

# Isaiah 49:14-50:11

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 December 2024

Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0:00] The sermon text for today is Isaiah chapter 49 verse 14 through chapter 50 verse 11.

! At the conclusion of the reading I will declare, this is the word of the Lord. And the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will respond together, thanks be to God.

But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me. Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?

Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are continually before me.

Your builders make haste. Your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you. Lift up your eyes around and see. They all gather. They come to you.

[1:20] As I live, declares the Lord, you shall put them on as an ornament. You shall bind them on as a bride does. Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land.

Surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants. And those who swallowed you up will be far away. The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears, the place is too narrow for me.

Make room for me to dwell in. Then you will say in your heart, who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away.

But who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone. From where have these come? Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hands to the nations and raise my signals to the peoples.

They shall bring your sons in their arms and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

Kings shall be your foster fathers and their queens your nursing mothers.

[2:25] With their faces to the ground, they shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord. Those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.

Can the prey be taken from the mighty or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? For thus says the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken and the prey of the tyrant be rescued.

For I will contend with those who contend with you. I will save your children. I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine.

Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior and your Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. Thus says the Lord, Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away?

Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. Why, when I came, was there no man?

[3:30] Why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea.

I make the rivers a desert. Their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens.

He awakens my ear to hear those as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious. I turned not backward. I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard.

I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord God helps me. Therefore I have not been disgraced. Therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

[4:36] He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God helps me.

Who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment. The moth will eat them up. Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant?

Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.

Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches.

Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled. This you have from my hand. You shall lie down in torment. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, as we do every week, we come before you right now in dependence upon you and your spirit to understand this word, which is the breathed out, perfect, sufficient word of God for us today.

[5:46] So Father, would you speak? Would you speak through me, Lord, today to your people and transform us into your likeness, Lord, from one degree of glory to the next, we pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Oh, good morning, church. My name is Mike. I'm one of the pastors here at Shoreline, and I also want to say happy Thanksgiving. Hope that you've been able to enjoy time with friends and family this weekend and give thanks to the Lord for so many reasons.

Well, back in 2011 now, I went on an overnight backpacking trip to Zion National Park in Utah.

Amazing place, if you've never been. It's this otherworldly place, just stunning.

I went there with a few friends, and we decided after the sun went down to keep hiking for a little bit in the dark, you know, with the light of our headlamps. And it was really cool and exhilarating for a while.

But we began to feel after a bit like we were seriously missing out. Like we would pass by what seemed to be this giant canyon, but we couldn't really make it out. And we would turn a corner, and it seemed like there was this awesome, spectacular view of sandstone cliffs in the background, but we couldn't really see it because all we had were our little headlamps.

[7:00] We finally chose a spot to sleep, and when we woke up in the full light of the sun, we were awestruck by the beauty and the majesty all around us, which we had completely missed with our little headlamps.

And you know, in the same way, God offers to us spiritual light and spiritual life through trust in Christ, opening us up to the beautiful and majestic realities of heaven.

But we first have to surrender our man-made earthly means of light. And this is the offer, this is the call that today's passage holds out to us today.

So if you haven't already, please turn to Isaiah chapter 49, verse 14. We're going to go through 5011 as Ethan read for us. And if you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles on the back table, already bookmarked the passage for today.

Feel free to grab one of those and keep it. We are in today the 10th sermon in the sermon series in Isaiah chapters 40 to 55, entitled From Sighing to Singing.

[8:04] And the title of today's sermon is Responsive Trust, The Path of Life. And here's the main point that we're driving at today. Get it right up front.

The path of light and life is humbly responding in trust to the never forsaking, never forgetting God and his humbly responsive servant, Jesus Christ.

Now that's a bit of a mouthful. What you need to remember is responsive trust is the path of life.

Responsive trust is the path of life. And it's specifically in the never forsaking, never forgetting God and his servant, Jesus Christ.

Well, through his prophet Isaiah, God has been speaking, as we've seen, a message of comfort, a message of hope to his weary and wayward exiles. For four chapters, we saw God was describing how Israel's deliverance from bondage in Babylon would come about.

But then chapter 48 gave rise to a greater problem, needing a greater deliverance. And that was Israel's own sin. That was the deeper problem, right?

[9:07] And the greater deliverer, as we saw last week, would be God's righteous servant, who would become the savior and the shepherd of Israel, and not only Israel, but the nations.

Now last week's passage concluded with that joy-filled eruption of worship and praise from all of creation because of who God is and what he has done in and through his servant to come. And the contrast between that, that response of worship, and what Israel says next could hardly be greater. But Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me.

My Lord has forgotten me. And this is the lie that Israel believed. That's the first point. This is the lie that Israel believed. My God has forsaken and forgotten us.

Now you might recall, if you've been here in this series, a similar wildly unfitting complaint from Israel back in chapter 40, verse 27. After God had declared his love and his power and the glory to come, Israel claimed, my way is hidden from the Lord.

[10:13] God doesn't see, right? And my right is disregarded by my God. God doesn't care. And now we have this very similar complaint. God has forsaken us.

God has forgotten us. He doesn't care about us. He doesn't care about our plight. He's not going to do anything about it. He's abandoned us to the enemy. We're doomed, right? That's what Israel is saying.

We're doomed forever. Apparently, all of the glorious revelation between 40, verse 27, and 49, 14 had not yet altered Israel's perspective.

Apparently, God's numerous assurances of his steadfast love and his faithfulness towards his people, his numerous promises of redemption to come and how that redemption would come about, apparently this had not affected change in the minds and hearts of the people.

And we've got to stop and ask, why not? Right? Like, why does Israel remain in the same doubting, despairing state as she was nine chapters ago?

[11:17] I think because sin is blinding and it leads us to believe the lies of the enemy. Sin is blinding and it leads us to believe the lies of the enemy.

Now, Mike, why did you say us? I thought we were talking about Israel here. Oh, right. Israel. The hearts of the people of Israel had grown hardened to the Lord. And that was through their persistent, willful rejection of him and his ways.

She had stiff-armed God, right? She had turned to her man-made idols and sunk deeper and deeper into the mire of sin. And, you know, the deeper and deeper Israel sank into her sin, the more and more distorted her perspective became about the Lord.

And so she developed a false narrative, right, about God and about herself. And then she interpreted her circumstances in the light of that false narrative.

Now, friends, we're not just talking about Israel here. Our sin, our sin, your sin, my sin, it blinds us to true realities about God and about ourselves, and it leads us to believe in lies.

[12:26] We believe in lies, and then we develop false narratives in our minds, and then we interpret our circumstances in the light of those false narratives, and it all becomes a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

You know, let's say something bad happens in our lives, like maybe we're offended or embarrassed at work. Or maybe we realize halfway through making dinner that we left the key ingredient on the counter at Aldi, and we begin to think, you know, God must really just not care about me today, right?

And as that self-pity party continues, we then get cut off on the drive home from work. Or then we burn the dish in the oven, and we throw up our hands and say, see, I knew God stopped caring about me today.

Right? God, if you cared about me, you wouldn't have let that happen. Now, those are two pretty silly, but maybe not so far-fetched examples of how we do exactly the same thing that Israel does, allowing nine chapters of majestic revelation from God to pass us by and affect no change in our hearts.

So what does God do? He lovingly, patiently, reveals even more truth to give to Israel.

[13:45] He's giving Israel yet another chance to combat her lies and correct her false narratives. And so we move on to the truth that Israel needed. And the first is about God.

And God says to Israel, I will never forsake or forget you. See, and look in verse 15 how God responds. He says, Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on

the son of her womb?

Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. God compares himself to a nursing mother.

Can a nursing mother forget her baby? Unlikely. Unlikely. Though there is, because of sin, there is a remote possibility. But with God, there is a 0% possibility.

0%, right? His people are graven on the palms of his hands. He's made them a part of himself. Now you might remember in John 20 when Thomas doubts that Jesus has really risen from the dead.

[14:56] And Jesus, what does he do? In patient pursuing love, he appears to Thomas and says, Put your finger here and see my hands. All right? Thomas, see the evidence not only of my sure resurrection, but of my boundless love for you.

The marks are proof of my love for you. I mean, friends, what earthly love is greater than the love of a mother for her baby? We witness this all the time in this church.

What earthly love is greater? Yet there is a heavenly love that far surpasses. And the nail-scarred hands of Christ are proof that God will never forsake, never forget his children.

Amen? Having expressed his love with this image of the nursing mother, the Lord goes on to show what it will look like tangibly. And it will look like two things.

I will rebuild and repopulate your city, he tells Israel, and I will subject and conquer your captors. So the first thing, I will rebuild and repopulate your city.

[16:01] If you look at verse 16, the Lord's talking about walls. Your walls are continually before me. These are the city walls of Zion, of Jerusalem.

And God is declaring that builders are going to come and rebuild these walls and the city will once again be populated. The restoration of Jerusalem in verse 18, it's described as a mother gathering her children or as a bride adorning herself for the wedding.

Now we see in this text that Jerusalem will be a place of safety. Her destroyers, verse 17, those who swallowed you up, verse 19, will depart, right? They're going to leave the city of Jerusalem in this state of peace and security.

And then in verses 19 through 21, God declares that Jerusalem is going to be filled to overflowing with inhabitants, with his people. The people are going to become so numerous that Zion, that Jerusalem will scarcely be able to even contain them all.

Now notice the amazement, the bewilderment of Israel at the hordes of people that are appearing. Verse 21, who has borne me these? Who has brought up these? From where have these come?

[17:11] Israel asks. And the unstated but obvious answer is the Lord, right? The Lord God, the faithful husband of Israel, the loving father to his people, he is the one who has brought about this exponential population growth of the people.

Now what does all this mean? Will Jerusalem literally be rebuilt and repopulated? Well yes, it did, right?

It was. We can read about this in the Old Testament. The return from exile, the rebuilding of the walls, the repopulating of the city was certainly the initial fulfillment of these words.

But today we know of a far greater fulfillment. These promises are way loftier than what actually happened in physical Israel before the coming of Christ.

We know that in Jesus, right, through the gospel, that right now even the church is being built, that hordes of people, new creations in Christ, are being added to that number.

[18:14] We know also that there is a future fulfillment to these words. When the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descends out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, Revelation 21 verse 2.

And in that day, church, in that day, the dwelling place of God will be with man fully, finally. all the saints from every nation, from every generation, will dwell together with God Almighty and the Lamb in perfect peace and safety forevermore.

Church, this is the glorious destiny of the people of God. This is the destiny of all of those who place their hope and their trust in Jesus.

He will surely never forget or forsake his people. He's leading his home to glory. I will rebuild and repopulate your city, says the Lord.

And secondly, he says, I will subject and conquer your captors. Verse 22, God says, I will lift up my hand to the nations and raise my signal or banner to the people.

[19:24] You see, at God's beck and call, the nations, even kings and queens, will flock to Zion, carrying the sons and daughters of Israel with them.

See, those who previously held the people captive are going to come and subject themselves to the Lord and his saints. And this leads, in verse 23, to this renewed understanding that God is the Lord and that those who wait for him shall not be put to shame.

Now again, partial fulfillment occurred in Israel's return from exile, but a far greater fulfillment is occurring even right now as the gospel goes forth to the nations, right?

To Papua New Guinea where the holes are, to Myanmar where Randy Matthews is going right now. The gospel is going to the nations, bringing people from every tribe and tongue and nation, even those in positions of high authority, under God's rule and blessing.

An interjection then comes in verse 24. Now it might be the voice of Israel, it might be Isaiah playing devil's advocate, it might even be God himself knowing the doubts of his people.

[20:36] And this question is similar to the one posed in verse 15 about the nursing mother. Look at verse 24. Can the prey be taken from the mighty or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?

Can they? Well, yes, they can. It's not very likely. But with God, there is a 100% possibility.

That's the logic here. Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken and the prey of the tyrant be rescued for I will contend with those who contend with you and I will save your children.

Now I want you to notice the binary nature of God's promises. See, people like us are slippery and unreliable, but God works in ones and zeros. Right? In verse 15, there was a 0% chance that I will forget you.

Now in verse 24, there is a 100% chance that I will save you. That is the sureness of God, the certainty of the God that we worship.

[21:40] And see, God, he's not only going to bring into willing subjection and then blessing that the former enemies of his people who submit to him. Now he's saying, I will also bring into forced subjection and destruction the enemies who refuse to submit to me.

That's what the Lord is saying here. See, he and he alone has the power to do so. And this is actually, remember the audience here, it's Israel. The audience is God's people. This is hope for the people of God.

Right? Now for a lengthier exposition of this idea, right, God saving his people and shattering his enemies, go back to the sermon in chapters 46 and 47, but we're not going to expound on that today.

We see though that in the end, verse 26, in the end, all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

This is the great purpose and meaning of mankind. To know God and make him known. That's a little phrase you should memorize. To know God and make him known.

[22:48] That is why we exist. Christ, the whole universe was made to display the beauty and the splendor and the glory of the Almighty God and he is going to ensure that all people come to recognize this in the end.

And what this means for the people of God is that he will never forget and never forsake us. Right? He's committed to displaying his glory, the glory of his love, the glory of his power.

He's committed to displaying that through his people, through the church of Christ. And this is the truth that Israel needed. Right? This is the truth that they needed to combat their lies, to combat the false narratives that they had constructed.

Now maybe this is the truth that you need today. Right? As you battle the lies of the flesh, the lies of the enemy, maybe you've constructed false narratives in your mind about who God is, about what his heart towards you actually is.

Maybe you've been led to interpret your circumstances as evidence that God has a cold or calloused heart towards you. But saints, the reality is, the reality, the beautiful reality is that God's heart towards you is tender and warm and compassionate and loving.

[24:07] and he possesses the power to ensure that that word, that word of love, that word of compassion, that word is the final word that will be spoken over you.

He possesses the power to bring that about. He has the final word. He will not forget you. He will not forsake you no matter what it might seem based on your circumstances.

This is the truth that we need. And this is the truth that Israel needed about God. She also needed the truth about herself. Now this is the next part. The truth about Israel.

The problem, God says, is your lack of responsive trust. Now as we jump into chapter 50. Thus says the Lord, where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?

Israel thought, again, that God had abandoned her. Like a husband, arbitrarily divorcing his wife or like a debtor who's been forced to sell possessions to pay back a debt and God is saying here, look, there's no divorce certificate.

[25:15] Right? There's no creditor that I'm supposed to pay back. He's saying the same message here. I have not forsaken you. I've not forgotten you. My love for you, my power for you, towards you is unaltered.

So what is the problem then? Right? Why has Israel experienced destruction and exile? Well, behold, for your iniquities you were sold and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. See, God's saying, you were sold not because somebody made me pay up. Right? You weren't sold because I divorced you. No, no, no. You were sold and sent away because of your own sin and rebellion.

Like, you broke covenant with me. You were the faithless one, God's telling Israel. This is why the destruction has come upon you. This is why exile has come upon you.

And God continues, why when I came was there no man? Why when I called was there no one to answer? He's saying, time and again I drew near to you. I called to you. I sent prophets to you.

[26:21] I reminded you that I am your only Lord and Savior but you, again, stiff-armed my approaches. Right? You remained completely unresponsive, forsaking all trust, committed to your self-made means of salvation, your little battery-powered headlamps.

Is my hand shortened that it cannot redeem? It's a rhetorical question, right? Have I no power to deliver? The obvious answer is no, your hand is not shortened.

You do have power. Jerusalem's destruction and exile was not the result of an inability on God's part. And though, look, listen to the hope of this.

Therefore, her redemption is possible. It wasn't God's inability. She was sent for her sin. God is able to redeem. And then he proceeds to provide proof of his ability in the past to save.

And he alludes once again back to the events of the Exodus, the parting of the Red Sea, the plague of turning the Nile River into blood, the plague of darkness. That's all there in verse 3 of chapter 50, 2 and 3.

[27:27] See, God has proven his mighty delivering power at work for the sake of his people. He's proven that all throughout her history. Okay, so this is the second half of the truth that Israel needed, right?

She needed to know God has not forsaken her, God has not forgotten her, and the problem, the reason for her destruction and exile is her lack of responsive trust in the Lord.

Her sin against a faithful God. His power remains undiminished. See, we need to be reminded of both sides of the truth, don't we? Now, perhaps it's the second part that you need to be reminded of today.

That maybe the distance you feel between yourself and the Lord is actually a reflection of your own pride before him and not in any way reflective of his heart towards you, which, again, I tell you, remains tender and filled with compassion.

That perhaps even some of the wreckage in your life is the result of sinful choices in which you were not responsibly trusting in the Lord but trusting in yourself.

[28:39] Now, listen, that's a hard word and everyone's story is different and some people here have been the victims of other people's sin against them and I'm not minimizing that, I'm not dismissing that because that may very well be true but the text today, it's calling each of us to look

into our own hearts.

That's what God is calling us to do from this passage. All of us have a me problem. All of us, at times, stiff arm God's approaches to be our soul, Lord, and Savior.

All of us are prone to look to self-made means of purpose and satisfaction. Now, we've been talking about membership in our equipping class.

This is one of the many reasons that we need to be invested in the community of the saints, humbly, honestly allowing others into our lives for discipleship and for accountability.

That's what membership in the local church is. It's me saying, hey, I'm taking responsibility for you. You're taking responsibility for me. I need your help to grow in holiness and to look more like Jesus.

[29:44] And when I'm blinded by my own sin, when I'm believing lies and constructing false narratives in my head and then misinterpreting the circumstances of my life, I need you to speak into my life.

Like, I need you, Tyler, to speak into my life and you, Ethan, to speak into my life and help be God's means of realigning my vision. When I was learning to play soccer, when I would shoot the ball, I would always lean back and then sky the ball over the goal.

Maybe some of you have done this before. And I didn't know why it was happening. Right? Now, if I had a coach or a friend just be like, Mike, you're doing awesome. Just keep at it, man. Like, that would have done me no good whatsoever.

I needed people to speak correction into me, right? Like, Mike, you're working hard. Great. But look, whenever you shoot the ball, you keep leaning back. You need to lean forward.

You need to lean over the ball. Then you'd have shots like the Bulls or like Ethan Weikling getting, you know, who kicked the ball perfectly upper 90 every time. Now, to this day, like, I still sometimes lean back when I'm shooting and sky the ball over the goal.

[30:51] But now I know how to diagnose the problem and to correct it, right? Because people were willing in love to correct me when I needed correction. This is why, church, this is why we need each other.

Spouses, this is why we need each other to speak correction into our lives. Speaking the truth in love, we grow up into him who is the head, into Christ, Ephesians 4.

And loving correction is always redemptive in nature, right? Its aim is not to shame. Its aim is for restoration and transformation. God doesn't want Israel here to wallow in shame but to reform her ways and to respond in trust.

And now Isaiah is going to show us the one person that would do that perfectly. And that is the responsive, trusting servant. So in chapter 50 verses 4 through 9 we come to the third of four servant songs in Isaiah.

You notice the voice shifts and the righteous servant of the Lord begins speaking. Now here's the first thing that we see in verses 4 and 5. The servant humbly receives God's word and responds in trust.

[32:04] The servant as we've already seen is ideal Israel, right? He is the living embodiment of wisdom in the book of Proverbs. It's allusions to Proverbs here.

He is the faithful and true disciple of the Lord. The servant awakens morning by morning to hear from the Lord and to be taught. Right? This teaching is humbly received.

It is faithfully obeyed. And then it becomes the servant's own teaching to others. Now Proverbs 10 verse 11 says that the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.

And this is fully displayed through the servant who knows how to sustain with the word him who is weary. Now notice Isaiah has repeatedly upheld God as the only one who was able to strengthen the weary.

and now the servant the servant he is seen to have the same effect with the power of his word. Here's the second thing that we see in verses 6 through 9.

[33:04] The servant will suffer and then be vindicated by God. But the servant suffering unlike Israel will have nothing to do with his own sin.

The servant willingly offers his body up. It says his back to be struck, his cheeks to have the beard pulled out, his face to be spat on and disgraced. The servant submits to the will and the ways of the Lord even unto suffering, even unto death.

And again, unlike Israel, the servant finds help in the Lord God. You know, that is, it's Adonai Yahweh. It is the sovereign covenant-keeping God of Israel.

And because he finds his help in God, the servant is not finally disgraced. And this enables him, verse 7, to set his face like a flint in his suffering, knowing that in the end he's going to be vindicated by God.

The servant's confidence, it leads him to challenge all the opposition, verses 8 and 9. Who will contend with me, he says? Who is my adversary? Who will declare me guilty?

[34:14] See, in the end, the enemies are going to wear out like an old sweater eaten by moths. They will find their efforts to oppose short-lived and futile. But the servant, now he's going to live on an endless victory.

Now how utterly different from unfaithful Israel is the servant of the Lord? Or the contrast between Israel and the servant is stark. As one commentator writes, listen to this, Zion is unheeding of the Lord's call.

The servant is ever a listener. Zion is unconvinced about the Lord's love and power. The servant is confident in the Lord's help and nearness. Zion suffers for iniquity and rebellion.

The servant suffers because obedient. Zion is charged with offenses. The servant knows no charge against him can be sustained at law. Now friends, this is the beauty, the faithfulness, the perfection of Jesus Christ.

He is the responsive, trusting servant who humbly received every word from the mouth of the Father, whose voice has the power to impart strength and life to the weary, who submitted to the will and ways of God even unto suffering and death on the cross to save sinners like us, who was raised to indestructible life, vindicated by the Father, reigning supreme over every authority.

[35:38] This is Jesus Christ. This is the servant prophesied here in Isaiah. And in light of these things then, in light of the truth about God and about ourselves, in light of the leadership and example of the servant, what will you decide?

That's where this text goes. What will you decide? Now this was the implied question at the end of verse 3. But now Isaiah moves to present the choice in all of its weight and urgency in the final two verses of today's passage.

Will you trust in God and his servant? This is the path of life. This is what we see in verse 10. Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant?

Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. So here is the first option presented.

Fearing the Lord and obeying the voice of his servant. You know, to fear the Lord, it's a theme all throughout scripture, to fear the Lord, it is not to be afraid of God and so hold him at arm's length.

[36:58] To fear the Lord is to properly revere him as the holy creator God who holds life and death in his hands and also to properly adore him as the loving, redeeming God who saves us and unites us to himself.

That's what it is to fear God. Now the book of Proverbs and in particular Proverbs 3, 5 through 8 provides a beautiful picture of what fearing the Lord looks like. Some of you have this memorized.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

It's a good verse to memorize there. Proverbs 3, 5 through 8. Now here Isaiah connects fearing God with obeying his servant. So once again we see in these servant songs that the servant carries a unique authority and connection to God and we of course understand this because the servant Jesus Christ is himself God.

[38:13] The word was with God and the word was God. So here's the question for us. Will we who walk in darkness trust in and obey God and his servant who as we saw last week is himself light and salvation and blessing?

Will we walk in the path of responsive trust in the never forgetting never forsaking Lord? Like in the rubber meets road circumstances of your life like even when it doesn't make sense will we walk the

path of submission and obedience to Jesus our leader and example and if we do this is the promise that this text holds out for us if we do we're choosing to walk the path of life the path of light or as Proverbs 3:8 states it the path of healing and refreshment well what's the alternative Mike?

Like I need to know all my options here well the alternative is this will you trust in yourself and the world? This is the path of darkness and death this is verse 11 Isaiah concludes behold all you who kindle a fire who equip yourselves with burning torches walk by the light of your fire and by the torches you have kindled this you have from my hand you shall lie down in torment so here's the alternative to responsive trust in God and Christ it's prideful self-reliance right it's trying to light your own way with your own means and the means with which the world would equip you it's hiking Zion National Park by the light of a battery-powered headlamp right rather than by the light of the sun go ahead the Lord sarcastically says walk by the light of your own fire right go ahead and conjure up strength from within yourself go ahead and follow the advice of the world take in the lies that I'm mean and weak and that I have it out for you or on the flip side that I'm so loving that I have no demands placed upon you

I believe the lie that you're the ultimate judge of what is right and wrong believe the lie that you need to discover for yourself what's good and what makes you happy and pursue it to the full go ahead and walk that path God says but sarcasm aside know this that in the end you shall lie down in torment the sun will never rise upon you you will have chosen the path of self-made light and all the beauty all the majesty that could have been yours in Christ you will have forsaken eternally and this the sovereign Lord declares is the only alternative there are there are two possible responses there's not a third there's two there's trust and life there's reject and death what are you going to choose this is literally what is at stake this is what is at stake this is the weight this is the urgency of the decision placed before us and friends

I want you to know that Jesus Christ the perfect humbly responsive trusting servant of the Lord he willingly allowed himself to be overtaken by the darkness so that we could be rescued from it like he himself by going to the cross and by dying and by being forsaken by the Lord has become for us light and salvation if we trust in his name so won't you abandon your self-made means of light and trust in him this morning for those of us who have already made that decision praise the Lord that he has changed our hearts by his grace we need to remember that as Ray Ortlund says the gospel gives us more than a place to stand it does do that right we have a standing in grace amen but it gives us more than that it also leads us into a path to follow it's a path to follow it's a walk it's a journey this imagery is all over scripture so let's stop turning from the light of Christ and resorting again to our battery powered headlamps we already abandoned those when we decided to follow Jesus in the first place we are on a path of life in Christ so let's walk in it let's walk in it humbly responsive to the Lord trusting in the Lord through all of the varied circumstances of life even when it doesn't make sense to us trusting in the Lord see church we are on the path that leads to a heavenly city right we're on the path that leads to a new Jerusalem the place where the dwelling place of God will be with man forever where there will be no need for a light because God himself will be that light the place where all mourning and all sickness and all sorrow and all death is banished forever swallowed up in life and victory this is the path that we're on this is the path so stay the course let's trust in our never forsaking never forgetting God and his servant

[43:40] Jesus Christ until he comes again and he brings us home safely to glory please pray with me thank you Thank you.