

September 9, 2021
Isaiah 42 – What is Jesus Like?
JD Farag

Good evening and welcome to our midweek Bible study. On Thursday nights, we're going through the Bible book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, and we are currently in the amazing book of Isaiah. We finished Chapter 41 last week. And so we're going to pick it up Chapter 42 tonight.

And I would invite you at this time if you're not already there to turn there. And once you do, if you would, please join with me. Let's pray and we'll ask God to bless our Bible study and our time together in His Word tonight.

Oh, Lord, thank You so much, for Your Word at such a time as this and for this time that we have on Thursday nights where we can just come to this, Your church. Lord, many of us are just super-stressed and just so much pressure right now and so much in the way of confusion. We know that You're not the author of confusion. So much in the way of anxiety and fear and uncertainty.

Lord, we know that if faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, then so too conversely, fear comes by hearing and hearing the world. And so, Lord, tonight we're here because we want to hear You as You speak into our lives in and through Your Word.

We need to hear Your voice, Lord. There's so many voices clamoring for our attention, the threatening voices out there. Lord, we need to hear Your voice tonight. We need to hear Your Word tonight.

Lord, speak as only You can in that still, small, refining voice of the Holy Spirit. Lord bless our time together. This is our time with You in Your Word. And so, Lord, bless our time together tonight, we pray in Jesus' name, amen and amen.

All right, so I made the decision to only take Chapter 42 tonight because it's one of the most magnificent descriptions of what Jesus is like. And as we're about to see, Isaiah, by the Holy Spirit is going to paint this powerful prophetic portrait of the coming Savior of the world.

You know how it is when you know someone knows someone, and you want to know what are they like? What are they like? Well, that's kind of what Isaiah is going to do for us tonight. We're going to get this picture of what Jesus is like, who He is, and how He is.

And really the takeaway is going to be that we can glean from it not only what Jesus is like, but in so doing, ask ourselves this question: Are we like Jesus? Oh, this is what Jesus is like. Well, I want to be Christlike.

And oh, by the way, the not-so-often-quoted verse after the very-often-quoted-verse in Romans Chapter 8, you know which one I'm referring to? Romans 8:29, oh, no, I'm sorry, 28 comes before 29. Oh, we know it well, right? "For we know that all things work together for the good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose."

Oh, I love that verse. Thank you, Lord. "All things work together for the good."

But it doesn't just stop there. There's a qualifier that is found in the next verse because in verse 28, we're told that "those who are called according to His purpose."

Okay, well, now we've got to ask the question and answer the question of: what's Your purpose? Oh so glad you asked.

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Verse 29, the purpose of God is to make us more like Jesus. He's conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ. That's His purpose.

Now we need to know what the fine print is, the terms of service, if I can say it like that. If you're anything like me, I know you do this because you're a lot like me, whether you want to admit it or not.

But you know, when you agree to the terms, do you read all of that? That's what I thought. Neither do I. Click, click, come on, let's get this show on the road, get this thing downloaded. I agreed to these terms.

Have you actually read through those, the conditions that you're agreeing to, by the way, the fine print, as we used to say back in the day?

Well, that's kind of what it is. See, this conforming into the image of Jesus Christ means that God's purpose is to make us more like Jesus.

Okay, well what was Jesus like so that I know that that's what I'm going to be made like because I'm going to be made like Jesus. And so that's what we're going to see here tonight.

So you ready with that introduction?

Verse 1, "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him. He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."

Just in the first verse, in fact, the first few verses right out of the chute, we start with this prophecy, and it's a prophecy that points to the person of Jesus Christ and His First Coming. When this prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew's gospel, we have the record that it was fulfilled in Chapter 12:16-21.

Matthew, by the Holy Spirit, says of Jesus, "Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him and He will declare justice to the Gentiles."

And then verse 19, which we're going to see now in verse 2 of Isaiah 42, "He will not quarrel, nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory, and in His name, Gentiles will trust."

Well, that's a fulfillment of what we're now reading here in Isaiah Chapter 42:2. "He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break and smoking flax He will not quench. He will bring forth justice for truth."

I'm hoping you'll just maybe kindly indulge me for just a little bit on these two verses because I don't know if it's possible to overstate what this description of how Jesus was and is, what Jesus is like. I don't think it's possible to really overstate the nature of Jesus because this speaks to how Jesus is not rude or loud like some people I know; (laughing) rather, he's kind, compassionate, and gentle.

Do you ever think about, especially when you're in the gospels, what it must have been like, what Jesus must have been like? I wonder what His laugh was like. I think like that. Oh, you know He laughed, right?

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You know this is - I might as well just get this off my chest, why not? You know those Jesus movies; you know the ones I'm talking about, right? I can't watch them. I'm sorry. You'll forgive me. I just can't.

Because first of all, the portrayal of Jesus - He didn't look like that. That's the first problem, okay? He didn't look like that. I hate to ruin your night and your picture of Jesus, but He probably looked well, kind of like me, Middle Eastern. I'm so sorry about that, but that's... right?

He did not look like that. That's why I stay away from any depictions of or portraits of Jesus. You know the most well-known one. He's got long hair and he looks - I don't even want to go there. That's enough on that - I just - that's not what He looked like.

And these movies portray Him as, you know, being stoic and somber and, you know, come follow Me; I will make you fishers of men. And then the actors are like, okay. No!!! It wasn't like that. He wasn't like that. I truly believe that just even the tone of His voice was so gentle and so loving.

And I'll tell you how I know that and why I believe that. Because children would flock to Him. He was so approachable. There had to be something about Him that would be inviting to children, not intimidating to children. You know what I mean?

There's that account; you know it well where the children are like flocking to Him in what would seem like great numbers, so much so that the disciples were like- kids get out of here! What are you doing? Go play on the H-3. Of course, they didn't have the H-3 back then, but you get the point.

And what does Jesus do? You guys, no, don't forbid the children from coming to Me; for such is the kingdom of heaven made up of these.

And you have to ask yourself the question. I mean, I know with me when children see me, they run. They run from me, not to me. You know because, I mean, well, look at me, I guess would be the answer to that dilemma. But there had to be something so approachable. I mean, just visually and I would even say audibly when He spoke, there was just such a loving tone in His voice.

You know, even with the disciples, all the accounts when He calms the storm and, you know, they're like waking Him up. He's in the boat sleeping in the middle of a hurricane, I guess and they wake Him up and He's like, why did you wake Me up? Do you see what's happening? We're all going to die!

And so Jesus calms the storm and then it's usually followed up whenever He does something like that in the gospels with, "oh ye, of little faith".

You know, when I was younger in the Lord and growing in grace and maturing in Christ and learning the Word, I would always imagine, of course, it's probably my temperament, but I would always kind of imagined Jesus like with this disdain and this disgust in His voice, like, oh ye of little faith!

No! I mean, this picture I have of the Savior is one of Him being so loving, so kind, so gentle, so compassionate that children would flock to Him.

And this is what Isaiah is prophesying here concerning Him. Look at this imagery. You got a bruised reed, and you come upon that bruised reed and He doesn't break it. I imagine Him taking that bent over, bruised, "buss-up" reed and straightening it up. And then in concert with that bruised reed, you've got this smoldering wick. It's burning; it's barely, barely hanging on.

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You know how those candles are? I'm learning a few things about candles, My wife's taught me a few things about candles. You know, you could buy some really cheap candles. They're worthless. They don't last that long. And what really irritates me - I guess I got a lot of things to get off my chest tonight. But what really irritates me is that you pay this money for this candle and then the wick doesn't burn all the wax in the candle.

You try to light it and use five hundred dollars' worth of that, you know, with that lighter, and your trying light this thing, and that thing will not stay lit.

That's the picture we have here. So you come across this; it's barely, barely a glow. And what does Jesus do? He rekindles it.

You know, broken things we devalue, and we throw them away. Not with Jesus. Jesus values brokenness. You know, in the Gospels, I'm quite taken back by how Jesus was attracted to the least and the last, the broken people, the weak, the weary.

You know, the harshest words that ever came from the Savior's mouth were reserved for the religious leaders of the day. I mean, He called them names like you viper, you snakes. Oh, where's the love?

How about that one account, and this makes us understandably uncomfortable. The account when He goes into the temple and they're taking advantage of God's people, the money changers at the tables there. I mean, talk about the picture of Jesus being completely thrown out the window. That's not a picture. Keep in mind He was a very hard worker, worked for His dad.

We affectionately refer to Him as the carpenter. But there are some Bible scholars and commentators that suggest that it was not really lumber, but stones. Now, think about that. I imagine Him being pretty rough and tough, not this, you know, with the long hair. Again, I'm sorry, okay, that's the last time, well, I hope.

Lord help me because I just - you know, it's interesting in Revelation, we're told that when we see Jesus, we are going to be just stunned, astonished when we behold Him. We're in for a real shock, actually. So this picture that we get painted on the canvas of this prophecy is one of a compassionate, kind, gentle man, God-man, very loving.

And again, I hope that throughout our study of this chapter that we, I'll include myself, will allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts concerning if this is what Jesus is like, am I like Jesus?

Is God making me more compassionate with people? Patient, gentle, long suffering?

By the way, this is all from the Holy Spirit, right, Galatians 5. That's another verse we quote very often. Have you ever really gone through that list? How far do you get before you're busted?

I mean, I usually make it to patience, busted. I'm so impatient. You know what impatience says? My time is more important than yours. Impatience says, I am more valuable than you. Do you know who I am? That's pride.

And it is the antithesis of meekness, and that is from the Holy Spirit. Let me say it like this and I'm going to - well, I'm just going to say it. I mean, here it is. It just is what it is. We are never more like Jesus than when we are meek and humble. And we are never more like Satan than when we're proud. Think about that.

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I want to be like Jesus.

Well, that means that you need to be humble because Jesus is the personification of humility, being meek, not weak, as we're going to see now in verse 4. "He will not fail nor be discouraged till He has established justice in the earth and the coastlands [the coastlands having this idea of being the far-off lands] and the coastlands shall wait for His law."

Did you catch that? Oh, He might be gentle, and He's not going to break this bruised reed. He's not going to snuff out or throw out the smoldering wick.

But never think for a moment that because he's meek He's weak. He's not weak. And see, that's our problem, isn't it? We have bought into this notion that meekness is synonymous with weakness, and nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus was not only strong, He was powerful and not only powerful, but all-powerful, omnipotent, all-powerful.

Verse 5, "Thus says" - yeah, right, good, I did it. Thank you so much. You had to be there. We had that planned.

Actually, this is probably as good of a time as any to welcome our visitors from Nashville, Tennessee, that are online members visiting with us tonight.

[Applause]

I had the privilege of getting to meet them before the Bible study because I can't stay after, so I got to leave. And so I was able to meet them and just talk with them. And she said, you know, we have my friends - is it okay if I share this? Okay, too late, I already started so...

But they're going to watch it, and they want to hear that they're here, and we don't show anybody because we just don't do that. And so she said, I have to shout amen.

To which my response was, I'll pray that I say something that you can say amen to. Ha! There you go! Praise the Lord! Thank you, Lord.

[Applause]

All right, verse 5. "Thus says God the Lord who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it:

I [verse 6] the Lord have called You in righteousness and will hold Your hand. I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house."

Oh, interesting. You know what this is saying? This is what Jesus was called to do when He was sent to the world, and it was fulfilled when He was in the world. Everything we just read from verses 5-7 is the purpose to which He was called as the Savior of the world.

Now, it doesn't stop there. It's our purpose too if we're going to be like Jesus, if this is what Jesus was like, and it was, and this is what He was called to do, and it is, and if we want to be like Jesus and we're called according to His purpose, then you can reread those verses, and just put your name in there and see how far you get.

I'm not going to tell you how far I got. Okay, I'll tell you; I got to verse 5 and then that's as far as I got.

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Verse 8, "I am the Lord, that is My name, and My glory I will not give to another." Will you hang on to that for just a moment, put that in your hip pocket? We're going to come back to that. "Nor My praise to carved images.

Behold [verse 9] the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare. Before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing to the Lord a new song and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!

Let the wilderness [verse 11] and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord and declare His praise in the coastlands."

Did that sound like we just read out of the Psalms? That's because we basically just did because this is a song of praise to the Lord. And in this song, it is a declaration that it is only the Lord who receives all the glory.

Take that back out of your hip pocket. We need to talk about this because no flesh glories in His presence. God will share His glory with no one.

Very interesting, by the way; you know in the priestly service in the Tabernacle and then subsequently in the Temple the priests had to cover themselves with their robes all the way so that when they would step up to the altar to offer the sacrifice, no flesh could show, it had to cover all of their flesh. And it also had to be made of a material that would not cause perspiration because perspiration comes from the flesh.

In other words, when you're in My presence, I don't want to see any flesh. I tell you; every pastor should take this to heart and take heed to this. God's the one that gets the glory. No man touches the glory. No man takes the credit. He alone is worthy of all the praise, all the glory due His name. Never try in any way in the flesh to take credit for that which God alone has done. That's what this is saying: No flesh, no flesh.

Verse 13, "The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man. He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud." Wait a minute. That seems like the opposite of what we just read at the beginning. Well, hang in there. We'll talk about it. "He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud. He shall prevail against His enemies.

"I have held My peace [verse 14] a long time. I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor. I will pant and gasp at once. I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation. I will make the rivers coastlands and I will dry up the pools."

Wow! What is going on here? This is the polar opposite of His voice shall not be heard aloud in the streets. He's not boisterous and obnoxious. And now He's saying, I will be loud and you will hear! What gives?

Well, there's a stark contrast here. The first part of the chapter was about the First Coming of Jesus. And this part here in the chapter is about the Second Coming of Jesus.

I love, and there's been many songs written about it, much in the way of commentary written about it, but when Jesus came the first time, He came as the suffering servant. But when He's coming back, He's not coming as the suffering servant. He's coming as the conquering king. Conquering King!

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And you know what? Aah, I can't wait because every knee is going to bow! And every filthy, ugly, blasphemous tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I'm sorry that the vein in the middle of my forehead - there we go! There's another one for you!

[Applause]

You're going to start something here, you know.

I'll tell you why I get so passionate about this. There's a reason for it and I think you'll understand when I share this with you. It settles me and it keeps me sane when I see what's happening in the world today and I see what man is doing, the evil of man perpetrated upon the righteous.

You know what my prayer has been as of late? It's been something along the lines of: Lord, sustain the righteous and restrain the evil. You know in 2 Thessalonians we have the prophecy about the Restrainer restraining, and then once the Restrainer's taken out of the way, oh, see ya, wouldn't want to be ya.

[Laughter]

Thank you for laughing because if I don't laugh, I'm going to cry. Can you believe that right now the evil, as evil as the evil is, is actually still being restrained? Can you imagine when the Restrainer is taken out of the way?

And so on the one side of it, Lord, restrain the evil. And He is. But in concert with restraining evil, there needs to be the sustaining of the righteous. Sustain the righteous; restrain the evil.

And I'll tell you what restrains me in my righteous anger when I see what's happening is knowing that when my Jesus comes back, He will come back as the King of kings, the conquering King, and every knee's going to bow and every tongue is going to confess Jesus is Lord. Yay!

But here's the thing: When they do, it's not for salvation, it's for damnation. Now, if that seems unloving and harsh, I think we would all do well to consider that, yes, Jesus loves me. But while Jesus is loving, He is also just. And if He's not just, He's not loving. And if He's not loving, He is not just. You cannot separate the two. Justice.

Verse 13, "The Lord" - oh, we just did that. Wow.

Verse 16, how about that? Did I miss a verse; someone tell me if I missed a verse. I didn't, right?

Okay, we're okay, good. I'm telling you; it was a rough week this week.

"I will bring the blind by a way they did not know. I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them and not forsake them. They shall be turned back. They shall be greatly ashamed who trust in [science, I mean] carved images. I'm so sorry. Not really.

"Who say to the molded images, 'You are our gods.'" [We're putting our trust in you]

"Hear, you deaf [verse 18] and look, you blind, that you may see. Who is blind, but My servant, or deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?

Seeing many things [verse 20] but you do not observe. Opening the ears, but he does not hear."

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Who's this speaking about? Oh, well, Isaiah is turning a corner here, and he goes from describing Jesus to describing His people Israel. They have ears, but they don't hear. They have eyes, but they don't see.

Give me a moment here. There's something here I think we would do well to notice. And it has to do with how it is that you can hear, but not hear, right?.

You know what I mean by that? I mean, you can hear, but you're not really hearing. You have ears, but you don't hear. Every one of the seven letters in the book of Revelation to those churches ended with this: Let He who has an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

You know how it is when you're in a conversation with somebody and not you - I'm talking about other carnal Christians do this, not you guys, you guys are amazing. But you know, they're talking, but you're not really hearing them. You're hearing, but you're not really hearing them.

But you're good at inserting the right things at the right time, like, oh, is that right? Hmm. You are miles away thinking about something totally different. Or worse yet, you're not hearing them because you're thinking about what you're going to say. And then sometimes you'll even interrupt them. You're not hearing them.

Have you ever noticed that God did not deem it fit to give us earlids like He did - I know this is weird, but there's actually a profound point to this. You know, we have eyelids. We don't have earlids. You ever thought about that? There's never a time when you shut your ears the way you would shut your eyes.

And by the way, the eyes aren't off the hook yet either because you know how you can be looking, but you're not really seeing? You know, when we say, "eyes to see," and by the way, how rhetorical is that: Let him who has an ear?

What? Okay, wait a minute. Everybody who has an ear?

Well, everybody has an ear, in fact, everybody has two of them ears.

Okay, hear then. Same thing with the eyes. You have eyes, but you're not seeing it. You don't have eyes to see. You don't have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. This is a sad description of God's people.

And lest we be too harsh on Israel, as I know many of us are prone to do. I know I'm just as guilty as the next guy. When I'm in the Old Testament, which I am often, and I read about the Israelites, especially during the Exodus, murmuring and complaining, I'm like, man, how could you?

And the Holy Spirit is like, if you were there, you would have been at the front of the line complaining. Wait, we want meat to eat, so bored of this manna, manna yesterday, manna today, manna tomorrow. I mean, you can only make so many manna burgers. We want meat to eat. I would have been the - I would have made up - nah, maybe not. I was going to say I would have made up those posters and started a protest and give us meat to eat!

And when we read that, we're all so pious in our spiritual... Well, I would never do that. Yes, you would. Yes, you would. Yeah, I have ears to hear. No, you don't. No, you don't.

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Oh, yeah. Okay, here's a good example. Just came to me. I'm hoping this the Holy Spirit. I believe it is. Here goes. You know how when you're hearing God's Word, you're sitting under the teaching of God's Word. Maybe you're listening to a message.

And here's what you think to yourself: Man, so-and-so needs to hear this. I think I'll send them the link.

Oh, really? Oh, they need to hear it? You don't need to hear this? I mean, you're good.

Oh, I wish they were here to hear this. They need to hear this.

What about you? Maybe you need to hear this.

No, I heard it.

Oh, you have ears, but did you really hear?

You know, I always - and I did this before I got into the pastorate. But I would always ask the Lord prior to a Bible study and a Sunday morning service, any time I was going to sit under the teaching of God's Word, I would always ask God to prepare my heart to receive the Word, to give me eyes that would see.

I mean, I have eyes. I don't need eyes. I just need eyes to see what You want to show me, Lord because I know You want to show me something. And just because You're showing it to me doesn't mean I'm seeing it. And just because You're speaking it to me doesn't mean I'm hearing it.

So Lord, when You show it to me, give me eyes to see it because I want to see it. And when You speak it, I want to have ears that are going to hear it and heed it because we can be guilty, as James says, of being merely hearers of God's Word but not doers of God's Word.

The litmus test by which you know that you're a hearer and take heed is when you're a doer of God's Word. Oh, you got it. Yeah, watch me now; I'm doing it. I'm taking heed. I'm a doer. I'm not just a hearer.

You know, I heard it and then I left and I forgot everything that I heard. And you're like a man looking into a mirror, the mirror, the perfect mirror of God's Word. Because that's what God's Word is. The law is perfect. And the law like a mirror shows us us.

I don't like to look at myself in the mirror, especially nowadays. You get up in the morning and look and oh, Lord, come quickly, please, Jesus.

Oh, I remember one time a while back I apologized to my wife. I said, honey, I'm so sorry, I was born this way and the years have not been kind to me. They've been great to you; she's beautiful. But look, I'm so sorry that you have to... Jesus, come quickly, please, you know?

But what does that mirror show me? It shows me as I really am. It shows me oh, you need to do something about that. Yeah, I better shave that, cut that, do something about that. That's what the mirror - I'm going to do something about what I saw and heard because my mirror talks to me, too.

Dude, you're getting old.

It talks to me so I'm going to do something about what I hear because see, God's Word shows me as I really am, as much as I don't like it. And I mean, throughout the pages of holy writ it's just like one

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mirror after the other. I'm a sinner. I'm a sinner. I'm a dirty, rotten sinner. I'm a stinking rotten sinner. I'm a sinner. I'm a sinner. I need a Savior. I need a Savior. I need a Savior.

That's what the mirror of God's Word does. I don't want to hear it. I need to hear it. I don't want to see it. No, I need to see it.

Verse 21, "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake. He will exalt the law and make it honorable.

But [verse 22 - this is interesting, listen to this] this is a people robbed and plundered. All of them are snared in holes, and they are hidden in prison houses. They are for prey and no one delivers; for plunder, and no one says, 'Restore!' Who among you will give ear to this? Who will listen and hear for the time to come?"

And here's another question, verse 24. "Who gave Jacob for plunder and Israel to the robbers?" That's a good question.

Answer: "Was it not the Lord, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, nor were they obedient to His law.

Therefore [verse 25] He has poured on him the fury of His anger and the strength of battle. It has set him on fire all around, yet he did not know; and it burned him, yet he did not take it to heart."

Wow! Wow! You know what this is speaking of?

It speaks to a very hard truth; it's very hard to hear. It's very hard to accept. But it's a very hard truth concerning the lengths the Lord will go to get His people to return to Him.

And I think this is the clarion call today. This is what the Spirit is saying to the church, to God's people today. And it's a hard truth; it's a hard message. I don't want to hear it; I don't want to teach it. But this is what the Lord is saying.

I'm the one who has brought this against you. Who gave Jacob for plunder?

Why, Lord, are you allowing the plunder, the robber, the thief? Why are You allowing the adversity? Why are You allowing all of this to happen?

Because I'm trying to get your attention. Have I got your attention yet?

God has a problem; God has no problems, but just bear with me.

The problem God has is that when things are going really well, He doesn't have our attention because when things are going really well, we're just kind of like we glide and abide. We're going and glowing, praise the Lord, and even shows up in our prayer life, right?

When things are going good, thank You, Lord, bless this, bless that in Jesus' name, amen.

Oh, then let adversity strike. Oh, Lord!!

Oh, now I got your attention.

This is Ecclesiastes 7:14, I think. I'm very uncertain about it, but I'm pretty sure it is Ecclesiastes 7:14. If it's not, somebody can lovingly correct me, lovingly correct me.

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But Solomon writes this; this is a paraphrase. During times of prosperity, just enjoy it. When God's blessing you, enjoy it. But when, not if, when adversity strikes - oh, I wish it said, if by chance adversity should strike.

No, when adversity strikes stop and consider. Now that God's got your attention - He's allowed both the prosperity and the adversities so that man will never become complacent about His future.

Hey, when times are going good, I mean, it's kind of like, hey, praise the Lord! But then when adversity strikes, Lord, what, why? Why are You allowing this to...?

Oh, now I've got your attention because there's something I want to show you. And see, I couldn't before I allowed the adversity, the plunder, whatever it is into your life because you're just so busy going to and fro, and your life is so loud. And you couldn't hear My still, small voice.

I always use the example of a teacher I had in high school. His name was Mr. Bowman. I actually at a high school reunion, told him that he was the subject of many a sermon illustration to which He thanked me, I think. But he was one of those guys that talked real softly. And you know, kind of a monotone voice, never got animated.

And as you might imagine for me, first day of class: Hey, Mr. Bowman, speak up. We can't hear you!

Well, I learned real quick about Mr. Bowman and his voice. He says to me, no, this is how I speak. If you want to hear me, you've got to quiet down.

Oh.

I get saved at age 19, and the Holy Spirit is like, (knocking) hey, remember Mr. Bowman?

Yeah!

I speak in a similar small, still, quiet voice. And if you want to hear what I'm saying, you got to turn the volume down on your life, or else you won't; I'm not going to compete. You want to hear what I'm saying?

Yes.

Well, then, I don't want to use the two words that start with S and U; I'll leave it there. Just be quiet so you can. You want to hear Me speak? Then this is how I speak. And now that I've got your attention, we need to talk because there are some things I need to tell you. There's some things I need to show you, and now that I've got you because of this I can show you. I can speak to you.

I want to close the Bible study with 1 Peter Chapter 4, two verses that I struggle with. I don't want to say anything more than that. I mean, I guess a pastor shouldn't say they have a hard time with the verses in God's Word.

But I think if we're honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that there are some verses, you read them and you go, oh, Lord, yeah, I'm not quite there yet.

One of them is James, "Consider it pure joy my brothers when you encounter various trials."
(Laughing) Pure joy when I'm in a trial? How about pure hell when I'm in a trial; that's more like it. Well, this is one of them like that.

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Verse 12, "Beloved, do not think it's strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you."

And then it goes on to explain why God has allowed that adversity, that trial in your life. There's a purpose for it. God wants to show you something. God wants to say something to you that He could not say to you before.

So He's allowed this trial into your life because now He's got your attention. And now you're all ears, as we say. You're on the edge of your seat now that He's got your attention. And don't think it's strange, like, oh, why is this happening?

No, don't think like that.

Yeah, this fiery trial that I'm in, Lord, why?

No, that's not the right question. It's not why. It's what, Lord? It's not why, Lord. It's what Lord, do You want me to see in this? Not why are You doing this to me? No, it's what are You wanting to show me?

And then verse 17: You want to talk about chilling? And it comports with this prophecy in Isaiah Chapter 42.

The apostle Peter, by the Holy Spirit, writes, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the House of God."

Okay, I don't want to... I don't want to hear that. I want judgment to begin with the evil and the wicked. No, the house of God. "And [listen] if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

In other words, and here's the takeaway: This adversity has struck, this trial has hit because God is purifying you. He's purifying you. I think it's in, I forget what Psalm, David says it, "The blows cleanse away evil."

He says, if You didn't do this to me, Lord, I would have went astray. He's actually thanking God for the blows, the adversity because were it not for the affliction, I would have went astray on my merry way. Thank you, Lord for stopping me dead in my tracks.

And here's the bottom line. You must really love me because think about it. If He didn't love you, He wouldn't bother. With our children growing up, I thank God that God's a merciful God. I think God's got an extra measure of grace for parents in our parenting, right?

Our children growing up, we used to tell them that we're disciplining them because we love them so much. Well, you said the same thing. We have different ways of saying it, you know. It's going to hurt me a lot more than it's going to hurt you.

Well, then why hurt yourself?

I do this because I love you.

Well, love me less.

Why?

No, if I didn't love you, I wouldn't bother.

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And I would tell my boys when they were little, I said, you know, listen, I'm disciplining you because I love you. If I didn't love you so much, I would just say to you, Yeah, fine, go ahead, juggle knives on the H-3 at 5:00 p.m. I'm really interested in the H3 tonight for some reason.

You get the point? In other words, yeah, go ahead, I don't care. I don't care what happens to you.

No, I love you. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord. Don't despise it. That's how you know you're His. When you get a spanking.

Oh, cause you're not going to - could you imagine you're in a restaurant, course nowadays, takeout, I guess, or I don't know camped out in front of the... I'm sorry. Who wants to stay in this world anymore?

Anyway, where was I? Oh, it was a profound illustration.

So you're in a restaurant, and you're sitting across from a table with a young family, with young children. And I mean, they are just screaming and fighting and throwing food at each other, and the parents are doing nothing.

And you want to get up out of your seat and give them children a good spanking. What keeps you from doing that? They're not your kids. If you did that, well, you can't do that. That's not your child.

Oh, but if I'm the father, I can do that. Oh, so you see in the grocery store those temper tantrums that the kids throw is always down the aisle where the candy is. And you see that parent disciplining that child. How do you know that's the mom? Because they're disciplining the child.

What, some stranger's going to come down that aisle and discipline the child? I mean, they might want to Discipline child on aisle 5, you know?

No, oh, that must be the mom, the dad because they're disciplining the child.

That's what our Father says of us. You're My child, and I'm going to discipline you because I love you enough to discipline you.

Why don't you stand; we'll have the worship team come up and we'll close in prayer, close in song. Oh, can you imagine if we did two chapters tonight? We'd be here till midnight. You know there's a lot here, right?

Lord, I pray that You'll take this now, and by the Holy Spirit begin that process, and it is a process where You're taking Your Word and letting it do its work in our hearts.

Lord, I don't think there's a one of us here tonight that doesn't want to be more like Jesus. And if this is what it takes, then so be it, Lord. As hard as it is, Lord, so be it. Lord, thank you.

Thank You for this chapter in Your Word. Thank You for inspiring Isaiah to write this so that we all these generations later could read it, heed it, be edified by it, and more importantly, apply it to our lives.

Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen.