

Behold, I am doing a New Thing

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[0 : 00] Friends, it's a joy to be with you this Lord's Day as together we come around the word of truth and seek to worship his name together.

Just a couple of intimations to begin. Following the service today, there will be a retiring collection for motor neurones disease. And also just to highlight the fact that I'm sure you're all well aware that the Reverend Ian Thompson has accepted the call to be your pastor here in Garibost Free Church. And please be assured of our prayerful good wishes from Park and Graver as you go forward in this new and exciting chapter in the strength of the Lord.

And we look very much forward to seeing how the Lord's going to work here in Point in the future. Well, friends, we're here to worship God. I'm going to begin by reading from his word from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Prophecy of Isaiah and chapter 43. Isaiah chapter 43.

[1 : 26] Reading the whole chapter together. Let us hear the word of God. But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters. I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.

When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned. And the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom. Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes. And honored.

And I love you. I give men in return for you. Peoples in exchange for your life. Fear not. For I am with you.

[2 : 42] I will bring your offspring from the east. And from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, give up. And to the south, do not withhold. Bring my sons from afar.

And my daughters from the end of the earth. Everyone who is called by my name. Who I created for my glory. Whom I formed and made.

Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes. Who are deaf, yet have ears. All the nations gather together. And the peoples assemble.

Who among them can declare this? And show us the former things. Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right. Let them hear and say it is true.

You are my witnesses, declares the Lord. And my servant, whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me. And understand that I am he.

[3 : 46] Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord. And besides me there is no saviour.

I declared and saved and proclaimed. When there was no strange God among you. And you are my witnesses, declares the Lord. And I am God.

And henceforth I am he. There is none who can deliver from my hand. I work. And who can turn it back? Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

For your sake I send to Babylon and bring them all down as fugitives. Even the Chaldeans and the ships, which they rejoice. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior.

[4 : 52] They lie down. They cannot rise. They are extinguished, quenched like a wick. Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

Behold, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches. For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people.

The people whom I formed for myself, that they might declare my praise. Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob, but you have been weary of me, O Israel.

You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings, or honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with offerings, or wearied you with frankincense.

[5 : 59] You have not bought me sweet cane with money, or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins. You have wearied me with your iniquities.

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. Put me in remembrance.

Let us argue together. Set forth your case that you may be proved right. Your first father sinned, and your mediators transgressed against me.

Therefore, I will profane the princes of the sanctuary, and deliver Jacob to utter destruction, and Israel to reviling.

Amen. We pray the Lord's blessing upon that portion of his own holy word. Let's now join together in a word of prayer. Let us pray. 1 Gracious and eternal God, we come and we seek to worship and to praise your great and your glorious name.

[7 : 12] name, seeking that even for this short time in this small way that by your grace our hearts would truly be bowed before the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the one who is high and lifted up, the one who inhabits eternity, but yet the God that today has made himself known to sinners just like us. And so we give thanks, O Lord, for the love that has led you to reveal yourself in your word to us. And as we come around this word of truth this day, we acknowledge that in and of ourselves we are unable to perceive those things that are otherworldly. We're unable to see into the nearer presence of our Savior. And so we pray, O Lord, that as we come together that your Holy Spirit would truly be pleased to open the eyes of our understanding, to bring us to that place whereby we are enabled to draw with joy from the wells of salvation, and that we might be granted even a drop from those wells, so that we can truly say, I surely shall be satisfied with thine abundant grace. Nothing else in this world satisfies. And so we come longing after you this day, that you would be pleased to reveal yourself to us, so that your name would truly have all the glory, the honor, and the praise. And as we come together as a congregation this day, we come and we acknowledge that we have much to give you praise for, that you are the God of provision, that you are the God who is supplying all of our needs according to your riches in glory. We give thanks, O Lord, for the provision of a pastor for this dear congregation. We pray for Mr. Thompson and for Connie at this time as they prepare to embark on this new chapter in their calling, that you would be with them, that you would strengthen them, that you would lead them. And what we pray for them, we pray also for this congregation as they look ahead to the glorious work of the gospel continuing here in this part of the world, that truly, by your spirit anointing it, this would be a marriage made in whereby many more men and women, boys and girls, whereby the seed of your gospel will be sown in tears.

And hopefully that we will see a great harvest whereby our friends here can reap in joy. Bring these things past to pass, O Lord, we pray, not for our glory, for we know that we are not worthy of anything but your wrath and your curse, but for your glory. And so we give thanks, O Lord, that our standing before you here today is not based upon our own merit, upon our own good works.

That we come here, O Lord, that we come here if we are in Christ to stay clothed in his righteousness. Help us at all times to be mindful of the wonder of who we are in you for that provision that is ours in him.

And as we reflect upon what is ours in Christ, that we would seek all the more to see those around us in our community coming and knowing something of this for themselves, so that we might cry out, Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did.

Is this not the Christ? We live in a world that is so full of chaos and confusion, a world that is characterized in many ways by angst and by pain and by suffering and uncertainty.

[11 : 56] But, O, how we thank you, O Lord, this day for the fact that today there is a stream in the desert and that we can point our friends, our neighbors, our colleagues, our loved ones to that stream.

We can point them to that place whereby they can be refreshed in their souls, not only for time, but more importantly for the endless ages of eternity.

We thank you, O Lord, then for this greatest of provisions. But as we find ourselves sojourning in time, we are so mindful of the frailty of the flesh and we pray that you would be with us, that you would strengthen us.

We pray, O Lord, that you would indeed bring this pandemic to an end and that in doing so, that we as your people, as your church, as your bride, that we would arise on the other side strengthened, strengthened and enabled to see why we are here, the priorities in life.

We pray that you would equip men and women to indeed provide a vaccine for this pandemic and that as they seek to look to their own wisdom, gifted in many ways by yourself, that all the more that they would cast themselves on you, acknowledging that they too have their limitations, that they need you, they need you.

[13:31] And what we pray for them, we pray also for our leaders, our first minister and our prime minister. We give thanks for them and we pray for them, that you would be with them and that even in and through all that is coming to pass in their experience, that they would realize the limitations of themselves, that they would see that there is one that is higher than they, that they would come to you, that they would cry out to you.

For we know that righteousness will exalt a nation. Bring these things to pass, we pray, by the workings of your power and be with any who are suffering today because of this pandemic, suffering in body and in mind, all those who are locked in their homes, who are facing various anxieties and fears.

We pray that the angel of the Lord would encamp and round encompass them, that they would put their trust in you so that even in their loneliness, that they would know a strength and a presence that can come only from yourself.

Bless this dear congregation then we pray, as they seek to go on in the days, months and even years that lie ahead, that you would indeed bless them and keep them, shine your face upon them. And all we ask, we ask for the forgiveness of our many sins, in the precious name of Christ. Amen. Well friends, we're going to turn once again to God's word, as we have it in the Scottish, in the, sorry, sing Psalm, Psalm 16.

[15:14] Psalm 16.

We'll hear verses 8 to 11 being sung to the tune, Golden Hill to the praise of God. Before me constantly, I send the Lord, the Lord, Because he is the time I've done, I'll not be overgrown. Therefore my heart is dry, My tongue with joy will sing, My heart will be true, My heart will be true, May no one wither in, For you will not die, My soul is yet to stay, Nor will you leave, Your Holy One, To see the tombs decay, You have been known to me, The heart of life divine, This shall I know, So that your right hand, Joy from your face will shine.

Well friends, If we could just for a short time today, Turn back to the chapter that we read together in the prophecy of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 42, To take today for our text, The words that we have in verse 19.

[19:09] Behold, I am doing a new thing, Now it springs forth, Do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness, And rivers in the desert, In the desert, I am doing a new thing.

Well friends, We can come to Old Testament narratives like this, And we can perhaps look at them in the wrong way.

We can come and we can read it, And we can appreciate the literary technique perhaps of the author. We can be interested in all the various historical details that we find there.

But as we reflect upon what we read, We perhaps subconsciously tell ourselves that this was written for a different time, For a different people, A completely different context, A completely different culture.

But as we come before this chapter today, I would like us just for a short time to recognize that the words that we have before us, Although perhaps their immediate context is different, They are words that are just as relevant to us here today, As the day they were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

[20:38] Of course we come around the word of God, A word that we constantly need to remind ourselves is alive. This is a living word.

This is a word that is today as fresh to you and to me than it's ever been. And so as we look at this text today, We would like, yes, for us to look at it through the lens, if you like, of its immediate

context, But also through that wider lens of our own experience.

Scripture always needs to be applied to our experience, In order for it to have any bearing upon us in our lives, In order for it to enable us to grow in grace.

Behold, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

The year here is 539 BC. We find ourselves in Babylon. And of course, Babylon, we know, has already been recognized very much as a, An enemy of God, an idolatrous people.

[22 : 03] Without going into too much detail of this just now, We see that here we have the Israelites. The Israelites, God's chosen people, They have been captured by the Babylonians.

They have been enslaved. Of course, this was in one way the doing of the Lord, Who was seeking to bring his people back to him, By perhaps teaching them this difficult lesson.

And so here we have God's people. They are being ruled, they are being reigned by those who are characterized by idolatry. Those who have turned their back on God in favor of worshiping the work of their own hands.

And you know, as we look at this here today, We see very much this is where we are as God's people. Yes, the props might be different, But we see that if we are a child of God today, We are exiles in this world.

This is not our home. And we praise God that this is not our home. We are surrounded in this world by views, And they are becoming increasing to the fore, I would say day by day, Views that are contrary to what we believe to be true.

[23 : 25] We live in the midst of a people who choose to worship the created, Rather than the creator. And it's difficult. As we seek to negotiate our way through life, It can be difficult.

We sometimes struggle to find out our place in this world. As we look at those around us, We see that those who have perhaps turned their back on God, That they are the ones who are gaining the upper hand.

That the Babylonians of the day are somehow in charge of what's happening. That they have such a tight grip on the way this world is going.

But friends, we mustn't lose heart. We mustn't lose heart. Isn't it true that often times the darkest hour is before the dawn?

When things can appear to be so utterly low, So bleak that they couldn't possibly get any worse in our lives, In our communities, in our nation, in our world, That often times it's then that the Lord in his mercy, in his grace and in his love, It's then that he intervenes.

[24 : 47] Why is that? Well, because no matter how challenging or uncertain the nature of our providences are, We have our own personal providences, our own personal crosses to bear.

No matter how difficult they are, no matter how far even as his people, We stray from him and we do. We do. The fact is that if we are his today, his promises will never change.

His promises never lose their validity on the basis of our performance Or the performance of anyone else or anything else in this world.

So that's what we see before us. Yes, we see a people who are enslaved. Yes, we see a people who are trapped. Yes, we see a people who in many ways find themselves in a hopeless situation. Yet what does the Lord choose to do? Well, before he speaks into the detail of what he's going to do for them, It's interesting to note that the foundation, if you like, that he lays in verse 1 of chapter 43.

[26 : 07] He says there in the middle of verse 1, Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you walk and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned.

And the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Isn't it interesting that these are the words that are first shared before the prophet goes on to speak about the detail of how the Lord is going to rescue these exiled people?

He's reminding them. He's reminding them. He's reminding them of who they are. And we all need reminded, do we not? That before we can believe any of God's promises for us in this life, We need to daily lay hold of the reality that we have before us by faith.

[27 : 14] We need basically to come back to basics. That he has redeemed us. That he has called us by our name. That we are his.

That he is the Lord, our God. God. And it's only when we truly lay hold of that, we need to do that every moment on this earth.

Every waking hour. We need to keep coming back to the cross. We need to keep coming back to Calvary, reminding us what this is all about. And it's only then that we will have that boldness to lay hold of all that God promises us.

See, the Israelites, they needed this foundation themselves. They needed to be reminded because what God was about to say to them appears to be utterly impossible, humanly speaking at least. Verse 14. For your sake I will send to Babylon. This is halfway through verse 14. And bring them all down as fugitives.

[28 : 28] Even the Chaldeans and the ships in which they rejoiced. Now the Babylonians at this time, they lived by the water. And their whole economy, if you like, it was built upon this system of trading by means of the Tigris and the Euphrates River as well as the Persian Gulf.

And so this was very much their source of life, if you like. Their boats and their trading by the water. But what God is saying here is that he's going to free Israel by way of him causing the Babylonians to take to their ships and to leave the Israelites free to go.

For the Israelites, this would have seemed like an impossible prospect. Why on earth would the Babylonians ever do such a thing? Why would they just get into their boats and leave those whom they had had such power over to freedom?

Why would they do this? Why would they do it? Why would they do it? They lack those who are independents to take to their ships and them for people who have served to? Those who are the Elliot chairs. Why would they do it? Because of course, it would be a greatainer infield there anymore. Because that's what we're talking about. Norway sends people to yourokraties.

Because of course, it's one of the wisest people. Because of course, what you're pointing in them for, or higher Artists, the elite of the■■ articles a month in the Notice of the Jackal of comes to being a human is one of the people that might have decidedly listed enoughboled. And we read it and we say, ah, but. Ah, but. We put our own clause at the end of it.

[30 : 00] Yes, I know God can do that. Ah, but. Look at the day we live in. Things are so difficult. And so we say to ourselves, never. This can never happen.

This promise is not for us. That promise certainly is not for us. And the next promise, we will never see it. And so, friends, we need reminded, even today, the 29th of November, 2020, we need reminded of the power of God.

Of course, as the Israelites are told this, the Lord, knowing us better than we know ourselves, he anticipates that reaction.

Of course, a reaction can often be one of objection and uncertainty and unbelief. The Lord knew this. And as he anticipates their reaction, so that almost before they have the chance to launch their objections to what he's proposing, he comes in with this reminder in verses 16 and 17.

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters.

[31 : 20] What is the Lord here referring to? What is this a reminder of? Well, this is, of course, none other than a reference to a past experience of the children of Israel themselves.

A reference to the way that the Lord had so mightily dealt with God's people in the past as they had fled from Pharaoh.

There they were running for their lives with the sound of Pharaoh and his men and the chariots behind them within earshot, fleeing for freedom.

When they are in front of them, they come to this vast ocean. Nowhere to turn. Nowhere to hide. Nowhere to run. And so humanly speaking, for them, it was game over. But God had his eye on his people.

[32 : 20] A people who, yes, like all of us, were flawed and unfaithful, yet nonetheless a people who were a covenant people. A people who weren't under the power of Pharaoh, ultimately, or any other human being, or any other worldview or regime.

A people who were under the power of God. And so God's reminding the Israelites here of what he's done in the past, of what he can do in the future, and what an encouragement that is to us that we worship today a powerful God, an almighty God, a God who's able to part waters, a God who's able to make the impossible possible, a God who's able to deal with the enemies of God.

That's what he did here. The children of Israel. He brought forth chariot and horse, army and warrior.

They lie down. They cannot rise. They're extinguished. They're quenched. Like a wick. That's how he dealt with those who sought to oppress his people.

His precious, precious redeemed. What a contrast this is to how he does deal with us if we are his redeemed today.

[33 : 57] It's only in the previous chapter that he says, a bruised reed he will not break, a smoking flax he will not quench.

And so at this point we might think, well, God is saying, don't you remember? Don't you remember what I did for you in the past?

Don't you realize today that I am the same God? I have the same power. I'm still sovereign. I'm still almighty. You have no reason to fear.

Absolutely no reason. We just need to reflect upon our own context and days gone by, even here on our own island in the year 1824.

Not that. Long ago in the grand scheme of things where we read of 9,000 souls having made their way to the Barvis Moor, to Mount Mornag, to hear the preaching of the gospel.

[35 : 00] 9,000 souls hearing those words preached by Finlay Monroe. Isaiah 25, 6. It's on this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine, well refined.

9,000 souls with a thirst and a hunger after righteousness. Now sitting here today, we think that's impossible. We put obstacles in the path of God.

We put our own ifs and buts before the sovereignty of God. But this is the same God. The same God who even in the community of Point has worked mightily in days of revival and renewal, perhaps even within living memory of some gathered here today.

He's able. And as you look forward to a new ministry here in your congregation, remember, He is able.

What a liberating, exciting thought. He is able. That God is still calling people to congregations just like this, to be, as it were, instruments in the Redeemer's hand.

[36 : 26] And that because of this, He has a plan for His people. He has a plan for you, dear congregation. Never forget that.

Be encouraged by that. Be exhilarated by that prospect of what could possibly lie ahead. Does that mean the detail of the plan will be the same as the past?

I think this is perhaps the difficulty that we often fall into. We think that because God has worked in a certain manner in the past, that He's bound to work in the same way in the future.

But we're reminded here in verse 18 that that's just not the case. We see Him saying, remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.

And no sooner has the Lord reminded His people of His almighty power in the past, and it appears that He's now contradicting Himself. He's reminded them of what He did in the past, and now He's saying, don't remember that.

[37 : 37] Don't consider the things of old. And so we might ask, well, what exactly is the Lord saying here? What He's saying to His people is this.

He's saying, yes, I did this in the past. Yes, I parted the sea. Yes, I made a path of safety through the waters. That is all true. But don't dwell on this.

Don't keep going back to this previous exodus, somehow thinking that your exodus will be exactly the same. Look to the future.

And in looking to the future, be aware that as God, I am not bound to replicate the detail of how I worked in the past.

Behold, I am going to do a new thing. And that word, behold, it's got a sense of urgency within it. He's saying, listen to me. Listen to what I'm saying.

[38 : 40] These past events pale into insignificance in the face of the new things that I have in store for you. Why? Because this exodus will be your exodus.

This deliverance will be your deliverance. This will be a manifestation of my power that will meet your specific needs today.

That's what he's saying to us, all of us, to every congregation, to every gathered people that are his.

He's telling us to remember his power, but not to dwell on the detail of the past, not to bind God to any set script as to how we think he needs to work in the future.

Our God is far greater than our boxes. Our God is far greater than anything that we can perceive in our own hearts and minds.

[39 : 50] And aren't we thankful for that today? At this point, we might ask, well, what is this new thing that the Lord is doing? We've spoken of this new thing.

What is it? Well, for the Israelites here on the surface, it was essentially a work of deliverance, freeing them from the bondage, from the oppression of Babylon.

But it was more than that. This was more than just merely allowing them to return home. Because packaged up, if you like, within this freedom from exile, this we have before us here is the beginnings of a far greater redemption.

Because what we see here is this whole scene set against that larger plan of God redeeming sinners from the bondage of sin.

And that's what Genesis through to Revelation is, of course, all about. God's rescue plan to mankind. And so we must always read it against that backdrop.

[41 : 04] And so, yes, the Israelites would return home. That's true. But they would return to a place in which the Messiah would eventually be born.

They, as a people, would be the people from whom the Messiah would eventually be born.

That's the new thing. And what a new thing that is to us. Every day. A child being conceived, supernaturally conceived, in the womb of a virgin.

The world had never seen anything like it before. The world will never see anything like it before.

This was a new thing. God himself becoming flesh.

God incarnate dwelling in this world. Walking the streets of this world. Rubbing shoulders with men and women, boys and girls, just like you and like me, physically in this world.

[42 : 17] This was a new thing. God dying that cursed death on the cross. taking to himself the hell that should have been yours, that should have been mine.

Plummeting to such depths of darkness, depravity, forsakenness of the Father with whom he had enjoyed eternal union and communion.

This was a new thing. And then, of course, he rose on the third day, triumphant over the grave, ascending to the right hand of the Father where he intercedes on behalf of his people.

This was, this is a new thing. All so that you and I can know this new thing for ourselves.

That's the reason for this. That by his grace, we could know that new, that living way. That by his mercy, we could sing that new song, a song that magnifies out God, a song that speaks of the fact that we have been delivered.

[43 : 40] We have been delivered from the bondage of sin. That we have partaken in our very own exodus from Egypt, released from the power of the Pharaoh of this world, Satan himself.

Behold, I am doing a new thing. Every single manifestation of the power of God in the life of sinners is a new thing.

Never loses its freshness. Never loses its wonder. And so the detail of how God brings this new thing to pass in the lives of generations, even of individuals, may differ from one person to another.

We have different experiences as to how the Lord brings us. Even as congregations from one generation to the next, we have different experiences as to how the Lord is going to lead us in his work.

But he will always do this new thing. And we need to believe that he's able, that he's able and he's willing for us to experience him carrying out more new things, even in the community of Point as he continues.

[45 : 06] That's important to lay hold of that word as he continues to fulfill his glorious plan of redemption. As he continues to work through earthen vessels, jars of clay, just like me and every other witness of Christ, so that his light can shine through.

It's not the vessel we focus on. It's the light that comes through the vessel. It's the message that comes through the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of freedom, freedom from bondage and from exile.

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. He's able to make the impossible possible.

That in the wilderness of life where there is no direction, if you're in a wilderness you don't know where you're going, but he promises to make a way. He promises to make a road and that's why the Lord's people really are the only people and I mean this with all due respect yet the Bible tells us that the Lord's people are the only people who have any real direction in their life.

So if you are here today and you don't know Christ as your saviour, you're like a ship without a rudder. You're drifting aimlessly knowing not where you're going. Where are you seeking to go? [46 : 40] What is the purpose of your life? What motivates you to face another day in this world? What is the ultimate end of what motivates you?

The Lord has made this path in the wilderness for his people. A path that is leading his people to something that is new.

A path that is going to culminate in that new heaven, that new earth, that glorious work of his redemption where all his people will be gathered together from every nation, tribe, and tongue in a place where there will be no more tears, no more suffering, no more angst, no more worry, no more sin, no more sin, in that physical place, in that new Jerusalem.

I wonder are you on that path today? Or are you content to navigate through this world using your own compass?

A compass that if you're being honest with yourself, and I say this in love, it's misleading you. It's taking you down different alleys and you find yourself at a dead end so you return and you go down another one and still you don't find satisfaction or meaning or purpose in life and you're lost.

[48 : 26] He can make the impossible possible and today provide for you a path in this wilderness.

And you know, that goes for the Lord's people too. As the Lord's people, we stray from this path. We backslide from this path.

And as even we find ourselves going through this path, we can be weary. It's not an easy path. It's not promised to be easy. And we can be tired. And we can slow down. And sometimes we feel like we've almost come to a halt.

But yet even for us, He provides. He doesn't say, well, you're on the path now. Get on with it. You've got this path set before you.

You just need to have a stiff upper lip and get on with whatever comes in your way. That's not what He does. Because here we see that He has provided a stream in the desert.

[49 : 36] A river in the desert. A watering hole. A place of refreshment and replenishment for us as we find ourselves tired and weary on this journey.

Today, gathered here, this is such a watering hole. as we find ourselves together as His people, as the family of God, longing to worship His name, united in that one spirit, united in the shed blood of Christ.

And we're strengthened. We're strengthened even, albeit from a distance, from seeing one another, from being with one another. as we come to His word, we have this watering hole.

This place that is able to feed our soul, to meet our deepest needs.

let's come to it. Let's come to it each and every day. Maybe today you're saying, well, that's all good and well, but the reality is it doesn't look as if He is doing a new thing.

[50 : 54] Why are we not seeing converts? Yes, we're seeing perhaps one or two, but why aren't we seeing the Lord working with great power? Why is it that I am struggling as a Christian?

Why is it that I'm not a Christian at all? In my own mind, I would like to be a Christian. Let's just look at what we read here in verse 22.

Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob. You have been weary of me, O Israel. I think the reality is, dear friends, and I include myself in this, we don't get because we don't ask.

We don't ask because we don't really believe. Yes, we might confess with our lips, but do we believe in our hearts?

You know, that's one of the most crippling factors to the work of the gospel, unbelief. We think that God will not work again. We look back to the glory days of the past as if somehow only these were the days that God would work, that this was the only suitable backdrop for him to work against.

[52 : 17] do we ask? Do we believe as we go forward, as you go forward to this exciting new chapter, and that's what it is.

You need to think of it in these terms. Do you believe that yes, as congregations, you've had many, many blessings in the past for which you praise God for, many rich, rich blessings, and you think upon them, and you meditate on them, and they strengthen you.

But this is the day the Lord has made. In it we will rejoice and be glad. Today is the day of salvation, and so God is saying to you today, behold, I am doing a new thing.

Believe it. Believe it, because it's true. I wonder just before we close, have you experienced this new thing?

Does anything that has been said here today resonate with you? Does it make sense to you? Can you put your amen to it? Has this been all theoretical to you?

[53 : 49] It's made its way to your head, but no further, not to your heart. You hear about this new way, you hear about new life, you hear about being born again, but still you know not of it yourself.

You might not need deliverance, friend, from Egypt or from Babylon today, but you need deliverance from sin. The question is, do you want deliverance?

As the Lord's people, we can lack belief. As those who would call themselves seekers, you can lack belief. You can say, I want to be a Christian, but do you really?

do you long to be freed from the captivity in which Satan is holding you? Now, that sounds very dramatic, and as you reflect upon your life, you might think, well, that's not the way my life is.

Satan isn't leading my life. The reality is that if you're not for Christ, you're against him. You're either a sheep or a goat.

[55 : 02] There's no in between. And so today, if you are not following Christ, you are allowing Satan to sit upon the throne of your heart.

Come to Jesus. Come to him and pray to him that he will reveal to you something of the wonder of this salvation, this freedom, you ask for him to do a new thing in your life, to make a path in the wilderness, and I guarantee you that if you ask with all your heart, you will receive.

He will provide those streams in the desert of your soul that you so desperately need, so that you can join with the dear saints gathered here today in one spirit, going forward in the work of the gospel.

Behold, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs forth. Do you not perceive it? That we would all know something of this for ourselves, individually and collectively as we go forward with a distinctive sense of anticipation and indeed expectation in the coming weeks, months, and we pray, even years.

Amen. We'll join together in prayer. Lord, our God, we give thanks this day for the wonder of your gospel. We find ourselves in a sin-sick world, a world that is so broken, full of pain and hurt and anguish, and so we praise you, O Lord, that you have provided that rescue plan for mankind in and through the work of your Son, that sacrificial act of love, the one who died so that we might live.

[57 : 14] We pray, O Lord, that your Holy Spirit would come with great power, blowing upon the garden of our souls, that the fragrance of Christ may truly be evident in our midst, and that we would be mindful of the fact that as ambassadors for Christ, we seek above all else to do your will, and in doing so we take delight in it.

We pray for any dear unconverted friends here today also, that they would seek after this new way, this new and living way, that they would not stop seeking until they have found, that they will have found that liberty for their souls that is to be found in you.

Go before us then, we pray, forgive us in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, friends, we'll conclude our time of worship now singing to God's praise from the Scottish Psalter, or at least hearing these words being sung from Psalm 126.

Psalm 126. When Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody, they among the heathens said the Lord, great things for them hath wrought, the Lord hath done great things for us, whence joy to us is brought, and down to the last verse, that man who bearing precious seed in the going forth doth mourn, he doubtless bringing back his sheaves, what a promise, rejoicing, shall return.

We'll hear these words being sung to the praise of the Almighty God. when Zion's bondage God turned back as men of inquiry, then filled with laughter was our heart, our tongue with melody, and the Lord said the Lord, great things for ever all.

[59 : 46] The Lord hath done great things for us, whence joy to us is brought.

God has streams of water in the sun are on his glory call, whose glory is the living time, of joy and joy he shall.

return. The man who paid in precious sea, in glory for the more, he that has paid him and his chief rejoicing shall return.

stand for the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with you now and forevermore. Amen. will be the war ■■■■■ ange España or over God■ thr hope and among two Brett