

Sam Buzzard Preaching

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Preacher: Pastor Bart Leger

[0 : 00] All right, good morning. Well, I'll tell you that I'm extremely thankful to be here today. One, to get to teach God's Word.

That's really first and foremost what I'm here for, and I'm really honored to get to do that. Second, I'm here as a representative of Camp Pearl, and anytime I am here, or anywhere really for that matter, I have a tremendous opportunity to tell you a little bit about what God's doing in our summer camps, especially as I'm going through the summer.

We just finished up our fourth week of camp. We have a seven-week schedule. At the very beginning of the summer in May, we have what we call Boys Adventure Camp, and we take a little break, and then we do our six weeks consecutively.

And we're four weeks into the summer, and it has been an amazing summer so far. I've told a couple of you that at this point, at this point so far, outside of somebody that many of you know, Miss Anna Lou Miller, I think she's the only person that's got hurt this summer, and we're praying for her, and we continue to do that.

But at this point, Brother Don and I, we were talking, and we keep saying we're just nervous. We're almost waiting for having to call a doctor, because no kid sprained their ankle.

[1 : 14] No kid has really had any issue at all regarding anything like that, and we're really thankful for that. But more important than just nobody spraining ankles or anything like that, we've really seen...

I try to be careful using this phrase. God's always at work. I want you to know that. God's Word says that He never sleeps. He never slumbers. He's not going to rest. He's not going to sleep on the job. He's not going to get tired of working in us. He's not going to quit holding the world together at any point. But we really, I think in the six weeks of the summer, or the seven weeks of the summer, we get to see it firsthand.

And it's really a blessing to get to see God at work in our campers' lives. We've had... We actually, in high school week, we had our biggest week we ever had at Camp Pearl.

And really, in the course of the summer, we've seen just a lot of campers come, but we've had 42 of them trust Jesus to be their Savior. And we praise God for that. And then on top of that, I don't have an exact number, but there have probably been...

[2 : 13] probably even close to double that, that have not only trusted Jesus, but have gained assurance of their salvation. A lot of these campers, they come to Camp Pearl, and they trust Christ in July of 2016.

And that's the only time they get fed God's Word in the course of an entire year. And a lot of these kids are church kids, but a lot of them just really aren't. And so they come to camp, and for a year straight, they're wondering, hey, if I did X amount of bad things, maybe God doesn't love me anymore.

Maybe I don't have salvation. And they get to come to camp, and they get to be reiterated the truth of God's Word. And they're able to understand that, you know what, I'm a child of God, and He's never going to leave me.

And we tell people all the time at camp that it's really hard to grow as a Christian if you don't know you're a Christian. So we praise God when we see people gaining assurance of salvation. And then we also have had a whole bunch of campers.

The last two weeks, really, the speaker hit on believers in Jesus dedicating their lives to following God, whether it be in vocational ministry, whether it be in missions or something like that, or even just being more faithful in reading their Bibles, or confessing some sins, or fill in the blank.

[3 : 25] And in the last, I know at least two weeks, we've probably had 45 campers or so who have dedicated their lives to serving God. And we praise God for that. So it's been really a wonderful, wonderful summer so far.

But we're only about halfway through. I told a few of you that we're at the point in the summer where every single time I sit down, I doze off. And so I'm glad that I'm standing here preaching.

I'm glad I'm not having to sit down at the moment. In fact, last night, every night I tell my kids a few stories. And my kids kept having to wake me up as I was telling them their nighttime stories.

So we're just at that point where we're all tired, but we're really, really glad to be spent for the Lord. This week, we've got our Pathfinders camp. That's our fifth and sixth grade week of camp. And then the next week, we'll have our Senior High Deeper Impact week.

We have one high school week, and it's just for any high schooler that wants to come. And then our Deeper Impact week, this is specifically for Christian kids. And the reason we say it's for Christian kids is it's a week full of growth.

[4 : 26] We throw out all the games. We don't plan a single game. We don't plan a single event at the ropes course. We don't plan any pool time. They may have a little bit of free time in the evenings. But other than that, we purposely throw out all the activity schedules so that the campers can get that they're there to grow.

And what we do is we crack open our Bibles for literally about eight hours a day. It's almost like taking a college course. And in fact, it's extremely similar to seminary courses I've taken.

But this year, the theme is going to be spiritual gifts. And this is probably the high schooler's favorite one because they kind of form a sense of identity in their local churches.

And they realize, hey, you know what? I'm not just the future of the church. I'm a current member of the church and I can get to work right now. And we've seen over our Deeper Impact years, after the spiritual gift rotation, that's really the one in particular that we've seen this.

But we've seen campers that have come to this who have started youth groups in their churches.

We've seen different campers who have decided with their parents' permission that they were going to go on mission trips. We've seen other ones that have started like shoebox ministries and different things like that.

[5 : 39] So really be praying for our Senior High Deeper Impact week. We're really, really excited about what God does through that. And then the following week, which is the last week of July, we have our Kids Week.

That's the third and fourth grade week. Now, a lot of campers that come in third and fourth grade, what we see is a lot of them continue to come throughout high school. So a lot of them have heard the gospel. If nothing else at Camp Pearl, they've heard it most of their lives.

And a lot of these guys, again, are church kids. Not all of them, but a lot of them are. But fifth and sixth grade week, which is this coming week, and then two weeks from now, third and fourth grade week, we see just a ton of campers who have never heard the gospel in their lives or have never heard it clearly explained in their lives.

And we just want to ask you, would you please be praying for us in the next two weeks? There are some weeks, sometimes in fifth and sixth grade week, where we have in a chapel service, oftentimes just so the counselors in the cabins, we call them summer service, just so that those guys can know who trusted Christ or who to follow up with.

Oftentimes the speaker will just get campers to close their eyes, hold their hands if they want to trust Christ, just so that we can have an idea of who to follow up with. And there are weeks in fifth and sixth grade week and third and fourth grade week where we'll have 50 kids raise their hands.

[6 : 51] And it's just really difficult to kind of narrow the focus and figure out, okay, which of these kids just raised their hand because they wanted to raise their hand, which of these campers are trusting Christ, which of these campers thought that they were saying to raise your hand if it's your birthday.

I mean, you never know what these campers thought that they heard. And there's just a lot of explaining in the next few weeks. So just be praying for us in that regard. We're really looking forward to it.

But then also I'll just tell you a couple other things that are going on at the ministry at Camp Pearl.

This is something that we're really excited about. I know that in the last couple of years, we've been trying to offer a Bible certificate through Southeastern Bible College at the camp.

And there was like a little, I think, 30-hour program or something, I don't remember the amount of hours. But basically you could go get accredited classes in college. And at the end of that 30 hours, you could actually transfer those credits and you could go to Bible college.

Or what you could do is just be happy that you got a Bible certificate from a university. But as you may know, Southeastern Bible College, it is no longer in existence.

[7 : 58] So with that being said, there's a university, a really strong Christian university called Piedmont International University. And Piedmont has approached us and they said that they would like to offer seminary classes through Camp Pearl where people would actually get an accredited master's degree at Camp Pearl.

They would get a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. And this would be a 30-hour program. And they're offering the entire thing from start to finish. And this would all be money that would go to Piedmont.

If anything, we would be losing money on this. We just want to offer it to believers. But the entire thing, start to finish, for 30 hours of a seminary degree would be a \$3,000 program.

And I did some seminary. I have not finished seminary. And I can tell you, I won't tell you the school that I went to because I don't want to make them look bad and how much they cost. But I went to school for a year.

And I think I only took 12 or maybe 15 hours. I don't remember exactly what it was. But in that 12 or 15 hours, I think I paid \$10,000 plus. So this is unreal right here.

[9 : 10] The cheapness of this degree program. If you have anybody that you know of that's interested in getting a seminary degree, I really strongly encourage you to send them our way. In fact, they can email Don.

His email address is don at camppearl.com. And the classes start September 11th of this year. So we're really excited about that. Also, if you wanted to audit a class, if you just wanted to take the class, we have, I think, this class right here is going to be Genesis in September 11th.

And Ken Ham's actually teaching the class. So that's pretty cool. And we have an apologetics class that's being taught by Lee Strobel. We have an evangelism class that's being taught by Larry Moyer.

So, I mean, just really, really, it's not just me, not that I'm not trying to bash myself, but it's not me teaching it. It's really, really well-known people teaching it.

So we're really excited about it. But if you just want to audit a class, if you don't want the credit, you just want to get the information, you can audit the class. I think the exact price is \$39 to audit an entire course.

[10 : 12] So it's unbelievably cheap. So if you're interested in it, email don at camppearl.com. The classes start September 11th. It's going to be wonderful. Spread the word around about it. It's going to be, I could not tell you how excited I am about it.

A few other things that are going on in the ministry at Camp Pearl. You can be praying for this. If you have girls that have come to camp, if you know of girls that have come to camp, the girls' dorms are finally remodeled.

We have been, in the last two years, we've been working on remodeling our dorms. Camp Pearl was found in 1947. And although the dorms were put in place after 1947, they looked like they hadn't been touched since 1947.

We weren't really proud of them. But we're really excited when people actually walk in the girls' dorms now. They look really nice. They've been painted. They have, or they've been painted on the inside. The outside still needs to be painted.

They've been painted on the inside. They have new vanity, new showers. They have new toilets. They have, I mean, it's just really a new dorm. It looks really, really nice. But with that being said, we're still working on the boys' dorms.

[11 : 13] And they have a little ways to go. I'll just leave it at that. But they have quite a ways to go. So be praying about that project. And then another project we have, we just found out in the last year, we knew we had a little bit of a leak in the gym.

And we found out it's an enormous leak in the gym. And there are, every time it rains, it's really pathetic. But we have buckets all over the gym in different locations. And these buckets get full pretty much every time it rains.

And they're scattered all throughout the gym. It's not just one or two leaks. There's a lot of them. And we're going to have to do some work on the gym. It's probably going to cost somewhere around \$25,000.

We haven't gotten an exact bid. But I mean, it's going to be a huge, huge project. So if you'd pray about that, if you'd like to give towards that, we would love for you to give towards that. I like to tell people, I don't try to play the role of the Holy Spirit.

I'm not going to get music to play or anything like that as I tell you about it. That's just the need. And we ask you to pray about giving towards that. But that's Camp Pearl. So let's have a word of prayer, and we'll get in God's Word.

[12:16] God, I thank you so much for your great love towards us. Thank you that you're a faithful God. And I thank you that in the highs and the lows and the in-between moments of life, I thank you that we can depend on you and we can consider you even more so than even considering the experiences that are going on right in front of us.

Lord, I pray that you'll do that. Lord, I pray that you'll bless this service. I pray that you continue to bless Faith Bible Church and their ministry. Please continue to bless Camp Pearl and our ministry. It's not our ministry, it's your ministry, but I pray that you bless that ministry.

And Lord, I pray that you'll be glorified in us today. We love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You know, at camp, I get to meet a ton of different people that are going through different stages of life.

And not only stages of life, I get to meet a lot of people that are going through different seasons of life. And as I meet different people going through different seasons, I just kind of see where they're at.

And I'm sure that you get to meet a lot of people in your career field as well. But one thing that God has really impressed on me in the last year is that we live in a hurting world filled with hurting people.

[13:28] I mean, just in the last year, as I go to Walmart and I greet the person that's supposed to be greeting me, I'll oftentimes see just this look on their eyes that there's hopelessness.

There's devastation. As you listen, you spark up a conversation. You'll even hear it in people's voices at times. In fact, last year, we had a camper that came high school week and I'll never forget her.

I've known her since she was really little. I knew her parents before they even had her. She was just a sweet, sweet girl that I've known for years and years. Never knew her extremely well, but I knew her pretty well.

And she came to camp, seemed pretty excited, seemed glad to be there, but I could tell something was a little bit off and didn't know exactly what it was. And Thursday night, we have a bonfire service and this girl got up.

She wanted to share a few things that she had learned at camp that week. So she gets up and she shocks us all. None of us were expecting what she was about to say. And this girl tells us that in the last year, she had been completely, utterly depressed.

[14:33] And in fact, Camp Pearl was always her favorite place. She didn't even want to go to Camp Pearl because she just really didn't want to do anything at all in life. She was hopeless. She was depressed. She didn't think that she could continue to live her life.

In fact, she wanted to end her life. And we were shocked by this. And on top of that, she told us that for years, she'd just been telling her parents that she was a believer in Jesus. And the only reason she told them that was because she knew that they would be on her back if she didn't tell them that. So she'd been living a lie. She knew she was living a lie. She was under conviction and she was also greatly, greatly depressed. And she said that, long story short, she said after, there was probably an hour of testimonies where campers said, this week at Camp Pearl, God taught me this. And this week at Camp Pearl, God revealed this to me. And just over and over and over again, she said after sitting under testimony after testimony after testimony of God's faithfulness in our campers' lives, she said something clicked.

And she said, I can't any longer deny the existence of God. And in fact, I'm not only going to believe that there's a God out there, I've placed my faith in Jesus to forgive me of my sins. And we were just blown away.

[15:39] We were just so excited to hear that. But then after that was done with, a couple months later, she said she wanted to join our SWAT team. And that's a service ministry at Camp Pearl.

Well, high schoolers come.

They want to serve. They want to be involved in the ministry. And we were really apprehensive about it because this is really a ministry for growing mature Christians. And so I called their pastor about it and I asked him what he thought about her.

I called their parents and asked them what they thought about this. And they said, look, she really has been growing in the last year, but you make the call. And as we prayed about it, we said, you know what, we're going to just see what happens.

And she came in January to join our SWAT team. And this girl, if I could just paint a picture, I wish I could, of how different she was from summer camp to January.

I wish I could paint that picture. She was so joyful and so excited about the things of the Lord. And she was getting in God's Word daily. And she was not just getting in it because she was supposed to get in it.

[16:42] She was excited to spend time with God daily. And she was a servant. Usually it takes the SWAT members about a year to really figure out what they're there for. She was there ministry-wise from the very get-go.

And every one of our retreats, we just saw God working in her life. And in March, we took them to Oklahoma. We go to this camp called Bertram Bob Bible Camp. And as we were over at Bertram Bob, this girl, she said, we always tell the SWAT members, they have a responsibility to share the gospel with at least one camper.

And she came to me. She said, hey, would it be okay if I shared with two? And I said, yeah, go ahead. That's fine. Go ahead and do that. And she was so excited to share the gospel. She just started sharing with as many campers as she could.

And this girl was used by God to lead two campers to faith in Christ. And as we look at this girl's life, we saw that this girl found the hope that this world has been missing for years and years.

But as I think about just many people that I've met in life, I realize not every Christian is filled with joy.

[17:47] There are some Christians that are really, really struggling. There are some, and obviously, there are many unbelievers who are also struggling greatly with this thing called joy. And what I want to ask today is where do we go when we're the ones who are hurting?

Where do we go when we're struggling? What do we do about it when we're going through rough seasons of life? And what comfort do we have to offer afflicted people all around us?

I heard in a sermon once, I remember sitting, and I've always enjoyed getting in God's Word. I've always enjoyed preaching. I look forward to hearing sermons. In fact, I used to have an iPod.

I don't think anybody has those anymore, but they have the iPhones. But in my iPod, I often got rid of all the music and I would just listen to sermons on it. They took up too much space and I didn't want that. I love that.

But I remember in a sermon once, I was real excited to hear what he had to say. And the guy starts off the sermon and he says, hey, I've been told before that if you're not going through a trial right now, that either means that you just got out of one or God's preparing you for your next one.

[18:51] And I remember thinking, well, thanks, man. I'm glad to be here. And I'm sure we've heard that before. But the question is, what do we do if we are going through something?

If you would turn your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 40. And as you're turning to Isaiah chapter 40, I just want to let you, or I want to paint a picture as to what's going on in this section of the book of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is a book of prophecy. In it, you'll see a couple continuous themes. One, you'll see God's holiness. Two, you'll see man's sinfulness. Three, you'll see God's justice in punishing His people.

But four, you'll also see God's mercy in not punishing them forever. Remember, the book of Isaiah is broken into three sections. We're not going to talk about section one. We're not going to talk about section two because Isaiah chapter 40 really starts the third section of the book of Isaiah. And what was happening right here is that God's people had sinned and they'd sinned greatly against the God of the universe. And they'd sinned so greatly that God was about to punish them in allowing them to be defeated and taken captive by the Babylonian empire.

[19:56] Seventy years, the people of Israel were going to be forced into another land. Seventy years, they would no longer be their own. Many of these people would actually die in captivity. Some would live but would return to Jerusalem having spent their best years away from home.

But even in that, Isaiah is saying, God's still merciful. He committed that His people would one day return home. He committed that one day He would allow them to rebuild His temple.

That was a big deal to them. And one day, He was going to restore their nation. And in this section, His call, His plea to the people of Israel is as you sit back in captivity and you realize that life is tough, the one thing that I want you to do or the one thing that God wanted the people of Israel to do is He wanted them to wait.

That doesn't mean just sit and twiddle your thumbs. Nobody likes to do that when hardship comes. But the idea of waiting had this idea of confidently expecting something. Trusting that God was going to do exactly what He said He was going to do and learning from their experience and learning from their sin.

He was telling the people of Israel that even if they didn't reap the rewards of God's promises, their kids would, their grandkids would, so learn from the mistakes that you made. Now as we're about to get into Isaiah, I want you to know that this book was written to a very specific people in a very specific time in human history.

[21 : 16] It wasn't written to you. It wasn't written about you. But God's Word makes very clear that there's application in all of God's Word for each of us to enjoy. So with that being said, Isaiah 40 verse 1 will start off right here.

It says this, Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. As Isaiah starts this section encouraging the people of God that life as you know it's about to be rough but you can wait on God.

Isaiah asked the question, What is the source of your comfort when hardships come? Well it's not in Isaiah's words. It's not in anything that he had to say. He didn't say, Hey look, I know you're going into captivity but toughen up buttercup.

It's going to be alright. He didn't say anything like that. He didn't say that, You know what? Just rely on me. I'm a prophet of God and my words have some value to you. He said, No, no, no. Comfort says you're God.

I want to comfort you. I care about you. What Isaiah is saying right here is that the next time that you're experiencing this thing called pain, the next time you feel the whips along your back as you realize that life is really tough.

[22 : 20] He says, Take a moment to consider your God. Consider who He is and consider what He's about. Now with that being said, we can't read the whole chapter so I'm going to just pick a few sections of Isaiah 40.

You can read it on your own. But right now, we're going to pick a few sections and we'll go through it. If you would skip down to verse 12, it says this. Verse 12 says, As I'm going through hardship in life, what should I consider about my great God?

It says, Who has measured the waters by the hollow of His hand and marked off the heavens by the span and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure and weighed the mountains in a bounce and the hills in a pair of scales.

Skip down to verse 26 with me. It says, Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created the stars, the one who leads forth their host by number. He calls them all by name because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power.

Not one of them is missing. Now, what was that that Isaiah is saying here? He says, Are you having a rough day? Consider for a moment the vastness of your Creator God. Consider for a moment that you serve a really, really big God.

[23 : 30] Hear this again. Verse 12. Who has measured the waters by the hollow of His hand. Now, I've taught through this passage of Scripture before and before I've had a bottle of water in my hand and as I hold a bottle of water in my hand I ask people, How many ounces of water do you think that I could fit into my hand?

And I asked our SWAT team members that once and we're close with each other and they humbled me because they said you could probably fit maybe an ounce. I think I could probably fit two. That's what I'm going to say.

Alright, so maybe one of us could fit two ounces of water into our hands. That's me. On planet Earth scientists estimate that there are roughly 326 million trillion gallons of water.

And Isaiah says, Hey look, we know our God's big but let me just give you a picture. Every one of those millions of ounces of water, a trillion, billion ounces of water, they fit right here in our big, big God's hands.

But he doesn't stop there. He says, Who is marked off the heavens by the span? Do you know what the span is? That's the distance between your thumb and your pinky finger. He says, just, and I'll encourage you to do this, as you walk out of this service, I want you to look into the air and I want you to just kind of try to get an idea of how big this universe is.

[24 : 49] Obviously we know it's not happening. Obviously we recognize there is no way we could understand how enormous our universe is that we're living in. But God's word says, Hey look, as God measures the universe, He measures it like this.

Okay. Yeah, I got it. I got it under control. This universe is, or we're nothing size-wise compared to this universe, but Isaiah says, this universe is nothing size-wise compared to our God. But there's more. Verse 26 says, Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created the stars. He later says that He calls them by name because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power.

Not one of them is missing. Now we have no idea how vast this universe is, but many scientists believe that the Milky Way galaxy is one out of ten trillion galaxies in the universe.

So think about that. One out of ten trillion galaxies, we live in the Milky Way, that's our neighborhood. There's a whole bunch of these neighborhoods all in the universe. And they figure that there are about a hundred billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone.

[25 : 54] So let's just say that there's a hundred billion stars in every one of those ten trillion galaxies in the universe. If that's even close to being true, that means that I tried to find a name for this number, I couldn't find a name for it, but there are one with twenty-four zeros behind it, that many stars in this universe.

Every three seconds or so, one of those burns out, right? And God's Word says that God created every one of those stars. He named every one of those stars. And I'm sure He has pretty cool names for them.

It's not just like one, two, three, four. He named every one of them. And on top of that, He remembers every single one of them. Now I'll tell you this. This is where I'm going to be completely honest. I have three kids that I love.

And I love deeply. I named every one of my kids. I care about every one of those kids. But I'll tell you, most of the time, I have no idea what their names are as I'm talking to them.

I'll just say, it's not even that, a lot of parents will say the wrong kids' names. So I have Addie, Amelia, and Titus. And a lot of people would call Amelia, Addie, and Addie, Amelia. I just make up names sometimes because I can't remember it as I'm calling them out.

[27 : 02] It's just like, I just threw out a name and I'm saying, I don't even have a relative with that name. What happened there? Right? No, but God, in His infinite wisdom, in His infinite might, in His infinite understanding of this universe, He not only made every one of these stars that makes Him really, really big, but He also remembers every single detail in this complex universe.

There's not once been a moment where a star burned out and He said, wait, where did that one go? He knew it was going to happen before it happened and He remembered that it did happen after it happened. It means that not only is our God enormous, but His mental capacity is unfathomable. But the question is, as we're going through heartache, this is the question I have people ask me all the time. This is the hard question that I think a lot of people ask and I don't want you to think I'm a heretic because I think we'll answer this in a moment.

But the question people ask as they're going through hardship is they say, you know what, I know that God is big, but the question for me is who cares? Who cares if our God is big when my trouble seems like it's way too small for a big God to handle?

I mean, we know that God's big enough to handle our problems, but He's trying to hold the universe together. Does He really have time for little old me? That's the question a lot of people ask. In fact, a lot of people have said before that if our God is so big and that's the only thing that we know about our God, that statement stood alone in Scripture and that was the only character trait we knew about God, it really wouldn't do a whole lot for us when we're in the midst of trials.

[28 : 41] But the question we have to ask is not only is our God big when I'm going through heartache, the question we also have to ask is does God care when we're going through heartache? If He's a big God and He also cares about us, well, that gives us hope.

Well, what does God's Word tell us? Does God care about us when we're going through heartache? I mean, even little things like a high school girl or a high school boy that went through a breakup,

does God care that these people are hurting?

When we see that people scrape their knee, my kids do it all the time, does He care when they're crying? I think so. God's Word would make pretty clear. But I don't want you to take my word for it. I want you to take God's Word for it. If you would, flip your Bibles to Psalm 46. You can keep one finger in Isaiah 40. Psalm 46. This is the sons of Korah.

They're singing praises to God. The question is, surely our God is too big to care about little old me, right? Well, in Psalm 46, verse 2, this is what they say. We'll read verse 1 in a moment.

[29 : 41] They're singing from the depths of their heart. They say, Therefore, we will not fear.

Though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

So what they're saying is, oh, no matter how incredibly tragic my life becomes, I will not fear.

Though there's an earthquake happening and I see the ground beneath my feet begin to shake.

I don't have anything to be concerned about. Though a mountain literally shakes and crumbles right in front of me and falls into the ocean, I won't be afraid. Now, how in the world could somebody sing that song and mean it?

I don't like to sing worship songs that I don't mean. I feel wrong about that. The Holy Spirit of God, as He's inspiring these men to write, I don't think that He's going to inspire them to write a lie.

They genuinely mean what they have to say as they're saying, we won't fear no matter what life throws at us. How could they say that? Because they knew, and I believe Isaiah probably knew the same truth, what's found in Psalm 46 verse 1.

[30 : 47] And that is this. God is our refuge. That means I can hide under Him. God is our refuge and God is our strength. He's really, really big. But He's also a very present help in trouble.

That word present means to come forth, to be found, to appear. That means that the enormous God that created every star, that created every planet, that sustains the universe every single second, and if He wasn't doing His work, that the universe would combust in a moment.

This God that's holding all of this together, there's not a single moment where He's not right there with you in the midst of your pain. No, we're not a number to God.

You're not one out of eight million issues that He has to deal with in the next two seconds so the world doesn't fall apart. God's Word makes extremely clear that you were created in the image and likeness of your Creator God.

He cares about little people such as you and me. So don't for a moment, the next time that you're going through something, this is what Isaiah is telling the people of God, don't for a moment, the next time that you're going through something, think that God is incapable of handling it.

[31 : 56] He's big, He's really big, and He's prepared for what's next. But on top of that, He's always available to hear you out because He cares about little old you and little old me and what we're going through.

Are you going through something for this moment? Are you going through something today? What Isaiah says right here is take a moment to consider our God. Yes, He's big. He put the world together.

He knows everything about it. But He also knows your problems. He knows what you're dealing with. And He cares. He's present with you in the midst of your pain. Rest in that truth.

But are you going through something today? Isaiah doesn't stop right there. He says also, take a moment to consider or to contemplate His divine character traits. Look at verse 13 with me of Isaiah 40.

Isaiah asks this question. He says, Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord or as His counselor informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?

[32 : 57] Now, I don't think that most of us, I don't think any of us really think that we could do a better job of being God than God is doing. I don't think anybody actually thinks that. Even when we're going through heartache, I don't ever think that anybody shakes their fist at God and says, I could do better, God.

But I think sometimes our attitude tells us otherwise or it tells Him otherwise. And you can almost hear it from the Jews as they realize we're about to be 70 years prisoners.

They're saying, Wait, captive? Me? Moving to a foreign land? God, you don't understand. I have kids. I could never do that. God, I was just starting to make friends here. Do you know how lonely

it's going to be over there?

God, your fancy promises sound really nice to the young people in this generation, but I'm 80 years old. In 70 years, I'm going to be gone. What do you have to say about me? Do you care about me? And what's Isaiah's response to this?

He says, Consider our God. Who's His counselor? Who's God's confidant? That friend that God bounces ideas off of just to make sure He doesn't make a really, really big mistake.

[34 : 00] Isaiah's saying, That's right. It's no one, right? Because our God doesn't need a confidant. He knows exactly what He's doing. And Isaiah says, Just trust Him. Just trust Him. He says, Who's His teacher?

Who gave Him all of His infinite knowledge and understanding? I don't know if any of you like college football. I love college football. And really, I love sports. And every single church that I go to, I have a sports illustration.

And most people are saying, All right, enough with that. But I have to use them because that's my life a little bit. But I love college football. And I remember watching the national championship this year.

I'm not an Alabama fan. I don't know if any of you are. I'm not a Georgia fan at all. I see we have one fan of one of these teams. But I'm not at all a Nick Saban fan.

I'll just admit that to you all right now. Some of you may say, Get out of here now. But that's where I'm at in life. I'm not a Nick Saban guy. But leading up to the national championship, I was extremely impressed with him in one interview.

[34 : 57] The interviewer asked, How in the world have you been doing this as long as you've been doing it and not only continue to stay afloat in college football, how do you dominate year after year after year and stay fresh and stay innovative and have new ideas?

How do you do it? And his answer just really, really impressed me. He said, You know what? Every single day of my life, I meet tons and tons of people. I meet recruits. I meet their parents. I meet assistant coaches.

I meet people I consider hiring. I meet people that I'm going to soon fire. I meet athletes. I meet students. I meet tons and tons of people in my line of work. And over the last few years, I've come to realize that in every interaction I have with another person, I'm meeting someone who has some knowledge that I don't have.

So my goal every time I meet somebody is to learn one thing from each person I interact with. And I think, Man, that's impressive. Probably the greatest college football coach that will ever live or that has ever lived to say that he still has more to learn.

That's humbling for us as human beings to recognize. And that's impressive to know that a human being that's that successful is willing to admit that he doesn't have it all together. But you know what's even cooler to me?

[36 : 12] The fact that God doesn't. God doesn't have anything at all he could learn from us. He could try to learn something from us and it would be impossible because he always has known what's going to happen next.

There's not a single moment in human history where God was surprised. If we wanted to on Christmas, I know that that's not the day that Jesus was actually born, if we wanted to throw him a surprise party, it would be pointless because he knew we were going to do it before we even knew we were going to exist, right?

Our God knows every single detail of this universe. And what Isaiah is saying right here is he doesn't need for us to question him.

Say, hey, could you have maybe you thought of maybe if you thought it through a little bit more clearly, you could have done it this way. Hey, you know what? I would have done it this way. This is what I think you probably should have done. Hey, you should have asked me because I had an idea in this matter.

Oh God, Isaiah is saying no, he doesn't need that. But what Isaiah is saying is that we, as believers, we need to trust him. We need to be confident that he's got this thing called running the universe under control.

[37 : 19] We don't only do it for his good and for his glory. Yes, we do that. We trust God for his glory first and foremost for that reason. But second, we trust him for our own good. That's just the best way you can live your life is to live with complete dependence and trust on God.

So for your own sake and for God's sake, just trust him. And consider him when you're going through heartache that he's big, he's really big, that he knows you, that he cares about you and that he's got this universe under control.

All right, we've got one more point. We'll read this real quickly. Isaiah says this. In Isaiah 40, verse 27, he starts to say, Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord, and the justice do me escapes the notice of my God?

These were my mom's favorite verses right here growing up. She would read them to us over and over again. She would say, Do you not know, have you not heard, the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow weary or tired.

His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might, he increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength.

[38 : 29] They will mount up in wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary. Remember the encouragement that I shared at the beginning of the sermon that if you're not currently going through a trial, you probably just got out of one or you're probably headed towards one?

As I've thought about it more and more throughout life, I hate to admit it, but it's probably true. As we look at God's word, we see that we live in a fallen and a broken world. And although each of us, believers and unbelievers alike, we daily get to experience the fact that God made this universe. And because God made this universe, we're living in the presence of God. God is here on this planet today. So we get to see this thing called common grace daily.

Common grace is God's general grace given out to all of mankind, whether you're a Christian or whether you're not. That comes in the form of that last breath you just breathed. That comes in the fact that you were given taste buds or relationships and seeing people smile, hearing people laugh. These are forms of God's common grace on this universe. So we see God's common grace on a daily basis as people who live on this world or in this world, but we also will all experience what's called the curse if we live on this earth.

[39 : 41] And not even if we live on this earth long enough, we're all going to experience it on this earth. That was been passed down to us by Adam and his wife Eve. See, bad things happen to each and every one of us and there's no denying it.

Sometimes bad things happen to us because we're living in sin and that's a form of punishment from God. But there are other times where we deal with heartache because we're just simply not home yet.

Because we're not in heaven yet. The reality is that I think a lot of times people allow the way that their heart feels to affect the way that their head thinks. And if we're not careful, what happens is we allow the way that our heart feels to affect the way that our head thinks about God Himself.

And Isaiah says to his countrymen who are about to endure 70 years of conflict, he said, don't think that God forgot about you. Don't let it even cross your mind that He can't hear you cry out, that He doesn't see your tears.

Yeah, He knows some of you are going to die in this prison. He knows that some of you may think that His promises are no longer true, but they're true. He hasn't forgotten you. He hasn't left you.

[40 : 45] He's listening. He's not sleeping on the job. And Isaiah says, as you consider your heartache and all you're dealing with, also consider who He is and consider what He's about.

And while you're considering Him, would you wait on Him? Wait again doesn't mean to sit back and do nothing. It means to hope and to rely on God to keep His promises. And if they did just that, Isaiah had to promise for the people of God.

He said, if you just wait on our great God, this is what He'll do for you. He'll give you strength. He didn't say that He's going to set you free from that 70 years of captivity. He didn't tell them that they would all make it out of Babylon.

He said, I'll give you endurance endurance for the next day and the next, and the next trial, and that next moment where you're about to explode. If you wait on God, He'll give you strength for the next day ahead.

Now catch this. Isaiah wasn't written to you. It wasn't written about you. You're not about to go into 70 years of captivity, or I sure hope you're not because then I'll be there with you. You're not Israel.

[41 : 47] This wasn't written about you again, but I do believe that we can still find hope in this passage, and that hope that we find in this passage is that our God hasn't changed. So the next

time that you're going through something, I want you to just think.

Just take a moment. I think sometimes we just need to stop what we're doing and gain perspective and think, oh yeah, my God's still big. Oh yeah, my God still cares. Oh yeah, my God's not going anywhere.

Oh yeah, yeah, He's going to keep His promises. He's going to do exactly what He says He's going to do. One thing that He's promised to all of us as believers in Jesus Christ is that whatever you go through on this earth, whatever you're dealing with right here and right now, it's not the end.

In fact, God's Word tells us that for all who have placed their faith exclusively in Jesus to forgive them of their sins, not trusting their works, not trusting their religiousness, not trusting their fill-in-the-blank, but all who have exclusively trusted Jesus alone to be their Savior, one day, we're going to be in a place called heaven where all these heartaches and all these moments of pain that we deal with, they're all going to be but a distant, distant memory.

They're going to make heaven look that much better. So would you trust Him? Would you wait on Him? Yeah, if you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, I ask you, would you trust Him for eternal life? But as a believer in Jesus Christ, really the plea is the same.

[43 : 09] Would you trust Him that He's going to keep His promise? And would you wait on Him? Don't give up on this thing called life. Don't even live your life as though you've been defeated, as though you've been giving up, and as though you're just going to mentally check out the rest of your life.

No, if God's given you life, live it to the fullest, not for yourself. And when people say, live it to the fullest in churches, you oftentimes get this idea that people are going to just live as free spirits and excited about nothing.

No, live it to the fullest for Jesus Christ and trust Him on a daily basis. There's no better life than a life lived for the Lord. So wait on Him, consider Him, trust Him, live for Him.

Let's pray. God, I thank You that our heartache, thank You that our pain is not everything. Lord, I thank You that Your Word makes very clear that even when we're in the midst of heartache and in the midst of pain, Lord, I thank You that Your Word makes abundantly clear You're right here with us.

Lord, we sure love You for that. We're so thankful for You. Thank You for the many people that I've interacted with that, yeah, have went through heartache, but I thank You for the many people that I've even seen who have been affected and changed and given a new hope and a new attitude because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[44 : 28] Lord, I pray that every time that we go through moments of struggle in life that we'll just remember how greatly You loved us, that You sent Your Son to die for our sins, to rise again, so that this world is not the end of our life, but it's only the beginning.

We love You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.