

Living Fearlessly

Isaiah 43:1-7

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We are in our Christmas series, Christmas Through the Eyes of Isaiah, looking at the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Today's message, The Lord is a Gracious Savior, is taken from Isaiah 43:1-7. Isaiah tells us that there is nothing to fear when God is our gracious and loving Savior. And that is the message of Christmas, God came down as a Savior and his presence in our lives should remove all our fears.

We Belong to God (1)

First, Isaiah gives us the foundation of the command fear not, God created and formed you (1). I created you is the language of creation, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1). I formed you is the language of a potter shaping clay. God created and formed Israel to showcase his glory and grace. Isaiah is reminding them that God created them for a purpose and he is faithful to fulfill his purposes for them. So, fear not, God created and formed you.

God has Redeemed us (2)

Then Isaiah says, fear not because I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine! The message of Christmas is that God became a man to redeem humanity because we cannot save ourselves. He describes what he means by redeemed as I have named you and claimed you. By naming Israel, God displayed his authority over them as his own and that he knows them intimately. This is the same type of language God uses of the church. God has redeemed us, called us by name and claims us as his own (Eph 1:3-10). What matters most in life is not how you see yourself, not accepting yourself, and not even loving yourself. What matters most is how God sees you, that God has accepted you, that God loves you, and that God claims you are his own. So, fear not, God has redeemed you.

God Will be with us (2)

Then Isaiah draws out the implications of redemption. Because I have redeemed you, when you go through trials I will be with you (2). Imagine going through the woods as a young child in the dark separated from your family. That would be a terrifying experience because of the darkness and the uncertainty of finding your way out. But imagine you are going through the woods with your father who is holding your hand and leading you out to the car because he knows the way. What a big difference that would make in your journey! You cannot see in the dark but you trust your father to get you out safely. How much more confidence can we have knowing that God our Father is with us forever! The presence of God, the one who redeemed us, is with us to provide for us and protect us.

Trials Will not Overwhelm us (2)

Water is a metaphor that describes the conflicts Israel has with the nations around them. When the trials are like a strong current of a river and you don't think you are going to be able to wade safely across, do not fear because God promises to be with you to sustain you. You will not be swept away because God is with you, protecting you. You may fall, you may stumble, but you will get across the river.

Trials Will not Destroy us (2)

Then he gives another metaphor for the conflicts, this time fire. When the trials are so hot that you think you are going to be consumed, fear not because the flames will not burn you, nor consume you. Does not burn mean that we will not be hurt? I don't think so because we know from Scripture and from experience that trials can hurt us (Rom 8:35-39). Consumed clarifies not being burned. In other words, our faith will not be fully consumed. Trials cannot not fully destroy our faith (1 Cor 10:31). In fact, Trials are meant to do just the opposite, to purify or refine your faith (Jms 1:2-3; 1 Pet 1:6-7). God loves his children too much to leave you as you are. You may fall and you may stumble, but you will not be lose your faith.

Why do we experience trials, difficulties, and suffering in the first place? Sometimes we experience trials because of our own bad decisions. But that is not always the case. Sometimes trials come out of nowhere and they appear for no apparent reason. But we can be confident that God's purpose in trials is to refine us, to shape us into the image of Christ. All the while we must remember that God is sovereign, God is good, God is loving, and God is faithful.

Do not fear Because God love you (3-4)

Then Isaiah describes our worth as a means to encourage us to fear not. First, we are precious in his eyes, that is, we have innate value to God. He shows us how far he will go to save his people, ransom other nations for them! He values them so much that He would ransom Egypt, Cush, and Sheba (4), and also any number of people! This is an allusion to the Exodus (Ex 6:6-7). We are precious to him because he loves us. Pause and reflect on that statement, the God of the entire universe is saying something as intimate as, "I love you" to you! Not in a general way, like God loves the world but in a particular way, the way a father says "I love you" to his own children! Let those words sink in for a moment. God tells you that you are precious in his eyes because He loves you the way a father loves a child! He loves you so much that He would give up entire countries for you, and exchange entire peoples for you! But God went further than giving up entire countries up for you. He gave up his own Son for you. That is the message of Christmas, God gave his Son as a Savior and has redeemed you as his own so that you ultimately have nothing to fear.

Do Not Fear Because God Will Fulfill His Mission (5-7)

Then God commands them to fear not because he promises to be with them again but in a different way. I will bring to pass my promise to Abraham, in him all the families of the earth will be blessed. I will call them and gather them from all the corners of the earth. Nothing will stop them from coming to me. God can say that will happen because God makes it happen. Everyone who is called by my name, those whom I created for my glory and whom I formed and made. God's mission cannot fail.

