

Isaiah 54:1-17

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] Good morning, Church. Today's sermon text is Isaiah 54. After the conclusion of the reading, I will say this is the word of the Lord and the church in joyful response to his revelation given to us.

Sing, O barren one who did not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor. For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married, says the Lord.

Enlarge the place of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out. Do not hold back. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed. Be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

For your maker is your husband. The Lord of hosts is his name. And the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer. The God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.

[1 : 33] For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord your Redeemer.

This is like the days of Noah to me, as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth. So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and I will not rebuke you.

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones.

All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness you shall be established, you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

[2 : 42] If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me. Whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose.

I have also created the ravager to destroy. No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication from me declares the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Heavenly Father, we come before you once again.

With your word in front of us, we ask that you would cause this word to go into our minds, and then down the one foot of difficult distance into our hearts.

And that path is only something that can happen by your Holy Spirit. So change us. Change us, God, through this word this morning. We want to see you in the glory of your love and to be transformed and made more like Christ.

[3 : 53] So do that work among us this morning. Amen. Good morning, Shoreline. My name is Mike, one of the pastors here, and so glad that you've joined us this frigid New England morning.

There are, I put one here so I wouldn't forget, kid sheets on the back table. If you haven't gotten one of these, adults let the children have them first, and then they're fair game for you as well.

So the text is here, an outline, a picture to color. Thank you, Caleb and Christina, for making these and printing them out. So go ahead and grab one of those.

It will help you follow along in this sermon. If you were here last week, we covered the previous text, Isaiah chapter 53. And in that passage, we kind of dipped below the surface of the bottomless sea that is Christ's sin-bearing work on the cross.

And we ended the sermon with an unanswerable rhetorical question. How could God love us this much? How could God love us this much?

[5 : 04] Now, I don't know what you did with that question between last Sunday and today. I can tell you that for the Lusa household, ongoing coughs and runny noses and endless dishes and laundry and sweeping and the growing stress of last-minute Christmas shopping and tasks needing to be performed before holiday travels, you know, all of that has a way of crowding out meaningful reflection upon God's love in Christ.

And, you know, such reflection, if only we would give ourselves to it, it would surely lift our spirits. Like, it would surely heighten our affection for Christ and put all these lesser things in proper perspective.

And yet, we earthly creatures are just so earthly, you know? So much in the physical realm, even though there is a spiritual realm that is the true ultimate reality.

You know, God's love to us so often feels abstract. The cross was something that happened 2,000 years ago, right? These words from Isaiah are from hundreds of years before that, you know, even more ancient.

Will any of this help me tackle my to-do list, right? Will any of this help me deal with my crazy in-laws over the holidays? We're visiting my family, so I'm not saying anything about Brittany's family.

[6 : 32] For some reason, this—I'm sorry. For some, so, you know, there's the stress of all these things going on this season. And for some, it's not so much stress over the holidays, but sorrow, right?

And if you're in that place where the holidays evoke pain and grief, then you may be wondering, well, will any of this take away that pain? Will any of this take away the grief of loss?

Now, perhaps the Jewish exiles to whom Isaiah was writing were riddled with similar questions. So, for a brief moment in Isaiah 53, their eyes were raised to this glorious future work of the servant.

But then the crude reality of life in captivity brought their eyes back down to earthly things. You know, but God, through Isaiah, he's not going to let their heads droop back down.

He wants their eyes raised up and fixed on the glory. And it's specifically here in Isaiah 54, the glory of his unrelenting love for them and what that means for their future.

[7 : 41] And church, he wants our eyes fixed on the same. So, let's all get our eyes on Isaiah 54. If you don't have a Bible, there's Bibles on the back table. Booked marked today's passage.

Feel free to take one of those as a gift to you. The title of this sermon today is God's Eternal Covenant of Love and Peace. God's Eternal Covenant of Love and Peace.

And the main point is this. The gospel, the good news of what Jesus Christ has done in saving sinners like us, the gospel has forever unleashed the spreading abundance of God's love and peace.

Can you put that on the screen, Kevin? The gospel has forever unleashed the spreading. It's spreading. Okay? It doesn't, it's not staying in one place. It is a spreading thing and it's abundance. It's abundance in God's presence and specifically the spreading abundance of his love and his peace. In other words, in and through Jesus, God's love has gone viral.

[8 : 48] Okay? God's love has gone viral. And this isn't just some trending TikTok. Okay? This is not some passing fad. This is eternal. This is eternal.

Now this chapter, Isaiah 54, it is filled with analogy and imagery, which is typical of the vivid poetic language that we've seen in Isaiah. Now as of just a really brief aside, did you know that one third of the Bible is poetry?

One third of the Bible is poetry. And I could say a lot more, but I just want to say this. One of the reasons that God has put so much poetry here is because two things, two reasons.

He wants to captivate our minds, right? Poetry has a way of captivating the mind with its vividness and its imagery. He wants to captivate our minds. And also he wants to capture our hearts.

So when you read poetry, think about those things. He's trying to captivate your mind and to capture your heart. So here in Isaiah 54, may God let that be so today.

[9 : 50] Now there are numerous images that we're going to see, but the chapter is arranged around three in particular. Kids, there's three images in this text. A family, okay?

The regathered family. There's a marriage, a reconciled marriage, and there's a city, okay? A rebuilt city. So we see a regathered family, a reconciled marriage, and a rebuilt city.

First, the regathered family. Verse 1. Sing, O barren one who did not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor.

For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who was married, says the Lord. Now remember, this is coming on the heels of Isaiah 53.

That climactic revelation of how forgiveness of sin and spiritual redemption will come to Israel and to the nations. Right? Namely, through the suffering servant, the exalted sin bearer, who we know is Jesus Christ.

[10 : 55] And the fitting response, the fitting response, the appropriate response to his redemptive work is to break forth into singing and cry aloud. You know, when you've been set free from bondage to sin through the gospel, the joy and the gratitude and the worship that rises in your heart, it must find expression in something.

And by God's grace, he's given us music and song so that with engaged mind and body and heart, we can give expression to what's arising from within for his glory.

So once again, we're finding that our sign is being turned into singing and God's redemptive touch. Now, if you want to hear more on that topic of singing, check out Andrew Beal's sermon from a few weeks ago on Isaiah 51 and 52.

But notice here who Isaiah is telling to sing and for what reason. He he he's calling the barren one who did not bear to break forth into singing.

And why? Why does he say because the barren one is somehow going to have an abundance of children? Now, in other words, the result of the servant, the result of Christ's sin bearing work in chapter 53 is that just as barren Sarah bore a son named Isaac.

[12 : 18] If you remember that story in the Old Testament kids, just as Sarah bore a son Isaac in her old age. So barren Israel, who is currently in exile in Babylon, she is going to have an abundance of children.

She's going to be blessed with the fruit of her womb. And so God calls her to sing, to rejoice. Right. His his faithfulness endures his promises. They still stand.

So Israel is called not only to sing, but also to prepare. Verse two, enlarge the place of your tent. Let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out.

Do not hold back. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

You know, this tent language would probably remind Israel of her wilderness wanderings after the Exodus and how God had faithfully provided for her all through that desert pilgrimage.

[13 : 25] And the same faithful God. Because he's he doesn't change. Right. He doesn't change. He's the same faithful God. He's now going to bring about miraculous and expansive growth to Israel.

So she's called upon here to prepare for the influx. Right. Like throw out that two man backpacking tent and don't just upgrade to a family sized tent. Get a giant canopy tent.

Right. Make sturdy the poles. Make strong the stakes as we're about to fill this place. Because why? Because Israel is going to find that God's covenant promise of old to make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the.

Do you remember? The sand on the sea. That promise is going to come to pass. And we're not just talking about filling a small land strip, you know, 150 miles long and 75 miles wide.

We're talking about nations here. We're talking about a worldwide expansion. So sing, prepare. And then third, he calls Israel to fear not.

[14 : 35] Verse four. Fear not, for you will not be ashamed. Be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth and the reproach of your widowhood.

You will remember no more. Now remember, Isaiah's target audience is a group of weary and wayward exiles.

They are plagued with shame for their own sin. They're plagued with disgrace for what Babylon has done to them and cruel and oppressive treatment.

Isaiah is linking this here to the life-dominating shame in the ancient world that a woman without husband or child would have experienced. But, Isaiah 53, the servant has been pierced and crushed for her sin.

He has borne upon himself the punishment and incurred the wounds that she deserved so that she could get what? Peace and healing. This sin-bearing work that Christ has done is so thorough, so complete, that all of her shame, all of her disgrace, God promises here, will be a forgotten thing of the past.

[15 : 51] And therefore, she need not fear. Do you see what's going on in this passage, church? A glorious future salvation has been promised to Israel over and over and over again in this prophecy here.

But Israel is in exile still, right? Right? What's to say that the same cycle won't just happen again? Right? Like in the days of the...

You read through the Judges. There's deliverance, right? And a period of peace. And then Israel forgets. And they fall into sin. And then another nation comes and takes over. And then God raises up a judge.

What's to say that that cycle doesn't just happen over and over and over again? And what's to say that after deliverance from Babylon and a generation or two of this desert-to-garden salvation experience, that Israel won't just relapse into sin and judgment?

What's to say? The answer? God and the sufficient work of his servant. That's to say a new covenant is being enacted here.

[17 : 01] Greater things. New things that Israel and the world has never heard of before. And these new things we know have been unleashed through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Son of God, clothed in human flesh, lifted up to die on the cross, resurrected to indestructible life, ascended to glory. He is the ultimate difference maker.

Can somebody say amen? He is the ultimate difference maker. And in and through him, the ancient promises have come to fulfillment.

And this, brothers and sisters, this is the age in which we live now. Right? This is the age of gospel fulfillment. The age of God's love going viral.

This is an age in which individuals are shedding past shame and disgrace and being clothed with the righteousness of Jesus as they yield their hearts and lives to him.

[18 : 05] If you're in this room and you're plagued with shame and disgrace for past sin, know today that Jesus bore all of that shame, not in part, but the whole, upon himself.

It is nailed to the cross. You need not bear it anymore. So turn to him. If you haven't, turn to him. Turn to Christ and find the freedom and the joy of full forgiveness.

Eternal security in him. Perfect love that drives out fear. Church, this is an age in which all over the world, from right here in Connecticut to Papua New Guinea and to Nigeria, the offspring of the true Israel are being miraculously raised up from the ground.

And they're declaring allegiance to God and to Christ. Christ, we're here today because of the unstoppable advancement of the gospel for the last 2,000 years.

That's why we're here. Because it's gone forth from Jerusalem to Judea and to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Jesus promised it and it's happening.

[19 : 14] It is happening all the more. And we're here today for its continued advancement to the ends of the earth. That's why we exist as a church.

To the glory of Christ. So may we be a church that doesn't ever stop proclaiming this gospel without apology. This is the good news of salvation for the world.

May we be a church that is completely sold out for the mission of raising up disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ. Who are then sent out to other parts of the world bearing that good news. Kids, look up here for a second. Our prayer is that you all would become disciple-making disciples of Jesus. Taking the good news to those that don't yet know it.

That's our prayer for every one of the kids in this room. We long to see more missionaries raised up. Going wherever God sends them. Whether it's right here in New London. Or following the whole family to Papua New Guinea.

[20 : 13] This is the age of gospel fulfillment. So may God fulfill his promises and his purposes in and through us.

Now all of this. The commands. The promises of verses 1 through 4. They're grounded in this beautiful compound declaration of verse 5.

Look in the text there. Verse 5. 4. 7. Now this verse.

This verse. This verse. Is a fear-shattering. Hope-instilling. Comfort-inducing declaration for the people of God. The one who made the stars.

We saw in Isaiah chapter 40. Who calls them each by name. Who fashioned us in the womb. Who sustains us by the power of his word.

[21 : 23] He has also pledged himself to us in faithful, loyal, covenant love. This is the God of angel armies. This is the God of absolute moral perfection.

Who is infinite in holiness. And this is the God. The same God. Who has taken upon himself all the needs of his people. That's what a redeemer is.

All the needs of his people. He's taken upon himself. And the cross of Jesus Christ is the ultimate proof of that. This is our God. This is our God.

The God of the whole earth. And the God of you and me. If you are in Christ Jesus. Now everything that I just said. Is knowing all that.

Going to help you tick off. Your last minute pre-Christmas shopping and to-do list. Maybe not. But you know what? It will fill you to overflowing.

[22 : 22] With hope and joy. And the love of Jesus. As you do. So with those glorious assurances. Isaiah. He transitions us to even more. Even more.

And now he switches to a second image. So we saw the regathered family. And now we're going to see the reconciled marriage. In verses 6 through 10. Look there in your Bibles at verse 6.

Verse 6. Verse 6. Verse 6. Verse 6. Verse 6. Verse 6. For the Lord has called you. Like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit.

Like a wife of youth when she is cast off. Says your God. Now this verse alludes back to chapter 50. Verses 1 and 2. In which God reminded Israel that she was sent into exile.

Like a wife separated from her husband. Not because of any inability or fickleness on God's part. That's what God told her. She was sent into exile because of her sin and rebellion against him.

[23 : 25] Right? The marriage was broken due to human sin. That's the first thing under here. The marriage was broken due to human sin. But now. Right?

But now. As a result of the suffering and death of the servant in her place. God has called her back. He's called her back. And what motivated such an act on God's part?

Verses 7 to 8 clue us in. For a brief moment I deserted you. God says. But with great compassion I will gather you.

In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you. But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you. Says the Lord your redeemer.

So what motivated God to redeem Israel through the work of the servant? What do we see here? His great compassion and his everlasting love.

[24 : 24] The marriage is restored due to God's love. So God had cast Israel off. He had hidden his face from her due to sin.

Right? She had provoked God apparently to overflowing anger. Now early on in Israel's existence. God had revealed himself to her as such.

As Exodus 34 7. A God who will by no means clear the guilty. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children. And the children's children.

To the third and fourth generation. But what does God declare first? This is God's revelation to Moses in Exodus 34. A pinnacle event in the life of Israel.

What does God first declare about himself? He says. The Lord. The Lord. A God merciful and gracious. Slow to anger.

[25 : 24] And abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Keeping steadfast love for thousands. That is thousands of generations. Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

This is who God is. A God who reveals himself first and foremost as a God of mercy, compassion, and steadfast love.

Yes, our sins will be passed down to our children and grandchildren. Day Norton writes. But God's goodness will be passed down in a way that inexorably, that means unstopably, swallows up all our sins.

His mercies travel down to a thousand generations. Far eclipsing the third or fourth generation. And later he says this. He says. God's anger requires provocation.

His mercy is pent up. Ready to gush forth. God's anger. This is our God. And after quoting that opening line of Exodus 34, 6.

[26 : 35] King David goes on to say in Psalm 103, which Rob read earlier, down in verse 10. He does not deal with us. Listen to this. God does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him. Now perhaps an analogy will help.

And Isaiah gives us one in verse 9. So in verse 9 and 10, we see an analogy to aid and then an assurance to reaffirm. Look at verse 9.

This is like the days of Noah to me. As I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you.

Now I love rainbows in the sky. Do you love rainbows? Do you guys love rainbows? Rainbows are awesome. We saw a double rainbow like a few months ago. So that's really cool.

[27 : 45] Not a lot of things are cooler than seeing a rainbow in the sky, right? Few things are more captivating than after a torrential downpour, this dazzling multicolored bow stretches across the sky.

And if you didn't know, if you didn't know this, whenever you see a rainbow in the sky, you should immediately remember God's promise to Noah after the flood and thank God for his love and faithfulness in keeping his promise.

The rainbow symbolizes God's promise, his covenant to never again send a worldwide flood upon the earth, right? Now the waters of Noah, that global catastrophe of the flood, was God's judgment, right?

It was a judgment upon mankind for widespread pervasive sin. And after that brief moment of judgment, after God's justice was satisfied, what followed was the reassurance of his love.

So now in Isaiah 54, God's justice has been satisfied, and what remains, what follows, is everlasting love.

[28 : 54] Now you might think it's Israel's exile that satisfied God's justice. But no, right? That's not it. It's the future suffering and death of God's righteous servant, Jesus Christ.

Israel deserved more than some temporary exile for her sin. She deserved eternal condemnation.

But her condemnation has been transferred to God's Son, who bore all of her sin upon the cross, so that God could treat her not as her sins deserve, but with great compassion and steadfast love.

That's what this flood analogy is showing us. And after that, God reaffirms this assurance that he already gave. Verse 10, Kids, have you ever seen a mountain run?

Like, have you ever seen a hill flee away from its place? We'll be freaking out on the day that Cadillac Mountain and Acadia National Park jumps into the Atlantic Ocean.

That will make worldwide news. We will be freaking out. The mountains and the hills are essentially fixed and immovable objects to us, right?

[30 : 26] And what we view as fixed, what we think is immovable, God says here, is fleeting and unstable compared to his steadfast love.

Right? That is the one solid rock in a constantly changing and chaotic universe. The hesed, the faithful, loyal, steadfast love of God is the theme of the Old Testament.

It is the theme of Israel's songs. In the Psalms, over and over again, the psalmists, they dwell on and they break forth into praise for God's steadfast love for his people.

And this love, it's the basis for God's covenant of peace. It says here, that issues forth. So the marriage covenant was broken due to human sin, but it's been forever reconciled due to God's steadfast love and compassion.

And what results is peace in every sense. In verses 11 to 17, they go on to depict what that covenant of peace will look like. But for now, we're left basking and delighting in God's steadfast love.

[31 : 39] As the Jesus Storybook Bible puts it, in his never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love. His never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

This is the love of God for those who belong to him. And this love, it took on human flesh in the form of a baby born in a stable in Bethlehem.

And it grew up to be a man despised and rejected by those he came to save and humbled himself to the point of suffering and death on the cross in our place in order to free us from sin, in order to unite us to himself so that we could delight in his love now and forever.

Do you have a relationship with this God of everlasting love? If not, you could today. You could today.

His arms are open, wide. You see, the repentant sinner, what he repents and turns to God. He's not met with wrath. He's not met with a rod.

[32 : 58] He's met with open arms of love and forgiveness in Christ. That could be yours today. He's calling you today. Turn from sin. Turn from your self-made means of satisfaction and turn to Christ and receive his never-ending, all-satisfying love.

Christians, do you see the baffling nature of God's love for us? Our past sin, our past shame, it does not diminish God's love for us.

In fact, our sin was the occasion that called forth his love in such a lavish display. If you're plagued, saints, if you're plagued by dark thoughts of your past failures, immerse yourself in the glorious truth of these verses.

Revel in God's invincible love for you that swallows up all those failures and that embraces you with a fierce and tender warmth.

And this also means that your present and future sin will fail to dam up or diminish the mighty torrent of God's love for you. His love for you is invincible, unbreakable, unchangeable.

[34 : 19] It is, it's overflowing in abundance for you. Church, it is in God's love that we find our stability, that we find our security, not in the passing things of this world.

You know, the earthly things that we perceive as immovable, the things we attempt to base our lives on are in reality shaky and unstable, right? The difficult circumstances even that we view as overwhelming, that we view as insurmountable, they are, in comparison to God's everlasting love, brief and fading.

That's the truth of this word. You know, this season, you might be saying, of waiting, whatever it is you're waiting for, it feels permanent, but actually it's not.

It's not permanent. But God's love is, right? This stage of my child's development, it feels permanent, but it's actually not. It's not permanent. But God's love is permanent.

The sickness, this work assignment, whatever it is for you, it's not actually permanent, but God's love is. That is the stable and steadfast and immovable reality that we can base our lives on.

[35 : 36] As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, 8, love never ends. That's divine love. Divine love.

And Isaiah now goes on to show what this divine love issuing forth in a covenant of peace will look like. So we've considered the regathered family, the reconciled marriage, and then finally the rebuilt city.

The rebuilt city. verse 11. Oh, afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted.

Stop right there. You can just feel the tenderness of God for his people. Oh, afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted. How many of us feel like the afflicted one, like the storm-tossed ones, the not comforted ones?

God says, behold, I will set your stones in antimony and your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones.

[36 : 47] The first thing we see is that the rebuilt city will be gloriously beautiful. Gloriously beautiful. From its foundation to its pinnacles, from its walls to its gates, every part will be ornamented in vivid and dazzling precious stones and metals.

That's the imagery that we see here. Now, this beautiful vision was not fulfilled when Jerusalem was rebuilt after the exile, right? But this vision was reconfirmed through the apostle John, who writes in Revelation 21, verse 9, Then came one of the seven angels who spoke to me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

This is the vision of Zion, the new Jerusalem of heaven, when God finally wipes out every stain of sin and when he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

Whether you live in a house or an apartment today, or maybe a Coast Guard cutter or a submarine, you know, our homes are constantly falling into disarray and disrepair.

[38 : 16] And I'm constantly bemoaning that fact in my own home. Hurting my thumb and getting cut and fixing our homes. But our eternal home will be endlessly and gloriously beautiful, made beautiful in the unveiled presence of God and the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

In his love and peace, our eternal home will be spotless, perfect, shimmering. So, you know, whenever you feel that twinge of discontentment over the state of your own earthly home, let it promise you to think about your heavenly one and to rejoice.

Now, here's the second thing. The regathered children will be abundantly blessed. Verse 13, All your children shall be taught by the Lord and great shall be the peace of your children.

In righteousness you shall be established. You shall be far from oppression for you shall not fear. And from terror for it shall not come near you. Now, this list of descriptors is a list of covenant blessings.

This was supposed to describe Israel under the law and the old covenant. covenant. And it did for a brief, few fleeting moments of her history.

[39 : 31] But now, because of the sin-bearing work of Jesus Christ, these covenant blessings become guaranteed. They're guaranteed.

This is life under the new covenant enacted by the blood of Jesus in which all God's children come to look just like him. And they come to experience a life of wisdom and peace and righteousness and justice and security and the absence of fear.

Ezekiel, another prophet who actually lived among the exiles in Babylon, he describes the new covenant in Ezekiel chapter 36. And I will give you a new heart and the new spirit I will put within you.

I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers and you shall be my people and I will be your God. Church, this new covenant is in effect now and forever.

[40 : 46] And when Christ returns, come Lord Jesus. When Christ returns, this new covenant of peace will be fully and finally realized.

Saints, can you imagine a world where conflict and violence is a forgotten thing of the past? Can you imagine it? Can you imagine a world where peace between God and man is amazingly and forever the status quo?

Where sin and shame has been banished and no longer taints our enjoyment of God and his steadfast love? This is our eternal destiny.

This is the culture of the never-ending kingdom of God. So saints, let your redeemed imaginations loose to ponder such things and to be filled with hope.

Did you know that our imaginations can be redeemed? Right? God's given us an imagination to imagine things like this, the glories of the new heavens and the new earth. And saints, God intends for this new covenant gospel culture to be put on display.

[41 : 54] Imperfectly, yes, but actually to be put on display through the church of Christ. The church is heaven brought forward as our brother Rhys Besant has said.

We are meant to be an alien outpost of God's kingdom in a foreign and often hostile land. And you know, the more we look like Jesus, the more we embody the qualities of this kingdom, the more we urge the lost to find life in Jesus' name.

So let's constantly be praying, your kingdom come, your will be done, and then constantly laboring to bring that about, laboring in selfless love and in the power that God supplies.

And in the new year, we're going to be launching into a series in 1 Corinthians through which, by God's grace, he will help us to better understand and to embody this gospel culture, the culture of the new kingdom, of the new covenant.

This is what he wants for this church. church. The last thing that we see under this eternal covenant of peace is that the remaining enemies will be decisively beaten.

[43 : 14] The remaining enemies will be decisively beaten. verse 15, if anyone stirs up strife, it is not for me. Whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you.

Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy. No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment.

First, just note that that middle verse, verse 16, is another massive statement affirming the sovereignty of God. Do you notice this? The manufacturer, the product, the user and his intent, and the outcome are all governed by the sovereign creator God.

He is sovereign. Now we've talked about that extensively in our time in Isaiah. This resounding truth is the basis for verse 15 and verse 17. Because of God's sovereign power over all things, he will ensure that the remaining enemies of him and his people are decisively beaten.

No weapon of war, no word of accusation will succeed against the children of God. See, just as the servant, Jesus Christ, is vindicated by the Lord and all of his enemies fall, so too, for those who are beneficiaries of his sin-bearing work.

[44 : 50] You know, saints, in this life, it often feels as though the ravagers are winning, right? It feels as though justice is silenced.

It feels as though God's love and power are held at bay, but the reality is, the glorious reality, God's love and power and his justice are immovable and unbendable.

In the end, he will destroy all the enemies of him and his people. So take heart. We can take heart this morning. Christ won already the decisive victory when he died on the cross and rose again, putting sin and Satan and death to shame, to open shame.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, it forever, you know, ruptured the dam and unleashed the raging river of God's love and his peace. And it's right now, right now it is spreading to the ends of the earth, this gospel, this covenant of love and peace, it's going to the ends of the earth, it is defeating the strongholds of the enemy and it is bringing him ultimately to silence.

So take heart. In the midst of your trials, lift up your eyes to the glory that is God's steadfast love for you.

[46 : 11] Lift up your eyes to the glory of this covenant of peace that is yours right here, right now and forever in full, guaranteed by the one who is both our maker and husband.

And take heart. The second half of verse 17 is a concluding statement of the whole chapter. Isaiah writes, This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord.

Because of the work of the servant, God's people once again receive the honor of being called his servants. And as God's servants made like the servant Jesus, we share in his eternal inheritance.

And this is an eternal inheritance of God's love and his peace, making everything new, making everything glorious in his unveiled presence. Is knowing all of this going to take away the grief and the pain of loss that you might be experiencing this Christmas season?

On this side of heaven, it might not, but it will fill you to overflowing with hope and with joy and with the love of Jesus, even in the midst of it.

[47 : 33] And in the age to come, that grief and that pain will be swallowed up completely and irreversibly so that all that's left is eternal delight in the steadfast love of God in the company of all the saints and all the angels.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Please pray with me. Father, your love is boundless and it baffles our minds.

We cannot comprehend it. Help us to comprehend it. Help us to know the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge. To know the dimensions of his love and fill us, Lord, with the fullness of him this morning.

We pray this in his name. Amen. Amen.