

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

All right, pardon me, good evening and welcome to our mid-week Bible study on Thursday nights. We're going through the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse.

And before we get started, I just wanted to give you a praise report, especially for our local congregation here. As many of you know, Pastor Mac had surgery on Monday morning. We prayed for him, laid hands on him during our prayer meeting the Tuesday night prior. And he wanted me to share with you on his behalf that not only was the surgery and absolute success as we prayed for, but it was so pronounced that it was one of those things, and he's going to share this I'm thinking as soon as he's back, which, by the way, get this: He may be here on Sunday. Only the Lord could do that. This thing was major surgery.

So anyway, he called me; he said, you know, Pastor JD, there are times in my life where you know, you pray and God answers that prayer. But then there's those other times in your life when you pray and it is unmistakable that the outcome was so much different because you prayed, so much so that had you not prayed, the outcome would not have been the same, and he said this was one of those times. You know how that is where -- yes, praise the Lord!

So I remember this was a while ago on a prayer night I shared how that particular day my day ended up in such a way that I knew without question that it was because I took the time that day to pray. In other words, had I not prayed that day specifically, my day would have ended up very different and not in a good way. It's just one of those times where you realize just how powerful prayer is to change things. And then you think about, and sometimes you just kind of shriek in horror when you think about it, but how things would have been different if I didn't pray.

You know, like James says; we're going to be referring to James a couple of times tonight, but it's like James says, "You have not because you ask not." That one verse should send shivers up and down every single one of our spiritual spines when it comes to prayer. It's like God says, "Oh, if you would have but prayed, if you would have but asked, I would have done exceedingly abundantly, above and beyond anything you could have ever thought or imagined."

So anyway, praise the Lord! Let's pray that we see Pastor Mac here on Sunday. Actually, he has to walk around as part of the recovery process in the therapy. So I said, "Well, you got plenty of walking to do here, so get back and we'll follow the doctor's orders."

All right, so we are going to be in Isaiah tonight. We're starting the Book of Isaiah. Lord willing, we'll make it through Chapter 1. I'll have you turn there, invite those of you that are watching online to join with us, and then we'll get there shortly.

I want to just real quick take a moment for the benefit of our online church and update you on the progress with the livestreaming at our JDFarag.org website. We really do very much appreciate your continued patience with us, but it is infinitely more important that you continue praying for us. I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance, the paramount importance of prayer.

Yes, we just got done talking about. That's what's going to make the difference is prayer, and we know that and we're asking you for that. And we're asking for prayer specifically. When we pray we would do well to pray specifically, and the specific prayer is for the closed captioning. This is the priority, especially for the hearing impaired, also the downloading, sharing, TV broadcasting, and also the availability of the teachings and transcripts, which, by the way, are available now at the CalvaryChapelKaneohe.com website.

Now it's our plan to sort of merge and migrate all of those teachings into one location so they're easily accessible. But it's a big job, and again, we really covet your prayers in that regard. Now, for the benefit of our YouTube subscribers, we don't want you to feel like we've abandoned you. Please know this is only for the Prophecy Update. We're still on YouTube.

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

Tonight's Bible study is livestreamed in its entirety, as is the Sunday morning sermon where we're also going verse-by-verse through the Bible. Lord willing, this Sunday we're going to finish 2 Timothy.

So what we're doing though with the Prophecy Update is only livestreaming on YouTube and Facebook just the introduction. So we end the livestream, and then we're really encouraging you to actually start at JDFarag.org for the complete, uninterrupted, and more importantly, the uncensored Prophecy Updates.

So again, please, please, we appreciate your patience with us, but please, please, please pray for us. We're really working hard towards that end, and we're hoping to accomplish that soon and very soon, before the rapture at least anyway.

All right, let's pray! If you would, please join with me, we'll ask God to bless our time together tonight in His Word. Father in heaven, thank You so much!

Lord, we truly cannot thank You enough. You are so good. You are too good to us, Lord. You're so kind and gentle and merciful, long-suffering, patient with us. Lord, tonight we're here because we're hungry and we're thirsty for You and that which only You can satiate in and through Your Word, the bread of life, the water of life.

So Lord, we posture ourselves before You tonight humbly with a teachable spirit, with open hearts to receive what it is that You would desire to speak into our lives to minister to us. Lord, we're really looking forward to what You have for us in this amazing Book of Isaiah. So Lord, speak; your servants are listening, in Jesus' name, Amen.

All right, well tonight we're turning a corner of sorts in our trek through the Bible verse-by-verse. And we begin now our study through the prophetic books, starting with the Book of Isaiah. So the Old Testament, as you know, consists of 39 books, and they're actually divided into four sections.

And the first section is the Pentateuch, the first five books of Moses. Actually, that's what "pent" means, pentagon, pentagram, five, Pentecost, actually five. The first five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, we studied through those. It's been quite some time now, but then after the Pentateuch, we studied through the historic books.

And the historic books contain 12 books total, starting with Joshua, then Judges, Ruth, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. And then when you get to Job, you get into what are known as the poetic books. And this is Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and then the Song of Solomon, which we just completed a couple weeks ago.

So now the corner we're turning is into the remaining books of the Old Testament, 17 books total. Pardon me, and they're known as the prophetic books, and they're actually divided into major prophets and minor prophets. And not because the major prophets are superior and the minor prophets inferior. Rather, it's because of the volume of the books, major prophets in the sense that these are major books, voluminous.

In fact, the Book of Isaiah that we're going to begin tonight has 66 chapters. Does that mean we're going to be in the Book of Isaiah at one chapter a week for 66 weeks? No, we will do our best to get through this in a timely fashion, but not so fast that we would in any way miss what God has for us.

So we're going to start off with just Chapter 1 tonight. But Isaiah starts off the prophetic books, and the major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Book of Lamentations is a prophetic book, Ezekiel, oh, my goodness, and then of course, the Book of Daniel. Those are the major prophets. Now when you get into

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

the minor prophets, these are, in terms of their volume, shorter books. The Prophet Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and then lastly, Malachi.

So now some of you are looking at me, and I know what you're thinking because I can read your mind. And you're saying to me, "When did you start in the Book of Genesis?" "I'm not going to tell you when we started in the book of Genesis, actually think it was about 2006."

"So wait a minute, Pastor, let me let me do the math just real quick, if you don't mind. So if you started in the Book of Genesis and we're just now starting in the Book of Isaiah, and you started in the year 2006 and this is the year 2021, how many years is that?"

"It's a lot of years."

"So what are you saying, are we going to get through the Old Testament before the rapture?"

"I hope not, I hope the rapture comes first."

Again, we're going to go through it and take our time, not go too fast, certainly not go too slow either. So anyway, Isaiah, Chapter 1: This chapter has with it an invitation from the Lord to simply reason together with Him concerning sin.

If you want to take-away, a devotional thought from this chapter, that's what it would be. If you were to put a caption on this chapter, it would be simply, "be reasonable." And that's what we're going to see when we get to verse 18.

Now, as we go through the Book of Isaiah, really as with any book in the Old Testament, all of which points to and speaks of the person of Jesus Christ, but in particular the Book of Isaiah, Jesus and salvation are woven throughout the fabric of the entirety of this prophetic book. It's all about Jesus from front to finish.

Actually, you know what the name Isaiah means? You know in the Hebrew, and really in the Middle East to this day, the name is the nature. You know, Yitzhak or Isaac, the name Yitzhak means "laughter." That's what we refer to it and say "Isaac," but that was his name because that was the nature of his birth.

It was laughable that a woman 90 years of age and a father 100 years of age could actually have a biological son (Laughing). I know; we'll name him Yitzhak. Yitzhak in Hebrew, it's actually the same word in my native tongue of Arabic, Yadhak, it literally means laughter.

If I were to say to you in Arabic "ina yadhak mayiqum," I just got done saying I laugh with you," laughter, yadhak. Isaac, Yitzhak; the name is the nature, and so too is this true with the name Isaiah. It means "the Lord is salvation." That's what his name means.

And here's what's really interesting: The word "salvation" is found 26 times in the Book of Isaiah. Well, what's the big deal? Well, the big deal is all of the other prophetic books combined, you only find the word "salvation" mentioned seven times in all of the other books combined. Yet here in the Book of Isaiah 26 times, you find the word "salvation" with this prophet inspired by the Holy Spirit whose name means "the Lord is salvation."

Do you kind of get the impression that the Lord wants us to be reasonable when it comes to His plan of salvation? That's what this chapter is about, and that's what we're going to start off with here in this study through the book. We're going to get to know Isaiah.

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

Some of the things that we do know about him and we'll see in this book is that he was married and had two sons. Now the writer of Hebrews in referring to those great witnesses, that great cloud of witness, the Hall of Faith, many who were mightily used of God, and there's this one reference to those who were "sawed asunder."

And some believe that under the reign of one of the most, if not the most wicked kings in all of Israel's history by the name of Manasseh, he actually had Isaiah put into a hollow tree and was sawed in half and martyred under the under the king, this King Manasseh, in the northern tribe of Israel. You have to understand that the time of Isaiah, Israel was divided into two parts. You had Southern Judah and then you had the Northern Tribes, the Northern Tribes of Israel.

And what's really interesting when you get into the study of the kings, which we did when we were in 1st and 2nd Kings, and we're going to see here in verse 1 in just a moment there were only nine good kings, and all of those good kings who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord were in Judah. You know how many good kings they had in the Northern Tribe of Israel? Zero count them, zero. All of the kings did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, save nine kings only.

And what's even more interesting, and this was a fascinating study in the kings, is that of those nine, only one throughout all of his life never did anything towards the end of his life that would be a sin against the Lord. And he's an obscure name that we're going to actually read in verse 1, and his name is Jotham, King Jotham. You never hear about him. You hear about King David, he was a good king, of course, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. But he committed adultery and murder, and you go down through the list, even King Uzziah, which Isaiah was personal friends with.

In fact, when we get into, I want to say it's Chapter 6 actually, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on the throne. This was a very good king who reigned for 52 years. And when he died, it shook Isaiah, so much so that he had to behold the throne and the Lord seated on the throne to settle his heart. Because what are we going to do now? This good king is gone.

But you know what Uzziah did? Check this out: He was not a priest; he was only a king. But he did that which only a priest could do and should do, and he entered into the Holy of Holies. And that was forbidden for a King, only the priest could, the high priest. And when he did that, he was struck with leprosy and they ran him out. And it was like God saying, "What are you doing?" And even then he was obstinate; this is a good king. Can you imagine what the bad kings were like? And yet this was a good king, King Uzziah, and we're going to read about him here in a moment.

Now let me set this up and then we'll dive in. And we will get through this chapter tonight, but beginning here in Chapter 1 and continuing through Chapter 5 see it like this. It's like God is laying out a court case against Judah. He's calling upon the heavens and the earth to bear witness in this courtroom, and Judah is the defendant, and as such, they're found guilty as charged. But God in His love, His grace, His mercy wants them to reason together with Him, offers a settlement, if you will, and that settlement is salvation is here in Chapter 1.

All right, Verse 1, "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, (or Yotham) (that's the guy) Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Verse 2, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. "The ox, verse 3, knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib. But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

Oh, boy, we're off to a horrible start, actually. What's this about? This is the opening arguments? Yeah. He's talking about Judah being dumber than an ox? Yeah. He's talking about Judah being more stubborn

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

than a donkey? Yeah, He's referring to them as His children who have rebelled against Him? That's how he's going to start off in this indictment, bring in the charges against Judah? Yeah. Why?

Well, you really have to understand the cultural dynamics in the Middle East, certainly in that time and even present modern-day, and sadly, we miss it in our day, in this Western culture. You have to know that it would be unthinkable to dishonor your father and your mother, but especially your father in that culture. You go to the Middle East today -- you know, we talk about, well of course in these last days, I mean, and maybe as a parent or even a grandparent, you said this to those little whippersnappers, "If I talked to my mom and dad like that, I wouldn't be allowed to tell you about it."

You know, it's like kids today, right, we just kind of brush it off and blow it off, "Oh, kids today." Oh, no, you would never hear that in the Middle East. And you wouldn't even hear that today. If a child so much as talked back to his father, ooh, you will be in great danger. It is criminal! It is unthinkable, the dishonor and the shame brought on the family name would be such that it would have to be punished to the severest extent.

And in this, you have packaged with this the loving heart of a tender, loving heavenly Father who says, "You've rebelled against Me as my children." Think about that. How about us as earthly parents with our children? Have you ever heard that expression: You're only as happy as your saddest child? How much hurt does it bring to the heart of a father, a heart of a mother when a child is rebellious, that prodigal son, that wayward daughter? I'll tell you, it's a pain that is so deep that one can hardly even believe that a human being could experience the depth of such pain.

How much more our heavenly Father? This is His case against them. You have dishonored Me as a rebellious child dishonors their father. Now in our day, again, we would look at that and say, "Well, what's the big deal? Kids these days; I mean, come on, this is the way it is, it is what it is." No, it's not. If a daughter or a son in any way did this, it would have been, again, unthinkable, and it would have to be judged.

Now, stay with me on this because this is going to be germane to our understanding of this book and certainly this chapter tonight because it's chapters like this, it's books like this, particularly in the Old Testament, that give God bad press, if I can say it like that. It's books like this, it's chapters like this that cause people to say, "You know, the God of the Old Testament was a wrathful God."

Well, God is just, but God is loving too. Here's the thing: If God was not just, He would not be loving. And if God were not loving, He would not be just. Let me explain. Let's say that we go into court and the perpetrator of the crime, horrific crime, unspeakable crime against the little child, let's say, let's just bring it up a notch. It rises to that level, I mean, it is an unspeakable, evil crime that's been committed. And you go into the courtroom and the judge is a loving judge. He says, "You know what? We're good." Passes an easy sentence. Time served, slap on the hand, slap on the wrist, as they say. That's unjust. Oh, but he's loving. No, he's not because what about the victims? That's not loving towards the victims.

See, God -- I want to say it like this, and for lack of a better way of saying it -- it's not that God has a problem because God doesn't have problems, obviously. But He has a dilemma of sorts, and that dilemma is: How does He remain just and loving at the same time? This is how: Grace, salvation, redemption. Because see, He could still be just. He becomes a man with us, God with us, fully God/fully man, dies for us because of His love for us. There's the love, and pays the price satisfying justice, and there's the justice.

Do you see the beautiful marriage between love and justice? He's just God, but He's a loving God, and He can't be one without the other. If He's not just, He's neither loving, nor is He not loving if He's unjust. He's a just judge. His judgments are righteous and just. He is a just, loving God and loving judge.

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

Verse 4, you need to have that in your hip pocket, so to speak, because it's going to get a little bit gnarly here, as we're about to see. Verse four, "Alas, sinful nation. A people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord; they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel." We're going to see that reference throughout this book, the Holy One of Israel. "They have turned away backward." I don't know if you notice this or not, but just in one verse there are seven serious charges in this indictment, and that's by design because the number seven is the number of completion. What God is saying in charging them with these indictments, seven in all, is that their wickedness was complete wickedness, complete and utter and total wickedness.

Verse 5, "Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises," -- and this is -- uhh, could have gone without hearing this, especially after dinner -- "and putrefying sores. They have not been closed or bound up or soothed with ointment."

You know what God's saying here in this indictment against Judah? He's saying, no amount of discipline seems to have any effect. I have disciplined you from the top of your head to the bottom of your foot, and yet you keep on sinning against Me.

You know, I think we would do well when we read passages like this to allow the Holy Spirit unfettered access to that deep recess in our hearts, that place in our hearts that is obstinate, stubborn, rebellious, unteachable. It's like God saying, "I've tried everything to discipline you, but there's nothing that works. You are not able to be disciplined. I've tried everything to correct you, but you're not correctable. I've done everything and stopped at nothing to teach you, and you're unteachable. Nothing seems to work, no amount of discipline.

Keep in mind, and this is important, "discipline," this is one of those words that conjures up all sorts of negative connotations. Discipline, oooh! It actually comes from the root word "disciple," to train, to discipline, to instruct, to direct. That's what He's saying here. I want to direct you, correct you, protect you from unnecessary suffering, of the consequences of your sin and rebellion. I'm trying to discipline you, disciple you, train you, lead you, guide you, and you won't be led. You won't be corrected. I've tried everything. What an indictment! It gets worse.

Verse 7, "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire. Strangers devour your land in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers." "So (verse 8) the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in the vineyard (vulnerable, insecure) as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city." The common denominator in all of those comparisons is vulnerability and insecurity.

Verse 9, "Unless (I like this word) the Lord of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom. We would have been made like Gomorrah." We're going to hear about Sodom and Gomorrah referenced again here shortly. You know what's happening here? This is again one of those paradoxical marriages between mercy and judgment. It's the mercy of God. Unless God in His mercy, the Lord of hosts, would have just been merciful to us and left us but a small remnant, we would have ended up like Sodom and Gomorrah.

You know how it ended up for Sodom and Gomorrah? Completely destroyed. But God in His mercy, in His love and His compassion, He saved for Himself a small remnant. And unless the Lord would have done that, it would have been completely devastating. And again, this is a demonstration as only God can of both mercy on one side yet judgment on the other. This blend, it's a paradox between justice and love. He's a just God, but he's a loving God and he's a merciful God.

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

Verse 10, “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me, says the Lord. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come (verse 12) to appear before Me, who has required this from your hands to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices. Incense is an abomination to Me, the new moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies. I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.” Translated: I've had it! I can't take it anymore! I cannot endure it anymore! Stop bringing me your sacrifices!

What a chilling and scathing indictment against the futility of their worship. It's meaningless. It's inconsequential. It means nothing to me; in fact, if anything, I become incensed with your incense and burnt offerings, as it were. It's an abomination to Me. That's pretty strong, you know. I hate it. That's what He's saying. It's abominable, unacceptable. It's repulsive to Me and I can't take it anymore, stop! Stop doing it! Stop worshiping me outwardly. I see the heart. Your heart's not in it. It's going to get even a little bit more graphic here in a moment, as if it couldn't.

Verse 14, “Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, (verse 16) make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good(verse 17.) Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor. Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

Wow, whoa! Well, you it sounds like to me is that they had innocent blood on their hands, the very hands that they would raise in worship to the Lord. And the Lords like “I'm not even going to look. Oh, and those prayers? I don't even hear them. Why? Because you got blood on your hands? Stop! Stop it!”

This is a quintessential textbook case of hypocrisy. One thing on the outward, the opposite on the inward. They have blood on their hands, the blood of the innocents on their hands, and notice the reference here to the widow and the fatherless. James says that pure, undefiled religion, better understood in our day as pure, undefiled, unadulterated worship, you want to worship God, you want to please God, take care of the widow and the fatherless. That's pure, undefiled worship in religion. God takes seriously the widow, the fatherless.

You know that when I was a young believer, I just thought of this: it's kind of interesting, but you know when people would say, “Well, God helps those who help themselves?” You ever heard that? You know, when I was a young believer, actually, I'll never forget this conversation, it was like it was just yesterday, and I was talking about cousin, and he quoted that, and I'm just like a new believer. I mean, I'm talking babe in Christ, infant, I'm like weeks old. (Crying) I'm a spiritual infant and I had no -- I was still in the process of reading through the Bible in its entirety, from Genesis to Revelation for the first time.

The year was 1986, by the way. Don't do the math; I was five years old in 1986. I was a new believer and I hadn't got through the whole Bible yet, and he said, “Well, you know, God helps those who help themselves.” I'm like, oh, wow because it sounds like it was in the Bible. And it turns out it's not in the Bible. Oh, it's next to that other verse that people think is in the Bible: Cleanliness is next to godliness. It's in the Book of 1 Hezekiah. The problem is: There is no such thing as the Book of 1 Hezekiah. It's not in the Bible. This notion of God helps those who help themselves: It's the opposite that's true. God helps those who can't help themselves. He's the God of the helpless and the hopeless throughout Scripture.

In fact, I think 1 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat, King Jehoshaphat, another good king, by the way, messed up, but still a good king, one of the nine. There comes this army, great hoard, I mean, it's game over; they know it. I mean, here they are, this small army of Israelites, and this great horde is coming against them. And Jehoshaphat is like, we're going to pray, we're going to fast, all of the Israelites, their families, their children with them. I love that detail, by the way. Sometimes our children need to be involved in the

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

worship of the Lord. They need to see us as their parents modeling worship of the Lord and prayer and worship and fasting and seeking the Lord. They need to see that model.

So all of the families gather together, and Jehoshaphat cries out to God. And he says this, he says, “God, we are helpless. There's no hope against this great hoard. We don't know what we're going to do, but our eyes are on You. The heavenly hush, shh, quiet. Did you just hear what Jehoshaphat prayed? He said he's helpless. He says they don't know what to do. He said their eyes are on Me. Go!

And then he says to Jehoshaphat, “Jehoshaphat, you're not going to have to fight this battle. Battle belongs to the Lord.” That's not to say that all battles don't have to be fought. There are battles that have to be fought, but not this one. I'll take care of this one for you.

“Did you say you were helpless?”

“Yeah, I don't know what we're going to do.”

“Okay, I got this then.” He said, “I just want you to stand and watch Me now.”

And he delivers this great hoard into the hands of the Israelites, miraculously, even effortlessly all because Jehoshaphat said, “We're helpless. We don't know what to do. Our eyes are on you.”

I say that to share this. I'm learning this in my own walk with the Lord. I think the Lord waits for us to come to that place where we throw up our hands and we say, “This is funny. The odds, yeah, we're toast with a capital T and a capital toast too. I mean, unless You intervene, there's no way.”

And I think it's, as we say, music to God's ears. Oh,” that's what I needed to hear. Now watch Me. Because see, now only I will get the glory for it. Even if you wanted to try, I mean, it would be, it would just be a joke.”

Oh, yeah, I think about Gideon and his army, 300 men against the army of the Midianites. One detail in the narrative says that there were too many to be numbered. Another part suggests that just in the close proximity of the army of the Israelites, there was about 135,000. And you know how it went down, right? So Gideon starts off with 32,000 men, and then God says, “You got too many men.”

To which Gideon is like, “No, they have too many men. They have... we only have...”

He says, “No, you got too many men and so here's what I want you to do. I want you to...”

I would have loved to have been a fly on the camel there to see the expression on Gideon's face when God says, “I want you to go to these 32,000 men and say if any of you are afraid, you could go home.” If I'm Gideon, here's how I'm doing it. If any of you are (mumbling - afraid, you can go home). Right? Because you don't want to go home because you know they're afraid and you know a lot of them are going to go home. Sure enough, 22,000 left.

And then Gideon is like, “What's up with this?” And now he's got 10,000 men. And God says, “Gideon, you still have too many men.”

“Really?”

“Yes, really. So I want you to take them down to the springs.”

Those of you that have been to Israel with us have been to these springs. It's an amazing sight. And He says, “I want you to separate the 10,000 men that remain. And I want you to put the ones over here that

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

just stick their face in the water and just, (lapping sound) you know, drink it because they're thirsty, they're all really thirsty. And then I want you to put them over here, and then I want you to put the ones that cup the water and bring it to their mouth, and I want you to put them over here.”

Now you gotta wonder what's going through Gideon's mind. How many men are going to stick their face in the water? 9700. So the picture of the scene. And if you're there, you see, it's a vast area. I could picture 9700 guys. There's enough land mass there. They're all over there, and I'm looking and I'm just watching Gideon. And there's 300 men over there that cup of water.

Now, you probably heard that taught like this: Well, these were the top guns, man, the Green Berets, keeping their eyes on the battlefield, you know, whereas the other ones that stuck their face in the water, I mean, you know, they're not battle-worthy. They're not keeping their eye on the battlefield.

I don't believe that because it doesn't fit. Remember now when God calls Gideon, you know where he's at? He's in the wine press, threshing grain. You know why? Because he's afraid of the Medianites because they would steal the grain from the Israelites. So he's hiding out in total fear.

And then God comes to him, “Oh, mighty warrior.”

Here's Gideon: “Where,” right? “Me?”

“Yeah, you.”

“No, God, listen, I'm the black sheep of my family. My family is the black sheep of our tribe. And our tribe is the black sheep of all of the 12 tribes of Israel. Three strikes, I'm out, You got the wrong guy, You pulled the wrong file.”

God says, “No, that's exactly why I'm going to use you; watch Me now.”

So then you know the whole fleece thing? Well, this was, you know, this was an act of faith. You know, “God, I need confirmation.” Totally not faith. He was trying to get out of it. You know how it went down, right? He puts the fleece out, “Okay, God, if this is really, really You, let the dew be on the ground and not on the fleece.”

And God's like, “Okay, all right, dew, no fleece.”

Next morning he wakes up, “Okay, God, if it's really, really, really, really, really You, this time have the dew be on the fleece and not on the ground.”

And God's like, “Okay, whatever.”

Next day, you know, dew on the fleece, not on the ground.” Now he's stuck. He says, “Okay, now I'm going to deliver the Medianites into your hands.”

And he's got 300 men. Do you know why the 300 men cupped the water and brought it to their mouth and didn't just stick their whole face in there and get into the water and drink to their heart's content? They couldn't. Why? They were the lame, the elderly, the crippled, the infirmed. I ain't getting back up. That ship has sailed a long time ago.

Doesn't that fit? Because even if 300 top guns, they still could have conceivably taken the credit for the defeat of the Medianites. “You should have seen us, man, the strategy.” Could you imagine 300 -- I'm sorry, I mean no disrespect. They're coming back to the camp of the Israelites on their walker. “You

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

should have seen us, our canes, you know?” Wait, you guys? No, you didn't! Look at you! Only God gets the glory. Even if you tried, you could not take the credit for it. God does it in such a fashion that only He gets the glory.

Okay, where were we? We were in Isaiah, Chapter 1 at some point here. So verse 14, oh, yeah, He's saying just stop already, blood on your hands. And yet you lift those same hands to worship Me. Verse 18, and here it comes. “Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” So if we're in this courtroom setting, it's like God saying, “Hey, let's settle this.” Let's settle this.

God's extending an invitation and an offer to just be reasonable.

“Let's reason together. Let's settle this out of court, if you will. Here's an offer. Here's an offer because the trial is not looking good for you. I just laid out My case. It's not looking good for you. You want to settle?”

“Yeah.”

“You want to make the Defense an offer?”

“Yeah, what's the offer; I mean, listen, at this point, whatever the offer is, I'll take it. Because if I don't, yeah, I'm dead. I'm dead. I'm guilty. It's the death penalty. So what's the offer?”

Okay, verse 19, “If (that's a big if, as we say) if you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

You know what this is? This is God giving us our free will to either choose, or refuse. He will never force himself on any man. Even the Holy Spirit will not continue to strive with man forever. God is in effect pleading with them: Be reasonable, Let's reason together. You've seen the charges I've laid out against you, the indictment. You are guilty as charged. Be reasonable. Be reasonable.

Verse 21, “How the faithful city has become a harlot. It was full of justice, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Your silver (verse 22) has become dross, your wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebellious and companions of thieves. Everyone loves bribes and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.” There it is again.

What's He saying? He's saying you've committed a spiritual adultery. You've played the harlot, you sold out, and committed spiritual harlotry and adultery. And again, we have this reference from James who says, “That friendship with the world means that you're at enmity with God. And then James says, “You adulterers, you adulteresses.”

Now before we go on and finish the chapter, I think it would be good for us to consider this for just a moment. You know, we're always prone when it comes to passages like this to smugly, even piously fancy ourselves as “I would never do that.” Oh, really?

You know, when you read throughout the Old Testament, you see the rebellion of Israel against God throughout their history. You're like, “Man, those Israelites.” When you go to the Exodus, here God does miracle after miracle after miracle. I mean, you would think after the whole Red Sea miracle, they would never complain. I mean, it was hours after the Red Sea was parted; they're already complaining again. “Aren't there enough, weren't there enough graves in Egypt? You had to bring us out here to kill us?”

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

And here's how we look at that. We're like, "Man, those Israelites, what's the matter with them?" Them? What about you? What about me? I think we would do well to consider this every time because we are just prone to commit spiritual harlotry and adultery when we become too friendly with the world and love the world and the things in the world.

Verse 24. "Therefore, the Lord says, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will rid myself of My adversaries and take vengeance on My enemies. I will turn My hand against you and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy. I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward, you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

What? Wow, You were really mad at us and judging us. And now what are You saying?

Oh, I'm going to judge you all right, but judgment begins in the house of the Lord. I'm going to do some house cleaning here. I'm going to start with the judges, going to purge away the dross, purify my people, make righteous again My city.

Verse 27, "Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness. The destruction (verse 28) of transgressors and of sinners shall be together. And those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed. For they shall be (now, this is a key word, hang on to this) ashamed. Ashamed of the terebinth trees which you have desired."

These are the trees that they would have these just horrific, sexual immorality took place around these trees. "And you shall be (here's another word to hang on to along with ashamed) embarrassed because of the gardens which you have chosen.

For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has no water (barren, dry). The strong (verse 31) shall be as tinder, and the work of it as a spark. Both will burn together, and no one shall quench them."

I hate to end chapter in the Bible study on such a note, but there might be some redemptive lesson here for us to take home with us. I think the lesson is that godly sorrow and sanctified shaming is a good thing. Paul to the Corinthians says, "It's the godly sorrow that leads to repentance." You know, I think in our day and age we just don't get embarrassed anymore. There's no shame anymore.

I think our tolerance levels for that which is shameful is so high now. The bar has been raised, if I could say it like that, and there comes a time in our Christian lives where we need a good dose of sanctified shaming, we need that godly sorrow. Can I say it like this? A godly embarrassment where the shame of the nakedness of your debauchery and rebellion and sin and sexual immorality is so embarrassing, so shameful.

And the reason why that's a good thing is because that's what is needed to bring a person to a genuine repentance. You know, there are two kinds of sorrow. There's the sorrow of being caught, like every time you get pulled over in traffic. I'm so sorry, Officer. I see Paula, over here. I haven't had a speeding ticket in 35 years, right, Paula? Yeah.

So anyway, but you get pulled over. I'm talking about you, not me because I'm such an upstanding citizen of the community and such a godly man. But you get pulled over by the police, right? What's the first thing out of your mouth? "I'm so sorry, Officer."

"Do you know how fast you're going?"

"No, I'm so sorry."

Isaiah 1:1-31 – February 11, 2020

Be Reasonable

JD Farag

You're not sorry; you're sorry you got pulled over. If you were really sorry, you wouldn't drive so fast. You would repent, you would change your driving habits. That's true sorrow. Yeah, I'm so sorry that I'm going to actually do something about this. That's called repentance. That's a godly sorrow, that's a genuine sorrow that leads to a genuine repentance.

It's like when your kids were little. Oh, they're so sorry. "I'm Sorry, I'm so sorry. " No, you're not; you're sorry I caught you. That's why you're sorry. Now comes spanking time. You're not sorry at all; if you were sorry, you wouldn't have done it. Because sorrow, godly sorrow, true sorrow leads to genuine repentance.

That's what God saying here. You need a good dose of godly sorrow because that's what's going to lead, that's the only thing that's going to lead to a genuine repentance. Sometimes we need to embrace that sanctified shame. And we have to realize just a shame of our sin, not condemnation, because that distances us from God, but conviction, that's what brings us to God for the forgiveness in our repentance.

That's a good way to end the chapter, right? Why don't you stand, we'll pray. Wow, we're off to quite the start, aren't we? 65 more chapters of this? Yeah.

Thank you, Lord. Lord, oh, You are so loving. And you are so just, and God, truth be made known, we wouldn't have it any other way. You're merciful, Lord, and we thank You for Your mercy. And we love You so much, in Jesus name, Amen.