

The God of Israel

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0 : 0 0] Children are dismissed to Children's Church. Thank you, worship team. I know it sounds like a broken record, but I'll tell you, I am blessed each week by the ministry of our worship team and praise team.

! Thank you, John. Thank you, team, for leading us to the throne week after week. What an amazing blessing that is. It's a blessing because it doesn't appeal to our emotion as much as leading us to the throne.

And in our study now, as we are now moving back to the Old Testament, as we're going to be picking things up and looking at the book of Isaiah, consistently we're going to find ourselves in a place where maybe we haven't been before.

And that is at the throne with a real, vivid picture of our God. Who He is and what He stands for and what He expects in His people.

That's where we're going to find ourselves beginning today and moving forward as we continue this study in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah. But maybe you've had some opportunities in your life to travel overseas a little bit.

[1 : 2 2] Anyone had a chance to do that? And you show up in this place, especially if you're by yourself. And there are some things that look a little familiar.

You can recognize there are buildings, there are roads, there are cars, and there's some semblance of familiarity in that. But then you look at the signs. And the signs are oftentimes in letters and characters you don't even know how to discern, how to pronounce them, let alone what they mean.

And then there's the language and the people and the way they dress and the way they relate to one another. And there is this sense, if you're anything like me, of just feeling a little bit overwhelmed.

And so you look for those things that are familiar. And so if you've had a chance to be in a different country, you can kind of spot there's the American over there.

He's wearing a lot of the same stuff and he's asking some of the same questions. And if you were both here in the States, you wouldn't give a rip about getting to know them. But the fact that you're over there and you kind of share this common connection, there's now an interest in getting to know them a little bit.

[2 : 3 5] Well, this morning as we begin our study in the book of Isaiah, I think it may be a little like that experience. Where there are some things that are familiar, certain terms that we've heard before in Sunday school class.

But by and large, the landscape of the Old Testament is so far removed from our own personal experience. There are challenges to overcome.

There are difficulties that we need to come against and try to break through in order to have some access to this study. Now, we've learned about Abraham and Moses and we've learned about Daniel and David.

But when it comes to the kings, especially kings like Uzziah and Ahaz and Hezekiah, we're like, who?

Who are they? Where do they show up in the Old Testament? What were they like and what did they do? And you can feel a little overwhelmed by the study and just check out before it even begins.

[3 : 48] What I want to help us understand this morning is that in our study through the book of Isaiah, there is going to be some common ground.

And I want us to understand some points of reference to help make this study through the book of Isaiah accessible to us today.

There may be some distance for us in terms of history, the fact that it happened 750 years before Christ even showed up on the earth.

And we're familiar with this three-year stretch of time where Christ walked on the earth. We're familiar with Roman culture. We've spent a lot of time in the Gospels and we've become familiar with that.

But when it talks about hundreds of years of history and kings, we can't even pronounce their names, in nations and empires that don't even exist anymore.

[4 : 46] We think, is this really relevant to me? Is this really significant in the 21st century? I thought that the Old Testament dealt with the law and dealt with certain religious standards.

And I thought that God in the Old Testament was a God of justice. But now in the New Testament, we're dealing with a whole new different culture, right? We're dealing with grace and we're dealing with mercy and compassion and forgiveness.

And so we can set the Old Testament on the shelf and not really give a whole lot of attention to it. At least that's the tension in our hearts.

But the reality is, and my prayer and desire, not only for this morning, but my desire through this study is to help us understand that the book of Isaiah is preeminently about God.

And that's why we're here in the book of Isaiah today. There are three reasons I just want to cover briefly why the book of Isaiah and why a study about this prophetic piece of literature in the Old Testament that seems so far removed, so distant from us.

[6 : 04] Well, first, I want us to grow in our love for God. All of Scripture is about God. It's preeminently about Him.

We know this to be true. Jesus, in His ministry, refers and quotes from the book of Isaiah numerous times throughout His ministry.

As a matter of fact, He actually opens His ministry in Luke chapter 4 with a statement from Isaiah that sets the course for what He means to accomplish.

His mission statement, as it were, His mission statement, as it were, comes from the book of Isaiah. And then towards the end of His ministry, in His time of meeting with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, He tells them, it says, He opens to them all of the scriptures beginning with Moses and all of the prophets, the things concerning Himself.

The scripture, and Isaiah is no exception, is preeminently about God. The God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

[7 : 19] We're going to come to terms with that in our study in Isaiah. We're going to see that God is consistent. God is dependable. God is faithful. God is trustworthy.

God is the same in the Old Testament as He is in the New Testament. We can trust Him for the continuity of His character. God is the same in the Old Testament as He is in the Old Testament.

His standards are absolute. It sets Him apart. It makes Him distinct. And it influences the way that He interacts with the nations.

The purifying purpose towards His people. And the punishing force of God, the hand of God to punish those from the nations who go against His holy standard.

But also as the Almighty God, we find that nothing can stand in His way. What He says He will do. There is no power.

[8 : 50] There is no force that can thwart His plans. And in this way, God is the divine initiator. He will accomplish all that He has said He will do.

He cannot be hindered. He cannot be prevented. And what He says rests on His ability to carry it through. Not on our ability to make it happen.

We will come to love, hopefully more, the God that we serve. The God who has called us into relationship with Him.

But secondly, to gain perspective of ourselves. We see here in Isaiah chapter 1, verse 1. And if you have your Bibles, I would encourage you to turn there.

We're going to look at this first chapter together. If you're a guest with us this morning, it's on page 566 in the Pew Bible ahead of you.

[9 : 45] It says this in verse 1. Just the first phrase. It says, The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Here, the target audience is these individuals living in Judah. Particularly in Jerusalem. During this period of time, about 750 years before the time of Christ.

We find that these people, Judah, are not so different from ourselves. Although they may carry out their sin issues in different ways, the heart issues are the same.

The conflict that they have with the world and the conflict they have with God is very similar. There is unfaithfulness in a lack of devotion.

They are dominated by self-interest. They are greatly influenced by their culture. There is a disregard for God's standard. There is complacency in their devotion.

[10 : 59] We find them going through the motions in religion. There is a fear of the future. There is a desire to control the outcome. A deficiency in their faith.

And a heart of pride. Can you identify? Regardless of how it connects with the outworking of your life, we can understand the similar heart conditions.

Because these are the things we struggle with as well. So Isaiah addresses it in the relevance of the culture, but the answer is still the same.

We'll see that this morning. It may express itself in different ways, but the heart condition is similar. And thus, God's remedy is also the same.

But finally, the final reason why we're going through Isaiah is to make it accessible. My desire as we're going through this study is to kind of whet your appetite.

[11 : 59] To let you see that there is some overlap. There is some relevance to this study in this unfamiliar book. And I have to confess that for myself, I chose Isaiah because of this sense of unfamiliarity.

Although I've read it numerous times, I've never really dug in to appreciate all that it has to contain. All the treasures that are involved. Now, maybe this morning you're wondering, okay.

Now, there are 21 chapters in the Gospel of John. It took us three and a half years to go through. If I parse that out to 66 chapters, doggone it, we're going to be in this book forever.

Well, the goal for us in going through Isaiah, we've chosen to take 66 chapters and do them in 20 weeks. The goal is for us just to whet your appetite.

To give you kind of an overview. To introduce you to the greatness of God in this Old Testament book. And to encourage you to dig in for yourself.

[13 : 07] To make it accessible. To make it a little more familiar. And so as we walk through this together, the goal is to introduce certain concepts. And to become familiar with some of the history.

And look at the people. And look at our God. And come to cherish the God of the Old Testament. That's the desire. We're going to find that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament.

There is something for us to learn. There's something for us to appreciate. So we'll spend 10 weeks in the first 39 chapters that kind of deal with God's judgment.

His chastisement of Israel. Of Judah and the nations. And then we'll spend 10 messages dealing with chapters 40 to 66.

That gives us the rest of the story. His compassion. His comfort. And the hope that we can experience. Now, I could spend about 20 minutes right now rehashing the historical context.

[14 : 14] I'm not going to do that to you this morning. And so what I'm going to do instead is I'm going to show you a video. And if you're wondering what in the world that insert is in your bulletin.

That's what it's for. It's to help you follow along and also give you the link so that you can go on the website and check it out again for yourself. We do want to make this accessible. Not just for you as parents but also for your kids.

So that your kids understand, hey, there's something a little interesting about this book. So let's check out the overview of Isaiah from the Bible Project. The Bible Project.

Isaiah. Isaiah. Isaiah. Isaiah.

Isaiah.

[16 : 21] Isaiah. Isaiah.

Isaiah.

Isaiah.

Isaiah.!!! In a strange experience, God commissions him with a very difficult test. He is to keep announcing his coming judgment.

But because Israel has reached a point of no return, his warnings are going to have a paradoxical effect of hardening. But Isaiah is to trust God's plan. Israel is going to be chopped down like a tree and left like a stump in the field.

[18 : 18] And that stump will itself be scorched and burning. But after all of that burning, God says that this smoldering stump is a holy seed that will survive in the future.

It's a small sign of hope, but who or what is that holy seed? The rest of the section offers man. Isaiah confronts Ahab, a descendant of David and the king of Israel. And he announces his downfall.

God says that it is the great empire of Assyria who will first chop Israel down and death. But there's hope. Because of God's promise to David, he's going to send, after this destruction, a new king named Emmanuel.

The king of God. And Emmanuel, the kingdom, is going to set God's people free from violent oppression. And Isaiah describes this coming king as a small troop of new growth that will emerge from the old stuff of the dangerous family.

It's this king that's holding him. And the king is going to be empowered by God's spirit to rule over a new Jerusalem and bring justice to the poor. And all nations will look to this messianic and his guidance.

[19 : 23] His kingdom will transform all creation into the kingdom. Now, if you finish chapters 1 through 12, it's a pretty good understanding of Isaiah's message to the judgment. And that brings us to the first two chapters.

And that brings us to the next section of the book. So first, we have a large collection of poems that explore God's judgment and hope for the nation. We learn, first of all, of the fall of Babylon and Israel's neighbor.

Isaiah received a serious world power would one day be replaced by the empire of Babylon, a nation even more destructive than Israel. Babylon's kings claimed that they were higher than all other gods, and so God vowed to bring Babylon down.

And not only Babylon, Isaiah goes on to list Israel's neighbors accusing them all of the same kind of pride and injustice. But remember, for Isaiah, God's judgment is never the final word for Israel or the nation.

And that leads to the next section, with a series of poems that tell a tale of two cities. There's a lofty city that has exalted itself above God and become corrupt in Israel. This city is an archetype of rebellion to humanity, and it's described with language that's all borrowed from Isaiah's earlier description, Ruth-Long, Syrian, and Babylon.

[20 : 47] This city is destined for Israel. And one day, it's going to be replaced by the new Jerusalem, where God reigns as king over a redeemed humanity from all nations, and there's no more death to the side.

These chapters are the climax of this section, and it shows how Isaiah's message pointed far beyond his notice. It was a message for all who were waiting for God, to bring his justice on a violent, oppressive kingdom, and bring his kingdom of justice and peace.

The following section returns the focus of the rise and fall of Jerusalem. And first, we find a whole bunch of poems where Isaiah accuses Ruth-Long's leaders for turning to Egypt from military to Texas. He knows this will back them.

And Isaiah says that only trust in their God and repentance and save his peace, which gets illustrated by the following story, about the rise of Hezekiah's kingdom. Just as Isaiah predicted, the Assyrian armies come to try to attack the city, and so Hezekiah humbled himself to for God, and he prays for divine deliverance, and the city is miraculously saved over.

But Hezekiah's rise is immediately followed by his fault. So he hosts a delegation from Babylon, and he tries to impress him by showing everything in Jerusalem, the treasury, the temples, the palaces, clearly an effort to make another political alliance with his text.

[22 : 10] Isaiah hears about this, and he confronts Hezekiah from his foolishness. He predicts that this ally will one day betray him, and return at the enemy of the Jerusalem. And we know from 2 Kings 24-25 that Isaiah was right.

Over a hundred years later, Babylon would turn on Jerusalem, come and destroy the city, its temple, and carry it to the Israelites away, and exile him back. And so all of Isaiah's warnings of divine judgment in chapter 1-39, lead us to this.

He's shown to be a true prophet, because it all can't pass. But remember, the purpose of God's judgment is to purify the root, and bring the holy seed of the Messiah to all nations.

And it's that hope that gets explored in the next part of the world. But for now, that's what Isaiah chapter 1-39 is. All right, I know there's a lot there, but you have the notes, you can take them home, you can watch that video again.

But let's dig into the text now, and we're going to look at five ways or reasons why the study of Isaiah is relevant to you. How does it connect to where you are?

- [23 : 22] How is it pertinent to the things that you need in the 21st century? The first, as we look in verse 1, we see front and center that it is the same word.
- We find the same word. Notice in verse 2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken.
- Right at the beginning of this book, all the way through the rest of this chapter, and on through the rest of the book of Isaiah, we find preeminently the word of God coming and rising to the surface.
- We find it here in verse 2. We find it in verse 10, where he says, Hear the word of the Lord, and then give ear to the teaching of our God.
- We find it again in verse 11, where it says, Thus says the Lord. And in verse 18, Says the Lord. Verse 20 and 24, point to the Lord's word.
- [24 : 26] The Lord has declared. The Lord has spoken. And throughout the rest of Isaiah, we find phrases that the Lord has spoken, or the word of the Lord is.
- We cannot walk away from the book of Isaiah without coming to grips with the fact that God's word is preeminent. That what God says, He will accomplish.
- It's authoritative. It's directive. It can be trusted. It's not to be mishandled. It's to be understood, to have the authority and the standard of God.
- We think about the centrality of the word from beginning of creation to the end of time. The word of God comes to the surface through the creation of the stars.
- Remember that creation account in Genesis? Where in every day of the creation record, it says, And God said, Let there be light. Or God said, Let the expanse be between the waters.
- [25 : 29] And day after day after day, the word of God comes to bear on the development of creation. The word of God is also influential in the creation of a nation, the people of God, in Exodus chapter 19.
- As He's calling out the people at the Mount Sinai and developing a covenant relationship with them. He says, If you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of the nations you will be My treasured possession.
- Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.
- He tells Moses to communicate to the people. It was through the words of God that a nation was established. It was also through the word of God that leaders of Israel were sustained.
- I remember in Joshua chapter 1 verses 8 and 9, what is this directive to Joshua, this new leader? He says, This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night.
- [26 : 42] And then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. The future of Israel was also anchored in the word of God.
- We find that in Deuteronomy chapter 28. If you obey My commands, then these things will happen to you. If you disobey what I tell you this day, then you can expect that these consequences, these curses will come upon you.
- But front and center for us, near and dear to our hearts, familiar to us is John 1.1, which says, in the beginning was the Word.
- The Word was with God. The Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. We find the Word of God preeminent in the Gospel of John, and the Word of God preeminent through the prophecy of Isaiah.

Isaiah. Jesus was wrapping up His public ministry during the Passion Week, and He calls the people to recognize the seriousness of His Word in John chapter 12, when He says this, What is your response to the Word today?

[28 : 19] What is the posture of your heart to the Word that God has spoken? God has called His people to respond to His Word, His authoritative Word, His pure Word.

He's calling the children of Israel to respond. He calls us to respond to that Word as well. But we also find in verse 2, not only is the same Word, but also the same identity.

Notice what He calls them here. At the middle of verse 2, He says, Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against Me.

Now that should sound familiar as well. Children of God. He refers to the children of Israel as His children, His prized possession.

Now this is an amazing portrait of God's compassion and mercy to a people. Remember, He calls Abraham out of the nations.

[29 : 24] Now there wasn't anything particularly appealing or attractive about Abraham. He didn't come with a lot of things to offer up to God, but God called him out of this foreign nation, and called him into the land of Canaan, and said, I will make you a people.

I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you. In you, all the nations will be blessed, Abraham. I will do this for you.

It rests on Me. It doesn't rest on you. So God makes Abraham and the descendants of Abraham, His special people.

Those who would represent Him to the nations. Those who would be the conduit of His blessing to all peoples. Those who would be marked by God's favor.

Who would enjoy His presence and experience the benefits of His power. There are over 621 times throughout the Old Testament when God refers to this nation as the children of Israel.

[30 : 34] His special people. They would be a portrait of God to the nations. When people see the children of Israel, they get a picture, a portrait of God Himself.

And so, as they represent Him well, they give a clear picture of the God they serve. So God has a vested interest in the purity of His people, and how they mark Him out to the world.

Similarly, we find in John 112. What does it say in John 112? But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Similar identity. Those who experience the favor in the relationship of God through now the conduit of Jesus Christ.

Not through the channel of the symbols and the channel of religion, but through the channel of Christ. He is the seed of Abraham.

[31 : 47] He is the channel of blessing. He is the source of righteousness. He is the means of acceptance. The perfect fulfillment of the law.

He is the one that we can come to, by faith, to experience this relationship with God. This personal relationship, intimate relationship with Him, being called children of the Almighty.

This truth blew John away. So that in 1 John he says, Behold, what manner of love the Father has given to us that we might be called the children of God.

Can you imagine it? A child of the King. A child of the Almighty. One who experiences the favor of God in relationship with Him.

But in spite of that special privilege, in spite of that distinct relationship that set them apart and led them into Canaan and established them as a people, giving them legacy and favor, there was still rebellion in their heart.

[33 : 02] That leads us to the next point. They have the same heart. The same heart. We can identify with Him because of the same word. We can identify with Him because of the same identity.

And let me tell you this morning, you can identify with this group of individuals because you have the same heart. It's unfortunate, but it's true. Let's see their heart here in verse 4.

How does the prophet and how does God describe that heart? Ah, sinful nation. A people laden with iniquity. Offspring of evildoers.

Children who deal corruptly. They have forsaken the Lord. They have despised the Holy One. They are utterly estranged. Can you resonate a little with that?

A heart that tends to be distracted. A heart that tends to be stubborn and willful. It is a deep problem for this people.

[34 : 04] A people heavy laden. With iniquity. A severe iniquity marked their lives. It was a pervasive problem as we find in verse 5.

It says, Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. As a nation, from the upper classes of the nation to the lowest classes of the nation, they were prevalently antagonistic towards God.

It was a pervasive problem. They had forsaken Him wholly as a people. And notice, it's also a painful problem.

He points to that in verse 6. Verse 6. From the sole of the foot to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds. They are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.

It created pain. The sin in their life, the rebellion and hostility towards God led them, led them to suffering, led them to heartache, led them to consequence.

[35 : 20] And like the people of Israel, we can identify. We know our own tendencies. We know our own hearts. We know how distracted we can be from doing what God has called us to do.

We know that even in showing up on a Sunday morning, there are so many other things going on in our minds. There is an outward expression of duty, of going through the motions, but in the center of our hearts, there is not alignment with God.

Do you see that to be true in your life? As I do in mine at times. The devotion that you desire to be true of your life ends up being mechanical, ends up being routine, ends up being empty.

You're going through the motions, but there is no true heart of love or devotion to God. Certainly that is what is happening with this group of individuals.

We find that they're going through the motions. We see that here in verse 11 of chapter 1. Notice the result of their mechanical worship.

[36 : 39] What does it do for God? What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices, says the Lord? I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and of the fat of well-fed beasts.

I do not delight in the blood of bulls or lambs or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings.

Incense is an abomination. The new moon and the Sabbath and the calling of conversations or convocations. I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

And you ask yourself the question, wait a second, they're doing all the right things. They're going through all the right procedures. They have all the right rituals in place and yet their heart is out of sync with God.

And God knows that to be true of their life. Listen to the language of God as He speaks to them in verse 11 through 15.

[37 : 45] It is a language of unwillingness to be appeased by outward religion. He is not satisfied with duty and obligation.

He is not convinced by counterfeit obedience. As if we could pretend and mislead Him. As if we could play games and deceive our God.

He sees the heart. He is not fooled by what is happening in your heart. John chapter 2 gives us a glimpse of Jesus coming into the temple.

Remember that in John chapter 2 at the beginning of Jesus' ministry? All of the things are in place. The temple is built correctly. The right people are manning their stations.

The right furniture is in place with the altars and the utensils. And all of the things are happening the way they should. And yet, Jesus identifies a heart that is out of sync with true worship.

[38 : 48] And so He purges the temple. He purifies it. And zeal for the house of the Lord consumed Him and compelled Jesus to action.

Where is your heart today? Where is your devotion to God? Do you find yourself playing games as sometimes I find myself doing?

God is not deceived. He is not fooled by your mechanical worship. Don't convince yourself that you are deceiving Him.

But fortunately for us, there is mercy. And that is the next point. There is mercy that we find from verses 16 to 18. The same mercy that was available to this rebel people is available to us.

Notice in verse 16 what it says. Wash yourselves. Make yourselves clean. Remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes.

[39 : 55] Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Correct oppression. Bring justice to the fatherless. Plead the cause of the widows. Now, Isaiah is not talking about self-help.

He's not talking about you getting your own life together. But what he's talking about is you having the right posture. You aligning your heart in the right way. And then the remedy will come.

We find that remedy in the following verses. In verse 18, it says, Now come, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. The stain of your life can be corrected by the God of love, the God of mercy, the God of forgiveness.

That same God of mercy who is active in the Old Testament. We see him here is also active in the New Testament, forgiving and showing mercy to those who have a heart to be cleansed and forgiven.

[41 : 06] Who are changing the posture of their life in repentance and turning away from those things of life that were detrimental and ungodly and turning towards the things that please him.

God brings mercy and forgiveness and cleansing to those whose hearts desire to be clean. And finally, there is the same judgment.

The same judgment. We find that in verses 21 to 31, but particularly in verse 26. It says, But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you have desired, and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen. For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers and like a garden without water.

The strong shall become tender, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together with none to quench them. Verse 17.

[42 : 24] Let me read that one as well. Zion will be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent by righteousness. God's word will stand in that he will purify his people.

He will purify those whose hearts are turned to him, and he will extinguish those whose hearts are turned away from him. God will punish according to his standard.

He will purify a people whose hearts are committed to him. But he will extinguish the hearts of those who rebel against him. He is holy.

His standard will go forward. He is the pure and radiant one, the holy one, who will have his way in his people. They will not be polluted.

He will purify them. We see the same concept, the similar statement in John chapter 15. In John 15, verses 1 and 2, it says this, I am the vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

[43 : 35] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit. Does that sound familiar?

The gracious hand of God in moving his people towards righteousness, towards his righteous standard, coming alongside them and removing those parts of their life that are keeping them distracted and impure, but then purifying his people, those whose hearts are wicked and hostile towards him and removing them from his sight.

God has a holy standard and we'll find that through this study in Isaiah, God can be trusted to carry out his word. But there is mercy, there is forgiveness for those who turn their hearts towards him and ask him for forgiveness and the righteousness of Christ will robe their lives.

As we look at this book together, I want us to understand that there is relevance, there is nearness, there is proximity to this book of Isaiah and as we look at it together, we'll be reminded of who our God is and who we are as people and how we need to come and to worship and to adore our God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you this morning for the book of Isaiah. We understand that there are so many unfamiliar concepts.

[45 : 13] We pray, Lord, that you would be gracious to us to help us sift through those and come to grips with the way that this connects our heart to yourself. May we stand in awe of your glory.

May we stand in awe of your character, your personhood. May we come to grips with who we are as individuals, as broken, as rebels, as needing a savior, a deliverer.

thank you that you are a God of mercy, a God who forgives. We pray, Lord, this morning if there are any in our midst who do not know you as their savior, God, that they would enter into relationship with you through faith in Jesus.

Thank you for that precious privilege of being called children of God. And we ask that you would be pleased through our time in Isaiah and through the rest of this week as we go to our various small groups this evening and as we engage our community through the week.

May we show Christ through our lives. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.