's a terrible thing when Christians stop living by God's word. It's a terrible thing when Christians stop living by God's word.

So without doing all of the theology of it just now, Christian sexual ethics is at variance with what people think is good and right these days.

And it's a big pressure on Christians. Will you live by what God says sexual ethics are, or will you go along with what everybody else says? And it's a terrible thing when people say, oh, the Bible's too childish, it's just nye, nye, nye, nye, nye, nye, nye, nye.

Shut up telling us that stuff. Tell us something different. It's a terrible thing when Christians live in deliberate and determined disobedience to God's word.

It's a terrible thing. Christians try that experiment experiment and it's a very dangerous experiment to try. It's not a million miles from any of us to try to live the Christian life without listening to God.

[21 : 23] You know how pressurized it is to find time to read your Bible. You know how pressurized it is in the morning or you're late in the evening, you're too tired.

but how important for us to keep listening to what God says. Jesus himself said if you want to abide in me you have to abide in my word.

And Christians have what they call the quiet time, meaning to say a time when Christians specifically said whatever else I'm going to do today I'm definitely going to spend some time listening to what God says in the Bible and what a thing that is.

So you might say I'm going to spend an hour and actually you find I can hardly spend ten minutes. Just find a way of doing it brothers and sisters.

Find a way of reading your Bible every day and if you can manage five minutes then make sure you're spending five minutes. If you can manage twenty minutes make sure you spend the twenty minutes but do it.

[22 : 36] What's the point of saying we're Christians if we never actually listen to what God says? So this is one of the faults, the deep faults of these people that they've got themselves into a

position where they're not listening to God and actually they don't want to hear God and they can't hear God.

Okay so let's go a little bit further with this analysis of the fault and what he says to these leaders who are going down to Egypt.

So the vocabulary of it, this is now in chapter 30, the vocabulary of it, is it verse 30, verse 3, is the vocabulary of shame.

Pharaoh's protection will be to you your shame. Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace. Verse 5, everyone will be put to shame. End of verse 5, it's only shame and disgrace.

So there's a strong vocabulary of shame and disgrace. So it's not wonderful and glorious and fantastic, it's shameful. What is shame?

[23 : 41] Our culture isn't so much into shame, we're more a culture of guilt. I think shame is when personal and moral failure is, everybody can see it. And he says this way of life will lead to shame.

And I think whatever culture we're from, we actually want to avoid shame, don't we? We don't want to be put to shame. But he says this is shameful. And he also says it doesn't even work.

So you've got this rather vivid picture, chapter 30, verse 12, which will give Chris Fry, the civil engineer doing bridges, bad dreams, of verse 13, a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly in an instant and breaks in pieces like pottery.

That's in chapter 30, verse 12. He says this is what it will be, like a high wall. Well, that's fine. That's a high wall. Walk along there. It just falls on top of you, cracked and bulging.

It doesn't work. Without making it too complicated, some wrong things do work, don't they? They seem to work. Some unethical practices seem to prosper, but it's only temporary.

[24 : 59] It's only temporary. This policy of looking to Egypt is said to be, verse 5, useless. Verse 6, it is, oh, I got verse 6, an unprofitable nation.

Verse 7, their help is utterly useless, and I call her Rahab the do-nothing. And what he says, not only is it wrong and it's against God, it's actually not going to get you anywhere.

It doesn't work. God's way and God's wisdom doesn't necessarily profit in terms of money or health or fame or success, but those things are not necessarily particularly important, are they?

But following God's way does work. If you think of the chapter in Hebrews 11, of all the men of faith, do you remember that?

The people of faith, they trusted the Lord, and it's a catalogue of all the things they did. They closed the mouth of lions, they defeated kings, they got sawn in half.

[26 : 24] Probably that isn't on your list of things to do before you're 40. But they achieved things through faith. And here's a lesson for us, doing things God's way works.

It's not as if we're too earthly-minded to be, no, too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly use. He says God's wisdom is a practical wisdom.

So that was looking at the fault, and we just looked at a few of the descriptions of that in these chapters. Let's look now at what he says several times about perspective for the future.

He looks long-term, he looks medium-term, he doesn't necessarily look short at them. And the reason I say that is because he several times says to people to wait.

Okay, does that make sense? Because if God was to do things instantly, then waiting would be, you wouldn't have to wait, it would just happen. But he says, you're trusting in the Lord, there's a long-term aspect and a medium-term aspect, and trusting means waiting.

[27 : 41] And the point being that we can't live life in the present properly without putting it in the context of the long, medium, and certainly long-term future.

That's the only way this makes any sense. And you might object and you say, oh, come on. The whole point of life is now. You've got to live in the now.

Forget the future. Forget the past. Just live in the now. The pleasure of the now. Wasn't that what the pride event was all about?

Wasn't it about the pleasure of now, having a good time now, just those few hours or however long? The pleasure, the pain, the experience of now, to which I'm going to answer.

Well, number one, be thankful for now. It's a great pity if we waste now and we're never thankful for it. Now is the only time you ever get in a sense, isn't it? You only live in the now.

[28 : 46] Let's be grateful for the now. I'm going to say sugar. I'm going to say sugar gives you pleasure now, but as we now learn, it does your teeth in, it does your health in, it does your heart in, and actually you'd be better off not eating sugar.

Isn't that right? Because of the future. And I'm going to say child birth, and half the congregation immediately breathe a sigh of relief.

Childbirth is painful, but for some reason all the mums I've ever met say, I'll never do that again, because it's because of the future.

I'm willing to endure the pain for now because of the future. And I'm going to say addiction. I'm going to say there are things that seem good now, but you really wish you weren't doing them because they trap you.

And I'm going to say reward. I'm going to say there are things, the way life is set up, and indeed God's life is set up, is that there are things that God will say, I really value that.

[30 : 00] I know it was hard and difficult at the time, but it was a valuable thing to do, and I will show how much I value it by the reward I will put on that in the future. All of those things say that the future is important, and it isn't all to do with now.

So the future that is painted in these chapters is so rich and wonderful it can be difficult to do much justice to it in just a few minutes, but if you care to look with me through the things he says about the future, so 30, 23 to 26, listen to this picture of the future.

He will send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows, oxen and donkeys will work the soil, will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel.

In the day of great slaughter when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill, and the moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter than the light of seven full days when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he has inflicted.

And it's a very gorgeous picture of the future. And as you start to read it you think oh it's just about success in farming, but as you read on it's actually using that sort of language to paint a picture of a new environment, a fruitful environment, almost like a new world as the long distant future.

[31 : 42] In 31, 4 and 5 the future is depicted as the Lord shielding his people. End of verse 4, the Lord Almighty will come down to do battle on Mount Zion and on its heights.

like birds hovering overhead the Lord Almighty will shield Jerusalem, he will shield it and deliver it, he will pass over it and rescue it. A picture of the Lord saving his people, put into pictorial language. The defeat of his enemies in future, 31 verse 8, Assyria will fall. Chapter 32 verse 1, a king will reign in righteousness.

righteousness. And he wasn't talking about the following year or a few years after that, he was looking ahead to the coming of Jesus and looking ahead to the second coming of Jesus.

A king will reign in righteousness. The world will not be left just to meander its own way through history. A king will reign in righteousness.

[32 : 49] righteousness. And 32 15, as he looks forward to the future, he refers to the spirit being poured upon us from on high.

And as they look back in those days, they're looking forward to the age when things change. And Isaiah says this is the age of spirit. The spirit is poured upon us from on high.

The desert becomes a fertile field. The fertile field seems like a forest. Justice will dwell in the desert. Righteousness live in the fertile field. The fruit of righteousness will be peace.

The effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

Though hail flattens the forest and the city is leveled completely, how blessed you will be sowing your seed by every stream, letting your cattle and donkeys range free. And I think the same thing is true there.

[33 : 46] It looks as though it's out of a nice career in escape for the country or something. But he's really painting in the language that's available a picture of security and fruitfulness and human flourishing in a completely new environment, in a new world to come.

It's a realm of justice and righteousness and peace and security. reality. And he says that's the vision for the future. So let's just try and pick up a few of those threads because there are a lot of threads there.

It's victory for the Lord against his and our enemies. This world is a battle. It's a spiritual battle between Satan and the Lord and the Lord's going to win.

It's good to know, isn't it? the Lord's victory is assured. We have enemies, the world, the flesh, the devil, and the Lord will win his victory.

And of course the hint is make sure you're on the winning side. Now's the time to make sure you're on the winning side.

[35 : 02] The salvation for his city, his land, his people, as it's described here. In other words, a place that makes it all worthwhile. And the New Testament will say it's not a geographical piece of area on the world.

It's a new heaven and a new earth. A total new environment. A city, a land, a people. A place that makes it all worthwhile.

So what it promises is that we'll go home. I remember Jesus saying in my father's house are many rooms. If it weren't so, I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you.

You can come and be with me where I am. So it's a place, a home, a city, a land, a new heaven and a new earth, a house, a temple. It's a place where we're going to be home.

Everybody wants to go home, don't they? home. A home that's the sort of home you would want to go home to. There'll be the reign of the king.

[36 : 11] So it's not an impersonal sort of republic. There is a person at the centre of it. There is somebody who has founded this city and rules over the city and is the presiding presence in the city.

And we shall see his face and he will wipe away every tear from every eye. And there'll be no more sighing and sorrow and mourning and pain for he makes everything new.

And he's the king who reigns. And there is the pouring out of the spirit in Isaiah. Well the spirit seems to be the wise side of God or the powerful side of God.

And it's only in the New Testament that we grasp that it's not the wise side of God or the power of God but God in his wisdom in the third person of the Trinity.

And we're already in the age of the spirit. Do you remember the bit where Jesus was baptised? John the Baptist. And it said of him, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[37 : 15] And it's also said of him, he is the one, the one on whom you see the spirit rest, is the one who will baptise with the spirit. God's God's God's God's God's hand to pour out God onto his people.

And that's the age we live in. That if we're in the kingdom, the spirit has brought us into the kingdom. If we belong to Christ, his spirit lives within us.

And that's just the beginning. But it is the beginning. This picture paints for us the idea of a whole transformed new environment, a resurrection environment, and of course, total future security.

We live in a world of insecurity. We live in a world where we're just not sure, but that future is a future of security.

And as it's said here, you live in peaceful dwelling places, secure homes, undisturbed places of rest. And in the New Testament, Paul would say to the Thessalonians, that's what we have ahead of us.

[38 : 38] We'll be forever with the Lord. And he'll say, encourage one another with these words. He'll say, encourage one another with these words.

Don't think that the future is unknown and threatening, and goodness knows what's going to happen. He says, the future is mapped out. You don't know the detail of it.

It's given to us in a language that appeals to imagination. But if you grasp it, you won't go wrong.

He's going to take you home. It'll be brilliant. The king will reign.

You'll see him. Encourage one another with these words. At the grave side, encourage one another with these words. When you're bereaved, encourage one another with these words. That's where we're heading.

So the second thing is the perspective for the future. And let me pick up one promise for the not long-distance future, but the medium-term future.

[39 : 39] And there's a number of these promises, so it's worth pointing them out. 3021. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more.

With your own eyes you will see them, whether you turn to the right or to the left. Your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it.

See, previously they hadn't been able to hear God's word. They're in that embarrassing situation where somebody says something to you and you just don't get what they're saying. In the end you sort of give up asking, what did you just say? No, what was it? Anyway, they couldn't hear, but they will hear.

You will be able to hear your teachers. 32. 3. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed and the ears of those who hear will listen and the mind of the rash will know and understand. [40 : 43] God will do something so that people's eyes will be unblinded and their ears opened. There's a theological term for it called the effectual call. It is that when God calls to somebody and instead of them saying, no, no, don't get that, and God calls and they say, no, no, not getting that at all, that God calls in such a way that they say, yeah, I get that.

Yeah, I see what you mean. This all makes sense. And the call is so clear and strong that eyes are opened, ears are opened, and people start to respond to what's being said. It's God's effective word. And this is what's being promised. You will hear. You will understand. You won't be blind and deaf and dumb.

You will see and hear and speak and walk. I think that gives a particular significance to Jesus' ministry.

And when people asked him, what are you doing? Who are you? He said, just look, what's happening? The blind receive their sight. The lame walk. Lepers are cleansed.

[42 : 01] The deaf hear. The dead are raised. Good news is preached to the poor. Doesn't that tell you what's going on? And John the Baptist, who was the inquirer, would have said, hmm, I think what's happening when Jesus comes is these prophecies are being fulfilled.

And it also gives the reason for why Jesus, when he was talking to his disciples, was so concerned when they didn't get things. Remember the bit where he'd fed 5,000 and they were in a boat and Jesus said something to them, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, and they said, ah, that's because we didn't bring our sandwiches.

And Jesus says, are you so stupid? Do you not realize what I'm talking about? Do you not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see and ears but fail to hear? Don't you remember? Key issue here. So let me ask you, can you hear? When God speaks, do you say, I'm not sure what that's about.

Do you see the point when God shows you something? Do you say, I can't see everything but I get the point of Jesus? And do you understand so that when it's put how important this is, you say, yeah, I do get that.

[43 : 28] that's the key blessing, isn't it? If you haven't got it, ask for it. Ask God to open your eyes. Ask God to open your ears.

Ask God to open your heart so that you get it. Well, let's go quickly to the third point which was responding in the present. We looked at an analysis of the fault that they had, the failure, and we looked at the future that they were supposed to see things in the light of the future, and we'll just look at the call to respond in the present.

And, well, what does he call them to do? Well, by working backwards, he didn't want them to make alliances with Egypt. He did want them to trust in the Lord.

He did want them to trust in the Lord. He did want them to put their trust in the Lord. And it's spelled out in a number of beautiful ways.

Here's 30, verse 15, where the Lord says, in repentance and rest is your salvation. In quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.

[44 : 41] The word for strength means the strength of a warrior. And I do think that's a beautiful text. What is God looking for?

He's looking for people not who are deeply panicked, deeply unsure, deeply insecure, but he's saying, I want you to be people who turn to me and rest in me, take what I offer quietly, contentedly, and that is the source of warrior strength.

You are like Iron Man if you trust quietly in the Lord. Sort of goes against the grain, doesn't it? Because depending on our makeup, we're either inclined not to be bothered at all or to be totally panicked, but he says, in quietness and trust is your strength.

In 3018, it says, the Lord waits to be gracious to you. He rises to show you compassion. Blessed are all who wait for him.

What an encouragement that is. Blessed are all who wait for him. And I think we can take whatever thing you are thinking of, thinking, when he's finished talking, at least I can start worrying about such and such.

[46 : 13] Whatever that worrying thing is, to bring that to the Lord and say, blessed are those who wait for the Lord. 31.1 says, they went down to Egypt, but they didn't look to the Holy One.

Well, look to the Holy One. 31.9 says, return to him. Well, return to him. Turn to him. And here is Isaiah's doctrine of faith, the key to security.

Faith in the Lord. He links it, as you will see in these wonderful linkages, with the spirit, righteousness, peace, confidence, security, fruitfulness, trusting in the Lord.

And the Apostle Paul would take that and he'll spin it out this way. Since we have been put right with God by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

And God has poured his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. He said, that's where we are as Christians, in a place of trusting, a place of grace, righteousness, peace, hope, glory.

[47 : 42] So let's start to live as someone who trusts God. Let's deliberately cultivate that as the deep characteristic of our Christian lives.

If we're not believers, we're nothing. If we're not living by faith, we're not living the Christian life. Our works are to proceed from faith, our hope comes from faith, faith, our love comes from faith, our experience comes by faith, by deeply trusting that God knows what he's doing, and his word is right, and his promises are right.

Not for us to be characterized by a deep sense of anxiety, insecurity, and unbelief, but as it says here, in quietness and trust is your warrior strength.

Let's sing together number 769, we trust in you. We trust in you.