

Isaiah 63-64 • The Day of Vengeance

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Let's open our Bibles tonight to the Book of Isaiah. We're in Isaiah chapter 63. And we have some more very incredible prophecies to go through tonight in our study. I hope you have a Bible. If you don't, we have some extras down over between the doors, there are a bunch of Bibles there. Some over on the back beside the sound booth.

Good to have a Bible to look at so that you can see what we're going through here. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we open our hearts to You tonight and to the ministry of Your Word. Your Word is true. And we thank You, Lord, for the prophecies that You've given.

Lord, this study of Isaiah has been absolutely incredible. And we pray that You'd continue to open our hearts to what You're saying tonight in the Scriptures because we confess to You, Lord, that without Your Holy Spirit, these are just words on a page. But through the ministry of Your Spirit, who is the Teacher, the One who enlightens, this Word comes alive. And it is nourishment to our souls.

We pray that You would nourish us tonight. We thank You and praise You. In Jesus precious name, amen.

We're going to be talking tonight about Isaiah chapter 63. And these chapters, by the way, go together. I personally don't believe there should be a chapter division between 63 and 64 that we're going to be looking at tonight. But there's some pretty incredible stuff that the prophet gets into here this evening concerning the coming of the Lord, the Battle of Armageddon, which takes place at the end of the Tribulation Period, and so forth.

These are prophecies that Isaiah is going to cover here, and he's talking about things that are yet future. And this man wrote these things down 700 years before Christ was born on the earth. 700 years and yet he's talking about things that are still to come. But are corroborated by many, many other prophetic writers in the Scripture.

This chapter begins, interestingly enough with a vision. Isaiah receives a vision of the Messiah, who he doesn't really refer to at this point as the Messiah. But we know him to be the Messiah, who is returning from victorious battle and the battle is the Battle of Armageddon.

You'll remember we've told you many times that at the conclusion of the Tribulation Period, at the very end of that 7 years, the nations of the world are going to gather to completely obliterate Israel. And they are going to look like they are about to accomplish that. And that is when Jesus is going to return physically to the earth. And the Bible gives us many, many statements about His physical return to the earth.

But that is going to begin a battle. We call it the Battle of Armageddon. And he's not going to talk about that battle, interestingly enough. He simply gives us a picture of the Messiah after the battle, who has been victorious over the kingdoms of the world.

This chapter, interestingly enough, begins with some questions and two answers that are given from the Lord. Look at verse 1 with me. It begins with the question,

"Who is this who comes from Edom, (Or at least from the direction of Edom) in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, (Bozrah was a chief city in Edom. And it says,) he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?" There's the question and the Lord himself responds by saying, *"It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."* (And so the Lord speaks this glorious, victorious response, *"It is I (coming) speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."* (ESV)

And then the second question is posed,

"² Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?" (ESV)

When they would press the grapes, the winepress was basically a big kind of a hollowed out rock. And they would put all the grapes in there and there would be a hole that would be drilled in the bottom of it. And the people would get in there with their bare feet and they would tread the grapes. And of course, you've probably seen that in pictures, movies, and things like that. And the juice would drain out and of course, they would stain their garments. And yet, the writer here asks, who is this whose garments are appearing as if he has tread the winepress? And he says, here's his response in verse 3,

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.

"⁴ For the day of..." And this is very important guys, look at verse 4, *"For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come."* In other words, my time of redemption.

Now, this is really incredible because the Lord is saying here the day of vengeance has finally arrived. Now He's speaking of course of that time when the wrath of God is poured out through the course of the Tribulation Period culminating in that Battle of Armageddon at the very end.

But that day of vengeance is very important for us to see here. Because I don't know if you remember the last time we got together and we studied Isaiah we were in chapter 61. And you'll remember that there was a prophecy given then that Jesus actually quotes in the synagogue in Nazareth. And I want to show it to you on the screen. Just so you don't have to turn back so we can see it all together. You'll remember back in chapter 61,

Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV)

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God...

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD (YAHWEH) has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, (look at this last part of that quotation) and the day (the LORD's day) of vengeance of our God...

Did you catch that? That connects with what we just read here in chapter 63. The Lord's day of vengeance has come.

Now what's interesting about this whole idea, is that when Jesus quoted this in the synagogue in Nazareth, He left off the last part. Did you guys ever notice that? He actually ends His quotation by saying, *"and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor..."* He didn't quote the rest. Because it's up to, proclaiming the year

of the Lord's favor, that pertained to his first coming. If you read on in that sentence, it now pertains to His second coming, the day of vengeance.

His first coming was not a day of vengeance. It was a day of the Lord's favor. It was literally the call of people to hearken to the kingdom of God. And yet now, Isaiah is prophesying the day of the Lord's vengeance. This is the day of wrath.

And I know that this is challenging for a modern audience to kind of hear when we talk about God's wrath. It's challenging for a lot of people. God's wrath, it's like, why? What is the big deal about God's wrath? I mean, why is He so wrathful? Why is God's wrath going to be poured out? I mean, He forgave us who came to Christ. Why can't He just forgive everybody? What's the deal with wrath?

It's interesting, we've talked about this before; but you and I, we turn on the news and we watch about what's happening in the world. Or we open up our laptop or whatever, read whatever news service we happen to be tuning into at the time. And we read about what's happening - the tragedies, the corruption, the murders, the rapes, the children being sold into sexual slavery.

And eventually, I have to tell you, I get enough and I can't do anymore. I have to turn it off. I have to shut it down. I don't actually get into the news nearly as much as I used to. I found that it was actually eroding my faith and my joy. I've turned it off to a large degree and I've been better for it, I think.

Did you ever stop to think that God can't turn it off? Every day, every second of every day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week He sees every single act of mankind against mankind and against God every single day. And the... I'm a sinner and I have a hard time taking it in small doses. Can you imagine what the pure, holy, righteous heart of God does with a constant barrage of the sinful activity of man. Do you think it grieves Him? Do you think that's an understatement? So do I. And so, God has set a day for His wrath to be poured out.

Now what's interesting about that is that, even in the midst of His wrath, and that wrath is entirely deserved; even in the midst of that wrath He's made a way for us to be saved. He has literally bent over backwards to provide a means by which we would never have to experience the wrath of God.

All we have to do is just embrace the finished work of His Son on the cross and say, I believe, I accept, that's for me. I'm a sinner. I put Jesus on that cross myself. I accept what He did for me. Boom! You know what, the wrath of God is gone for me and for you. If we do just that. Isn't that crazy?

But there is a day. There is a day that He has set out for judgment and vengeance. In fact, He goes on in verse 5 to say,

"I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so (look at this) my own arm (And remember "arm" in the Old Testament refers to strength.) brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me.

⁶ I trampled down the peoples in my anger; I made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their life blood on the earth." He says, "my own arm brought me salvation."

And that salvation, I've told you many times in the Old Testament, the word that we translate salvation can also mean deliverance. And so it can refer here to the deliverance that Jesus is going to perform for the nation of Israel to pull them out of this destructive attack at the very end.

But the word salvation here can also speak of eternal salvation. And either way, either way, whether He's talking about the deliverance of Israel, or the deliverance of all those who put their faith in Jesus. The point is, what He's saying is, my own arm brought it about. In other words, my own strength brought it about.

The Lord is saying here, that He alone is the one who makes salvation happen. You with me? That's something you got to hang on to. I mean, hang on to that. He alone. He alone. He alone. And that's the emphasis of these verses. He atones for our sin alone. He judges the world alone. He alone is the Savior. He alone is the Judge. Alone. Okay?

I mean, honestly, guys, that's one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory stands in such stark contrast to the message of the Word of God. Because it's essentially when you think about purgatory, in the Roman Catholic idea of purgatory, it's a place where you go and work off your sins, certain sins. If those didn't get forgiven while you were here on this earth, you got to go work them off after death in this place called purgatory.

Well, essentially what that does is it takes the work of salvation out of the hands of Jesus alone, and it characterizes His work on the cross as being insufficient to handle all of our sin. Because there's some we got to go take care of. He didn't take care of it all apparently so we got to go work it off. And nothing could be further from the truth.

This passage says, He did it all. He says, my own arm worked deliverance. My own arm worked salvation. It was complete. I love what He said on the cross. *"It is finished."* (John 19:30)

Sometimes I get emails from Christians who are convinced that God is punishing them for their past sins. Happens a lot. A lot. People will go through something, whatever it may be. Some place of difficulty. And they will, and they'll just come out and say to me, and I appreciate the honesty, but they'll say to me, pastor Paul, I really, truly believe that God is punishing me for my sin. I've lived a really rotten life. And I came to the Lord with a long laundry list of sins and so forth. And now I believe that God is punishing me.

And every time I get a note like that, I got to tell you, my heart breaks for those people. Because, they've become convinced that God's punishing them. I wish they were half as convinced that what Jesus did on the cross was enough. Because if they were, that convinced that what Jesus did was enough, they wouldn't be worrying about God punishing them. And I have to, tell them, you are not being punished for your sin.

Christians, can I say that to you too? You are not being punished for your sin. Jesus was punished for your sin. And He did it alone. And He did it completely. And it was finished.

You say, well, then what, how do I explain some of the rotten things that go on in my life? Well, the Bible does say that He chastens us. You say, well, what's the difference? Chastening? Punishing? Who cares? No. No, no, no. Very different things. Very different things. God chastens us for our good. As a father who loves His children, He disciplines us in that form of chastening.

Listen, punishment is always for condemnation. And we know that can't be what He's doing to you, because as Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans, *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* right? Romans 8:1. That should have been your memory verse, way back when. Because that helps you and I remember, oh, I'm not being punished. Because punishment deals with condemnation.

Jesus was already condemned for you. He was condemned on the cross bearing your sin. He took the condemnation, so you would never have to.

So, what you're dealing with from time to time is the chastening hand of the Lord. But you are to consider it an act of His love for you. And that's a completely different thing from condemnation.

Listen, condemnation comes from the enemy. The enemy loves to condemn. And so what happens is, you go through a difficult situation or circumstance, and the enemy comes along to condemn. He says, I know why this is happening to you, you're a scumbag. And you're finally getting what you deserve, bottom line. And you know what? We believe it, just like that. Gulp! (Pastor Paul makes a swallowing gesture) Swallow it down, hook, line, and sinker. Even with the Word of God speaking to us as it does, saying "...*there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,...*" Even with that we feel condemned.

Pastor, why do I feel condemned? Because the enemy lied to you and you believed it. That's not rocket science, you guys. We give in to those kinds of deceptions all the time. Regularly. That's why we have to go back to the Word of God and remind ourselves about what it says.

Because we need an adjustment, right? Just like you're going to the spiritual chiropractor. We're all coming into church, walking in a corkscrew. And we're like, oh man, the enemy's been beating me up so we get back to the Word of God. And we get back into alignment with the truth.

God loves me. God hears my prayer. He's for me. He loves me as a father. Yes, He chastens and disciplines me, but it's for my good that I might be formed into the image of His Son. That's a completely different sort of a situation, isn't it? Than that feeling of condemnation, like you're under God's thumb. So it's a completely different thing.

Now, verses 7 through 14, I'll just tell you, is a beautiful recollection of the mercy of the Lord. And it actually begins by saying in verse 7,

"I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love."

You know why I love verses, verse 7 here, because it's, it stands in such stark contrast to what people normally think of as God in the Old Testament. I've heard so many people say, I just don't really like to study the Old Testament because God's always mad. And He's always like nuking somebody or whatever, the grounds opening up, or they're dropped dead where they stand, or God's saying, you're a sinner, and this and that. And so I just stay away from the Old Testament. Well, I give you verse 7 again as proof that, that is not always the case. Yes, God shows Himself as holy. But that happens in the New

Testament too. He shows Himself as very holy. No, I like to hang out with Jesus. He's always telling people they're okay. Really? I remember Jesus saying things like, and you too will die in your sins if you don't repent. Those are the kind of things Jesus would say. So, the holiness of God is consistent through the whole Bible, Old and New (Old and New Testament.)

But look at here, verse 7 again, *"I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,.."* Not just the love of the Lord, the steadfast love of the Lord. He says, the praises that are due to the Lord according to all that He has granted us. All the incredible goodness that he's poured out to the house of Israel. And according to his, what?... compassion, according to the abundance, the overflowing abundance of His steadfast love.

Look at verse 8,

"For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely." And he became their Savior.

⁹ *In all their affliction (Boy, check this out guys. "In all their affliction") he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. (ESV)*
(How did they respond to him?)

Verse 10,

... they rebelled (They rebelled against that kind of goodness) and (they) grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

¹¹ *Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit,*

¹² *who caused his glorious arm (read that again, strength) to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name,*

¹³ *who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble.*

¹⁴ *Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name." (ESV)*

What I like about this prayer is that it comes to that place of remembrance. And it is being spoken from the voice of someone who has experienced defeat. Did you catch that? In the midst of those verses, he speaks like somebody who has experienced genuine defeat and yet is now recognizing God's incredible goodness to the nation of Israel.

Now the rest of this chapter begins a prayer of confession. And this is what's going to spill over into the next chapter and continue there. But here in verse 15 we see this beautiful prayer of a godly individual praying about the sin of his nation. And the reason I like this is because this is the kind of prayer I think that we can pray for our nation as well. He begins this way.

"15 Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me.

16 For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

17 O Lord, why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.

18 Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.

19 We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name."

That last verse is particularly poignant because the prayer confesses just that agony of the fact that we're like a completely atheistic nation. We're like a nation that never knew you in the first place. We're like a nation that has become so godless that you wouldn't even know that we ever heard about you in the first place.

Man, I hope... I pray that's not what happens to the United States of America. I know that we're already considered a post Christian nation. But I pray that the references to God in this country are not the things that are carved in stone on monuments around, scattered around Washington, D. C., and that's all there is. I pray that's not all there is. I pray there's more. I pray there's a people who long to know the Lord and walk with the Lord.

Chapter 64 continues with this incredible prayer, this prayer of national confession and repentance. And he goes on here in verse 1 saying,

"Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence-"

And I want you to stop there for a moment because I believe this is the true cry of the child of God throughout the ages. It was the cry of the righteous Israelites. It's the cry of God's people today. We see it in the Book of Revelation. Let me show you on the screen from Revelation chapter 22.

Revelation 22:17 (ESV)

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come."

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." (Rend the heavens. Tear apart the heavens And ("Come") let the one who hears say, (or repeat) "Come."

That's the heart. It's the heart of the Spirit. It's the heart of the church, "Lord, come." You see it here even in Isaiah. "Lord, come." He says, I wish that you would come and that the mountains would quake again like they did. We haven't seen that in our lifetime, he says.

Verse 2,

"as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil- to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence!" (And that's a prayer that's being held up for when Jesus returns, the nations of the world will tremble at his presence.)

³ *When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence."*

Have you ever had the Lord do something that you weren't looking for Him to do? Isn't that crazy? You pray, you pray, and you pray sometimes for God to do something that you want Him to do. And that prayer seems to go unanswered. And then the Lord does something that you never asked for. Something that you never expected Him to do. It's just that He pops into that situation sovereignly and just moves. And it's undeniable. The Lord has moved. And you're like, wow, that's incredible! That's amazing!

I've had that happen in my life on occasion; where the Lord picked me up and rescued me out of situations that I never asked Him to rescue me out of. In fact, I didn't even know I was in a situation until later on. And then I find... I look back at this thing and I'm going, wow! Thank you, God, for taking care of me. I didn't even know my fat was in the fire. Didn't even realize it. And that's what the prayer is saying here. Thank you, Lord, for those times you did those awesome things that we didn't even look for.

Verse 4 says,

"From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, (nor I) no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him." (ESV) (If that's not underlined in your Bible, it probably should be. That, especially that area there, "the God who acts for those who wait for him." Great.

So, somebody wrote me a note just this last week, said, pastor Paul, what does it mean to wait on the Lord? I love it when people ask me Bible questions because I got to go back and think about it myself. It's good for me. But I thought about that. I thought, wow! This is a really important question.

Earlier in Isaiah, you'll remember that we were told that, those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they'll mount up with wings as eagles. (Isaiah 40:31) Well, yeah, that's a pretty cool passage. But it's all predicated on waiting on the Lord. So we better figure out what waiting on the Lord is.

And so I thought to myself, that's a really good question, I'm glad they asked. And I wrote back and I basically said, waiting on the Lord is refraining from stepping out in the power and strength of self and instead telling the Lord that my confidence is in you and I'm going to trust you for deliverance. I am not going to work my own deliverance.

We do that all the time. We have a situation that is pressing and we become panicked. We become, fearful about it. And so what do we do? We just step into the fray and we work out our own deliverance.

Here's the problem with that; sometimes it works. Sometimes we're successful actually delivering ourselves. And I say that's a bad thing because it becomes very much easier to just step out and do that again. And again. And so now, every time we face a difficult situation we've just gotten... We've grown into this habitual sort of action where I just fix it. I just fix it.

And some of us are resolvers. I don't know if you're a resolver or not. But that's part of my personality, unfortunately. I have to really, really watch this. All the resolvers in the room, you guys are the ones that have a hard time going to bed at night until things are taken care of. Until things are squared away. Right?

And so, we resolvers, we have a special kind of a temptation that we can enter into very easily. To step into the arena that is God's to take care of and we begin to work out our own sort of deliverance. And again it becomes habitual. And then finally we reach a situation where there's nothing we can do or we try to fix it ourselves.

Kind of like Jacob. I love reading about Jacob in the Book of Genesis because he's so like me, or I like him trying to fix things. Trying to fix things in his own strength. Trying to work it out. And then we get to a place where there's nothing we can do. And then what happens?

There's this wrestling match with God where we have to find out that, even though we've been wrestling with God and He'll allow us to wrestle with Him for a season. He comes to that point where the sun comes up and He just simply touches us and the fight is over. It's done. (Genesis 32:22-32) All He had to do is touch us. And it's like, I can't fight anymore. And I'm reminded, oh yeah, I'm a weak idiot. I obviously lost sight of that because I've been stepping into God's arena and trying to work out problems in my own strength.

Well, that's the opposite of waiting on the Lord. Waiting on the Lord is not sitting and doing nothing. Because anybody who has continued to put your hope and trust and confidence in God knows that is a very active sort of an action on your part. It's not passive. You're constantly putting your faith in God. Lord, I trust in you. I refuse to step into the middle of this situation and fix it on my own.

What is the promise that's given to us there in verse 4? And that's the part I wanted you to highlight. God acts on behalf of those who wait for Him. Okay? He acts on behalf of those who wait. Pastor Paul, I've been praying about this and I didn't get an answer. You mean yet? You mean yet? You didn't get an answer yet. How long have you been praying? Two weeks? Where in the world did you, did someone tell you that two weeks is as long as anybody should ever have to go? Keep praying. Keep pressing.

I had somebody write me too, another question this week. How long should I pray? How long should I keep praying for a situation for? They were talking about a deal regarding like healing or something like that. How long should I

pray for healing or,...cause the Lord hasn't done anything. At what point do I just consider that my physical issue is a thorn in the flesh like Paul's thorn in the flesh? (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)

And I wrote back to that person and I reminded him, I said, listen, Paul did not believe that his issue was a thorn in the flesh simply because God hadn't answered him. He didn't deduce that from silence. God spoke to him. Jesus spoke to Paul and said, no, stop asking. It's there for a purpose. It's to keep your feet on the ground, son.

And that's why Paul went on to say, because of all these incredible revelations that I've been receiving throughout the course of my life, in order to keep me from becoming conceited. Now I understand. He gave me a thorn in the flesh. To keep me grounded. To keep me understanding that I'm a human being. Okay, I get it. But God showed him that. That's why he stopped praying about his thorn in the flesh.

Don't look at that thing and go, well, I guess Paul (the apostle) eventually just concluded it was a thorn in the flesh. No, that's what Jesus told him. You keep praying. You keep praying till you get the answer. Whatever the answer may be. Persevere in prayer. Continue to wait on the Lord. Doesn't matter how long. Keep waiting on the Lord. God's timetable is rarely in sync with our own. Rarely. In fact, I can't remember a time in my life when my timetable was the same as God's.

He's (Isaiah) continuing to talk about the blessings of the man who walks with the Lord, waits on the Lord.

Verse 5, he says,

"You meet him (Isn't that cool? Isn't that a neat image? You meet him. You meet the one) who joyfully works righteousness, (And that means is living his life to please you, not self.) those who remember you in your ways. Behold, (he says now,) you were angry, and we sinned; (We deserved it.) in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? He's asking that rhetorical question, will deliverance come?"

He says,

"⁶ We (all) have... become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment." Or your Bible may say, "filthy rags." I want you to notice there that it doesn't say that, "all of our sins are like filthy garments or

polluted rags" or something like that. He says our righteous deeds are like that. That means the best you and I can do is like a polluted garment.

That's a wake up comment, isn't it? I mean we start to think that we've got this serving God thing dialed in. And he's probably pretty happy with everything I'm doing. But alongside the absolute purity and holiness of the Lord, the best that you and I can do by comparison in the power of the flesh is "polluted and unclean." It's basically what it's talking about. All of our righteous acts. Our righteous acts.

I had somebody ask me one time, does that mean God doesn't appreciate what I do? You got to understand, He doesn't expect you to do things in the flesh. He's given you His Spirit, that you might walk in the Spirit, and accomplish things according to the power of the Spirit. And when we do that, because we're connected to Him, we begin to do things which have an eternal value.

When we do things in the flesh they have a temporal value. And they cannot please God. The man who walks in the flesh cannot please God. The man who walks in the Spirit is pleasing to God. So, our most righteous acts of self are like polluted garments.

He goes on to say in the middle of, the end of verse 6 there, "*We all fade like a leaf, (because of obviously our sins) and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.* And that's a very poetic reference to how death comes to all because of sin. (Romans 5:12)

Verse seven,

"There is no one who calls upon your name, ..." That's interesting. You might say, well, I don't think that's true. I mean, I've heard people call on the name of the Lord. I think I remember at some point in my life, myself calling on the name of the Lord. What does he mean when he says "*There is no one who calls upon your name...?*") Is he just being down? Is he just being negative?

I think this is a statement he's comparing sinful human man. And completely eliminating the whole idea of the grace of God, and the power of God, and the drawing work of the Holy Spirit. And apart from that, in our flesh, no one, no one, calls upon the name of the Lord. We don't call upon the name of the Lord apart from Him, even you guys.

See that's the incredible thing about grace. The grace that God gives us to live our lives. He even gives us grace to call upon Him. That... even calling on His

name is not a credit to your account. That is through the Spirit. Jesus said, no one comes to me unless the Father draws him. (John 6:43) There's this work of the Spirit that is always going on. There's no one who, in and of themselves, by their flesh, calls upon the name of the Lord.

Nobody *"who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.*

⁸ *But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.*" That verse right there, verse 8, is an important one to meditate on.

There is a place, a very important place, that every Christian has to come to at some point in their walk with Jesus, where they recognize the hand of the potter. And not just the hand of the potter, but that they themselves are the clay in His hand.

That is a very important determination, realization, revelation, that we all come to. And we begin to then see what happens in our lives. And the difficulties that we come to as the work of God's hand, rather than just some random acts of evil, or bad luck, or karma, or whatever you want to call it. But that I am in the hands of God. And He's the potter, I'm the clay. It's a pretty incredible idea.

Verse 9,

"Be not so terribly angry, O Lord, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people.

¹⁰ (Holy cities) *Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.*

¹¹ *Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, (Remember something, when Isaiah wrote this, the temple was still standing. This is prophetic.) and all our pleasant places have become ruins.*

¹² *Will you restrain yourself at these things, O Lord? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly."* Wow, you can just feel the heart, can't you, of that prayer. That prayer is so intimate, so passionate, so necessary, so beautiful. You need to recognize, Lord, we need you. We need you.