

**July 15, 2021**  
***Isaiah 28 – 30 – Speak Only Smooth Things***  
**JD Farag**

All right, good evening and welcome to our midweek Bible study. On Thursday nights, we're going through the Bible, and we are currently in the book of Isaiah tonight. Lord willing, we're going to complete Chapters 29 and 30, having completed Chapter 28 last week, right? Yeah. Was I here? I think I was. It's pretty bad if you don't remember if you were...anyway.

Why don't we pray and we'll ask God's blessing on our time together in His word tonight. Father in heaven, thank You so much.

Lord, we love You so much and we're so grateful to You for this time that we have on a Thursday night to come to this, Your church as Your people and put aside all the busyness of our lives, the cares and the affairs of the day of the week, and just give You our undivided attention so You can minister to us and speak into our lives in and through Your Word. Lord, that's why we're here.

We're here because we want to hear You speak. We are hungry, we are thirsty, we are a needy people, and we readily admit that to You. And in so doing tonight, Lord, we submit ourselves to You and we commit to You this Bible study in Jesus name, amen and amen.

All right, so in the two chapters before us this evening, the prophet Isaiah is prophesying to Israel, and sadly, he is prophesying to a people who only want to hear smooth things, not hard things, smooth things, positive things, good things. Hey, don't tell us about that. I want to hear good things, so just the smooth things, not the hard things.

You know, it's amazing and it never ceases to amaze me, wherever you're at, do you find this to be true? I know you do, but wherever you're at in God's Word is where you're at in your life? We know that God's Word is alive and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, as we just studied and learned in our study in Hebrews.

But it is so alive and so active that it activates and it leaps off the pages of our Bibles and comes to life because it's the Word of life, and it speaks to wherever you're at in your life. And this is exactly where we're at in our lives today.

It's where we're at on Sunday mornings just last Sunday talking about being dull of hearing, becoming bored with the things of God, not wanting to hear the hard teachings. And we're also in the Prophecy Updates talking about in the Old Testament with the prophets like Jeremiah and Micaiah. Very interesting account with Micaiah. And he was the only one that was willing to stand up against the rest, 400 to be exact.

All these prophets were speaking in the name of the Lord, thus sayeth the Lord, and it's all good, it's all good. And then here's Micaiah, who says, no, it's not, it's not good. In fact, it's bad. I know you don't want to hear it, but you need to hear it because it's the truth. This is bad. This is really bad.

And we live in a day now, and we're going to talk about this tonight where I mean, people don't want to hear. They just want to hear warm and fuzzy sermonettes for Christian-ettes, as one said. I like that one. But just, you know, be positive, none of this doom and gloom stuff. I don't want to hear that. Come on, speak only the things that my ears are itching to hear, the things that I want to hear, the smooth things. And we're going to see that tonight.

Well, let's start chapter 29:1, "Woe [again a curse] to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add year to year, let feasts come around. Yet [verse 2] I will distress Ariel. There shall be heaviness and sorrow, and it shall be to Me as Ariel. I will encamp against you all around. I will lay siege against you with a mound.

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And I will raise siegeworks against you. You shall be brought down. You shall speak out of the ground. Your speech shall be low, out of the dust. Your voice shall be like a medium's, out of the ground. And your speech shall whisper out of the dust."

Well, we're off to a great start. How perky is this? I mean, Isaiah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is pronouncing this curse, this prophecy to Jerusalem. Another name for Jerusalem is Ariel, the city of David. And it's really a warning from God who loves them. And He wants to warn them about this coming invasion from the Assyrians, which we'll talk about more here shortly.

"Moreover [verse 5] the multitude of your foes shall be like fine dust." You're going to be brought to dust, but I'm going to make them like fine dust.

In other words, this judgment is coming upon you, but I'm also going to judge the enemies that I'm allowing to come against you. "And the multitude of the terrible ones like chaff that passes away. Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly. You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire.

The multitude [verse 7] of all the nations who fight against Ariel, even all who fight against her and her fortress and distress her shall be as a dream of a night vision."

This is getting interesting.

Verse 8, "It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, and look—he eats, but he awakes, and his soul is still empty. Or as when a thirsty man dreams, and look—he drinks, but he awakes and indeed he is faint, and his soul still craves. So the multitude of all the nations shall be who fight against Mount Zion."

You know what Isaiah is declaring here? You know how it is when you wake up from a dream, and realize oh, it was just a dream? Or worse yet, how about those nightmares that are so real? I know I shouldn't have eaten that before I went to bed.

I mean, this was in 3-D, IMAX, that dream. It was so real. And you wake up in the morning, you're like, oh, thank You, Jesus, it was just a nightmare. Of course it works both ways. Sometimes you wake up in the morning and this is real. I wish it were a nightmare or a dream. And no, this is really happening.

Well, this is what Isaiah's doing here. He's painting this picture of someone waking up from a dream only to realize it was just a dream. So here's this invading army coming against Israel, coming against Jerusalem. And it's their dreams come true, except it doesn't. This is what the targets were in their sights.

Oh, man, this would just be a dream come true to invade Jerusalem, and then they wake up to the reality that it did not and will not happen. And that's what the Lord declares through the Prophet Isaiah.

Verse 9, "Pause and wonder! Blind yourselves and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine. They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink." Well, then the question becomes what, pray tell are they intoxicated and blinded by if it's not drink?

Oh, answer: Pride. Stay with me.

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Pride blinds. The one thing about pride is that it blinds you to the fact that you're proud. Let me say the same thing in a different way. This is the insidiousness of pride. You don't even know your pride. You're proud; you're blind to your own pride.

And so someone might say to you, well, you're full of pride.

No, I'm not.

You're blind to it. And not only are you blind to your pride, you're intoxicated by your pride. That's the other thing that pride does. It brings you under its intoxicating influence, and that is exactly what happened to them then.

And it happens to us, too, doesn't it? It's the one thing about pride; it is so subtle, yet so dangerous. And pride always leads to the fall. I know in my own walk with the Lord, I - okay, I struggle with pride. So do you too, so don't look at me all spiritual and everything.

And sometimes it just kind of, oh, the flesh loves it, right? And we start thinking, hey, not too bad, not too shabby. And we become full of ourselves and full of pride. And if that weren't bad enough, we are all capable of and have the propensity to become spiritually proud.

Oh, that's the worst, spiritual pride. We can become so spiritually proud that we actually are humble about our pride. And even in that state, we can become proud of our humility. You know, how it is; it's called false humility, by the way. That's not humility at all.

And what makes it so just I guess, again, for lack of a better word, insidious is that you don't realize that you're proud. You actually fancy yourself quite humble, by the way. Just ask me; I'll tell you how humble of a man I am.

That's what pride does; it blinds you to your current condition. It blinds you to seeing you as God sees you. And this is why it is that God deems it necessary to show us: Us as He sees us. I mean, you see yourself this way; remember those memes that they're probably still around, I don't know, I don't go on social media anymore.

they had the first picture, "what my friends think I do." Oh, you know what I'm talking about, right? And then "what my boss thinks I do," "what my parents think I do," and then there's one last picture, "what I actually do."

And it's quite humorous, actually. But how we see ourselves and we always -- come on, let's be honest with ourselves - we always shed ourselves in the most favorable light, don't we?

When we were going through our study of the Book of Proverbs, we got into the teens, the chapters that are often referred to as the contrasting proverbs. These are the proverbs where Solomon writes that the righteous do this, but the wicked do that.

And you're like, yeah, those wicked! But boy, that first part of the verse, that Proverb, the righteous do this - thank you very much. Thank you, thank you very much. And them, wicked.

No, we're going to see this here in a moment. You got it backwards. You're the wicked.

I'm sorry if I'm pointing; I'll try to...

I know, I'm wicked, I'm wicked!

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But we always shed ourselves in the most favorable of light. But God sees through that. He sees us as we really are. And the problem is, is that our pride and our arrogance and our obstinance blinds us to the reality of our true condition. And that's what Isaiah's saying here.

Verse 10, "For the Lord has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep [this isn't good] and has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets. And He has covered your heads, namely, the seers.

The whole vision [verse 11] has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please."

And he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed."

Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please."

And he says, "I am not literate."

What's happening here? Well, it seems that God has sealed up, shut up, closed up His Word to them. Now, lest one think that this is not fair, why would God do that? Well, this is what happens when we close our ears and eyes to the Lord.

The Lord says okay, you don't want to see it, you don't want to hear it, it's boring to you, yawn, yawn. I'm just going to give you over to that which you want anyway. So it's this - this is chilling to me that God would pour out this spirit of deep sleep. Some of you were like, man, I would do anything for a spirit. I need a good night's sleep; I could use me some of that deep sleep.

But what about when God shuts your eyes so you can't see? What if He seals it up so you can't understand no matter how you try? I mean, you even solicit the help of others who are of no help to you, and this is what God does. He will close up and seal up and not reveal to you that which He knows you will not be faithful to do because He cannot be party to your disobedience.

In other words, you didn't do what I said before. Why would I give you something else to do? You didn't do the last thing. I'm thinking of that Proverb, and I hope I don't botch it too much. But it basically goes something like this: That the integrity of the upright guides them, but the duplicity of the unrighteous will be their downfall, meaning that God who knows the end from the beginning, if He knows that you have the integrity to follow through on what He calls you or shows you to do, He will show you what to do.

But if He knows that there's duplicity and there's really no sincerity, let alone integrity to do what He's showing you or telling you to do, then He will close it up to you because if He were to reveal that to you and open that up to you, and yet you have no intention of doing it, then He becomes party to your disobedience.

Does that make sense? It's an interesting word in the original language of the Old Testament because the word for "guide" is the same word from the Urim and Thummim that the high priest would use to make the decisions and discern what God's will was.

This is what Samuel brought with him to the House of Jesse to anoint the next king of Israel. And so God would reveal what it was that he was to do through the Urim and Thummim. They would lighten up and align in a certain way. And then the priests would know this is the way. This is what God would have us to do.

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But here's the problem: If God knows that show me first, tell me first, and I'll decide. No, doesn't work that way. Doesn't work that way because I already know. I know you more than you know yourself, God says. And I know how you are. I know what you'll do.

We were talking, my daughter and I, on the way to church today, the children's ministry lesson is in Psalm 139. This is where the psalmist writes about how God knew us before we were even formed in our mother's wombs. His thoughts towards us are more numerous, incalculable, really, more numerous than the sands on the seashore.

And how God knew us even before - I told her, I said, God knew you even before I met Your mom. How about that? Whoa, that's heavy. Yeah, it is. He knew you before I was even born because you understand, without me there's no you. Think about that one. Mom, too, I guess, but we're not talking about mom right now. But God knew me before I was even a thought, before my parents even knew each other.

And God knows us; He knows the end from the beginning, and He knows how we are and who we are, and what we will do. And so God will reveal to us, He'll open it up to us when He knows that we have the integrity to follow through and be found faithful doing that which He has called us to do. If we're just going to kind of test the water and, you know, let's just, you know, take this slow, show me the plan, then I'll decide.

Oh, really? No, that's okay, I'll find somebody else who I know will do it.

So it's closed up to you. It's closed up. I'm going to close your eyes. And never imagine this as God taking delight in doing this. In a way, if you'll think about it, this is God's grace. Because otherwise they become more accountable in their disobedience.

This is why it is, by the way, that Jesus spoke in parables. He knew that they would not accept Him. They would reject him. Had they understood and still rejected Him, it would have increased their eternal torment and punishment.

This was the grace of God to keep it from them, to close it up and keep it from them. That was the grace of God. He was actually being merciful to them because you're judged according to, recompensed according to that which you do. So this is God's grace. He's closing it up to them.

Verse 13, "Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men."

This sounds familiar, right, this verse? It should because Jesus quoted this verse describing the people of that day in both Matthew 15:7 and Mark 7:6. In other words, what He's saying is: Oh, yeah, you're singing all the words to the song, but your heart couldn't be further from Me.

Or you know the lingo; I mean, you can speak Christian-ese, as it's been called, but your heart's not in it. Or you pray; oh, that's an eloquent prayer. Almighty God, we even put reverb into it, right? Creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is.

That was more preacher type.

And maybe it's like this, and I'll just speak for myself. I find myself doing this, so I'll just be very open with you. So during worship, right? And I'm back there; oh, that was so great, wasn't it?

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How Great Thou Art (singing) How Great Thou Art.

[I sure hope I can get - when I get to verse 8 in chapter 29]

Oh, (singing) How Great Thou Art, right?

Again, I'm using myself as the poster child in this example.

But we're singing, we're worshipping, we even have our hands up, pit stains and all worshipping the Lord, and I'm thinking about oh, my goodness, did I turn the oven off? You're thinking about -- okay, Sunday morning - again, I'm not talking about you; I'm talking about other people in other churches. They're worshipping, thinking about you know what we should do is get that meat jun from that place.

Oh, (singing) How Great...

That's kind of what he's saying here. Well, I mean, you're singing the words. You're speaking the language. You're honoring Me, praising Me with your lips, but your heart's not even close, nowhere even in the neighborhood. Your hearts are far from Me.

Verse 14, "Therefore behold, I will again [and this is the love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God with His people] I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder. For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.

Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the Lord, and their works are in the dark. They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?" Surely [verse 16] you have things turned around!

Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay? For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Whoa. Do you know what you're saying here? Oh, and once again, alive and well today. God created us, and like the clay to the potter, you didn't make me.

Oh, I didn't, did I?

No, you didn't form me.

Excuse me? I created you; I made you. And you think you can hide from me? You got it backwards. You can't hide from Me. But here's the thing: I can hide from you.

And sometimes that's exactly what God will do: Is hide Himself from us. Talk about the height of arrogance and haughtiness and pride. To say to the creator who created man, You didn't; there is no God. He didn't create me.

Verse 17, "Is it not yet a very little while till Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest? In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

For [verse 20] the terrible one is brought to nothing, the scornful one is consumed, and all who watch for iniquity are cut off, who make a man an offender by a word, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate and turn aside the just by empty words.

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Therefore [verse 22] thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: “Jacob shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now grow pale. But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel. These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding, and those who complained will learn doctrine.”

A magnificent end to a gnarly chapter that started off with a curse, and a prophecy, and a warning and a declaration, and it ends with God's restoration. This is speaking of the Kingdom Age when God restores his people, Israel.

Chapter 30; You ready? All right, Verse 1. “Woe [off to a good start again] to the rebellious children,” says the Lord, “Who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin, who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!

Therefore [verse 3] the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt shall be your humiliation. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.” What in the world is going on here?

Well, Isaiah is pronouncing this curse, this prophecy upon Israel, specifically concerning how that they had put their trust in Egypt instead of the Lord. Why were they putting their trust in Egypt? Well, they were putting their trust in Egypt to come to their defense against the coming invasion of the Assyrian army.

Now, from what we understand in scripture concerning typology, Egypt is a type of the world. This is the picture for us today, like with them then. They were turning to the world for advice. They were trusting in the world/Egypt to help them, and they did not ask the Lord. They did not seek the Lord. They did not trust in the Lord to deliver them.

You know what's really interesting? It's really an irony of ironies, but you got to think of how this must grieve the heart of God. And we do this. Didn't God deliver them from the very Egypt that they are now turning to for help? Think about that. Oh, those Israelites, here we go again, right, shedding ourselves in this favorable light; we do that all the time.

God delivered us out of slavery to sin in this Egypt world. And we turn back to the worldly ways. When the going gets tough, we get going back to Egypt. And this was the sin, sin to sin; they added sin to sin, You know that doesn't end well, sin to sin. It's just piling up: Sin, sin, sin, sin.

And God, just again - and please, I hope you see this through the lens of God's grace and God's love. He's like, you're going to them for that which I alone can do.

You're trusting in them to deliver you; they cannot deliver you. I can deliver you.

You're seeking advice from them? They cannot give you advice. I can give you advice; I can advise you, guide you, lead you, deliver you. All of the things that you're turning to the world for, I alone can give.

Oh, how that must break the heart of God. I can't even imagine.

Verse 5, “They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them or be help or benefit, but a shame and also a reproach.” The burden [this is interesting] against the beasts of the South. Through a land of trouble and anguish from which came the lioness and lion, the viper, and fiery

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flying serpent [I don't want to see one of those] they will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys, and their treasures on the humps of camels to a people who shall not profit. For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose. Therefore I have called her Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.”

What is this saying? Now, watch this. God is telling them, I see what you're doing. You're taking the money that you're going to pay Egypt and you're packing it on the back of your donkeys and your camels, and I'm watching you guys take this money to Egypt, paying them to defend you, and I'm watching you travel through the Negev to the South.

And you're taking this money, this treasure to pay them for that which I was freely offering you. And here's the thing: They're not going to do anything.

That's what Rahab-Hem-Shebeth means. It basically means that Rahab -do nothing, good for nothing, worth nothing.

Here you're taking all of these riches to them to pay them to help you? They're not going to help you. You are not going to get your money's worth. You might want to try to get your money back. They won't give it back. How absurd is this?

And God sees everything; He's watching this whole thing play out. And it's kind of like Isaiah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, makes this declaration kind of like, I saw that. You did? Yeah. What are you doing? Why are you doing that?

Here I am at the ready. And you won't come to Me?

You go to them, not only go to them, but pay them for that which only I can provide?

Now, here again, I should probably just speak for myself. I mean, the righteous indignation. How could they do that?

Oh, I'm not worthy.

Well, what about you?

What do you mean what about me?

I would never do that.

Oh, really?

Here's the scenario; just think it through. How many times have we spent money on things thinking: This is the answer! Now, maybe this book by that author. I'll pay that; I'll pay for this course, this series, this conference, whatever it is, you fill in the blank. And we load up our camel or donkey, so to speak, and we go and we take them this money, and we think that deliverance is in that.

And here is God going, wow, I see how I rate. And that's why God becomes irate, I guess because if you would have just come to Me, if you would have just sought Me.

You know, I remember years ago - it was so good, it was just this picture that was painted on the canvas of my imagination, and it was a picture of God in heaven. And He has this huge table with my name on it. And this table, I mean, it is piled and packed. I mean, heaping with all of the things I need.



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And here's God just at the ready, waiting to give me everything I need in my parenting, in my marriage, in my finances, in my career, in my work, in my business, in my job, and I don't come down. There for the asking, everything I need. I need deliverance; it's right here, it's right here.

Would you come to Me?

And instead, we go to Egypt, and we pay Egypt.

How about this? How many times have we called them instead of going to the Lord? It's the first response. Our first response is, man this is bad. I'm going to call Brother so-and-so, Sister so-and-so, and we're on the phone with them for three hours. What are they going to do?

Imagine not three hours, what about three minutes in prayer, calling upon the Lord? Lord, I got myself in quite the pickle here. Oh, great to hear from you. Only time I ever hear from is when you need something, but that's okay.

Reminds me of the guy I used to work with as many years ago back on the mainland; he had a son in college. I said man, the only time he ever calls me is when he needs money. So I anticipate it. And I figure, hey, you know, at least I get to talk to him, so that's fine.

So he'll call me up, and before he even asks me, I said, I'll send you five hundred dollars. And he was going to ask for more, so he's like, oh, well, thank you. But that's the only time I ever hear from you is when you - Maybe could it be that because God knows that the only time we're ever going to go to Him is when we need something, He'll bring about a situation in our lives where we need something so He can hear from us? I don't know. I'm just saying.

I think about my own life. I think sometimes He just wants to hear from us. He wants us to call upon Him, rely upon Him, trust in Him.

Verse 8, "Now go, write it before them on a tablet and note it on a scroll that it may be for time to come, forever and ever: That this [verse 19] is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord, who say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things. Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. [lie to us] [what?]"

Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."

Do you see the progression here? Here's basically what's happening. They're saying to the seers, stop. We don't want to see that; we don't want to know about that. They're saying to the prophets, don't prophesy that. Don't prophesy to us right things, righteous things, true things. Don't speak the truth to us. Don't be negative, oh, you're such a Debbie Downer.

I don't know what they call the guys. They've called me names that are not appropriate from behind the pulpit, certainly so. But you're such a downer, such a killjoy. Just stop talking, and that's what they basically say. If you can't tell us what we want to hear, don't, just stop, aah! I don't want to hear it.

I mean, that they would even have the audacity to say, listen, hey, just kind of (singing) tell us lies, tell us sweet - how's that song go? That's what they're saying. Lie to me if it's what I want to hear. And if you can't do that, then cease from speaking at all. Wow.

Well, here again, in our righteous indignation, we would look at something like this and say, man. I would never do that. Those Israelites, yes, they are a rebellious people. They are lying children.

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They are liars. They don't want anything to do with the things of God. They don't want to hear. They don't have ears to hear.

Well, 2 Timothy 4; we just studied through 2 Timothy not too long ago. Verse 1, "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing [that's the rapture] and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word."

Timothy is a pastor; you know that, right? Paul is writing to him, exhorting him, trying to encourage him too. And he says, "Be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke [oh, they don't like that, they won't come back next week] and encourage with great patience, and careful instruction."

Here's why.

"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."

In other words, Timothy, in the last days, this will be a marker too, by the way. We're talking about Christians here. These are God's people. They will flock in great numbers to pastors and churches that will only tell them God loves you, you're a good person, it's all good, smooth things.

Oh, my ears, oh, just tell me more. Because when I leave, I just want to feel good about myself.

Oh, you do, do you? I don't think I read that anywhere in God's Word where we're to feel good about ourselves. In fact, I find the opposite.

We're to die to ourselves.

Well, that doesn't - I'm not going to hear that - stop. Preacher, there's a church down the road from you. That pastor first of all, he only talks for about 20 minutes. That's your introduction, 20 minutes. So I'm going there.

Okay, bye, see ya, aloha.

I did not say Allah; I said aloha. No, that's for real. I said aloha, and I apparently did not enunciate well enough. And oh, my goodness, blew up comments.

Did he say Allah?

No.

Okay, I just had to get that off my chest. Aloha means hello and goodbye, right? Am I right? Help me out here, please. Lie to me if it's not.

Oh. See that pastor down the road isn't going to tell me what I need to hear, and say to me that I'm a sinner and that I need Jesus. He's not going to tell me the truth, even though it's faithful, that friend is faithful who will wound you. The wounds of a friend are faithful, and they can be trusted. An enemy multiplies kisses.

You know, that's self-love, right? You're thinking more about yourself because you want that person to like you, so you're not going to say anything negative to them. Sorry for the drama, but... Because I want them to like me; I want you to like me. I mean, who doesn't want people to like you?

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But I don't see that either. Oh, I wish it were there; I wish I could stand up here and preach on a passage about how God wants you to be liked by people. In fact, the opposite is true again. Beware when all men speak well of you. It's backwards. It's upside down.

It should be noted that evil, E-V-I-L is live backwards, L-I-V-E.

Verse 12, "Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel: "Because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perversity and rely on them, therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.

And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel, which is broken in pieces. He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water from the cistern."

This is a picturesque prophecy. God is saying to them that His judgment will come suddenly, in an instant as a bulging wall suddenly breaks into pieces, a thousand pieces.

"For thus says the Lord God, [verse 15] the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

But you would not, and you said, "No, for we will flee on horses." Therefore you shall flee! And, "We will ride on swift horses." Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift! One thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left as a pole on top of a mountain and as a banner on a hill."

Sad; God's making this offer, just come to Me. I'll give you rest. All you who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest for your soul. You know, there's two words here in verse 15 that I really am fond of. Rest, quietness. I'll take it; where do I sign? Rest, quietness?

But you would not. You refused My offer. And now, instead of a thousand enemies fleeing from them because of their obedience, a thousand of them will flee from their enemies because of their disobedience.

Oh, I like the first one better, like way better.

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies to live at peace with him. When you're walking in obedience, when you're walking in uprightness and righteousness before the Lord, He will make your enemies flee. But the opposite is true; it works both ways.

When you're not walking in obedience, then instead of your enemies fleeing from you, you are fleeing from your enemies. That's what's happening here.

"Therefore, verse 18, the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for Him." God has used this verse in my life over the years, I mean, in a powerful way time and time again concerning God's timing.

Notice with me the first part of verse 18 that the Lord will wait. Can you picture this with me? I hope it's not too silly of an illustration, but just picture God just like ok. (singing) Dun dun, dun dun.

He's waiting on me, He'll wait; the Lord will wait.

Okay, I'll wait.

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He's waiting for us.

Oh, we talked about waiting on the Lord. Have you ever thought about the Lord waiting on you? No, think about this.

I'm waiting on the Lord.

Lord's like, you're waiting on Me? I'm waiting on you. What's up with that?

He'll wait. He's merciful, He's patient, He's long suffering. Oh, my goodness, He has to be long suffering. But here's the problem: God won't move - it's not that He can't. God won't move a parked car. He'll wait till we get it in gear.

Reminds me of a very humorous story. I think it's a true story. Many years ago in Southern California a very wealthy lady turns her signal on, she's got this big Cadillac, and she's going to pull into this parking space as somebody's getting ready to pull out. And before she can get into the parking space, here comes this young guy in a smaller car. He just zips in and takes her parking spot.

Has that ever happened to you? Oh, you bear witness. My sanctification flees from me. Oh, yeah.. no, it's... anyway, that's enough of my problems.

But so she's just... and then to make matters worse, he gets out of the car and he looks at her and he says, when you're young and fast, you can do that. So she does this. She takes her big Cadillac, and she zooms and bashes into that car. And she keeps backing up and running into it until she pushes it up on the sidewalk, and takes the spot and parks her car.

Can you imagine the look on his face?

She gets out of the car and says to him, when you're old and rich, you can do that.

[Laughter]

So the moral of the story is God won't move a parked car, but old, rich women will. So you can tell people that's what we learned in our Bible study tonight. Okay, let's get back to our -we're almost done - that's so funny, isn't it? I would have loved to have seen that. Anyway, where was I? Our Bible study already in progress.

We wait on the Lord, but how often does God wait on us? He's waiting for us. Let's get a move on. He's gracious. And the Lord will wait. And one more thing on this, and then we'll finish the chapter and the study. God's timing is always perfect, right? We say that as cliché. God's never late, but He's never early either.

God's timing is always perfect, and truth be made known, we don't want Him to be early, because that can thwart that which God wants to do in His perfect timing.

You know, oftentimes we just think, wow, Lord, I just... you know, why is this taking so long?

Oh, If you only knew; just wait, you'll see. Just wait. Wait.

No, but I hate to wait.

I know you do, but you have to, you have to wait.

I can't wait.

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No, you have to wait. Just wait, you'll see what I'm going to do.

There's been so many times in my life over the years where I've looked back at what God did. And I just think, wow, Lord, I'm so glad You made me wait as much as I hated it. Man, had You done what I wanted You to do at the time that I wanted You to do it would have been horrible.

God's like, I tried to tell you that. You wouldn't listen. You wanted it now. No, wait, wait, the Lord's going to be gracious to you.

Verse 19, "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry. When He hears it, He will answer you, and though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers.

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." [this is how God speaks] He speaks in that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 22, "You will also defile the covering of your images of silver and the ornament of your molded images of gold. You will throw them away as an unclean thing. You will say to them, "Get away!" Then He will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground, and bread of the increase of the earth. It will be fat and plentiful.

In that day your cattle will feed in large pastures. Likewise the oxen [verse 24] and the young donkeys that work the ground will eat cured fodder which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.

There will be on every high mountain and on every high hill rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall. Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord binds up the bruise of His people and heals the stroke of their wound.

Behold [verse 27] the name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with His anger, and His burden is heavy. His lips are full of indignation and His tongue like a devouring fire. His breath is like an overflowing stream which reaches up to the neck to sift the nations with the sieve of futility.

And there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err. You shall have a song [verse 29] as in the night when a holy festival is kept and gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel.

The Lord [verse 30] will cause His glorious voice to be heard and show the descent of His arm with the indignation of His anger and the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering tempest and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord, Assyria will be beaten down as He strikes with the rod."

This is a reference; we've talked about it often, and I won't go into detail, but it's in 2 Kings Chapter 19:35 under King Sennacherib of the Assyrians, and they invaded Jerusalem, were outside encamped laying the siege on Jerusalem, 185,000 of them, and God sends just one angel.

We're not even told his name. I think it was an intern. Sends him down, kills 185,000 of them in one night. They wake up in the morning; they're all dead right there. That's what God said, and that's what God did.

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Verse 32, "And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, Which the Lord lays on him, it will be with tambourines and harps, and in battles of brandishing, He will fight with it.

For Tophet [another word for hell] was established of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large; its pyre is fire with much wood. The breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone kindles it."

Whoa. You know that expression there's a special, fiery hot place in hell, for - It's not very nice, but I think this is maybe where it comes from because this is what God is saying. I've prepared a very hot, fiery place, in Tophet for the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, but that was the near prophecy fulfilled for them then, but this also is another dual prophecy for us now at the time of the end, because this place, this lake of fire, God has prepared it for the devil and his demons. And it burns very hot.

And that's what this is describing. Is that wrong or bad if I say I can't wait till the devil gets his? That day is coming, and I believe it's very soon.

Why don't you stand? We'll have the worship team come up. Thank you for your patience. Don't look at your watches yet. We'll close in prayer and then song, and wow, I mean, whew! I love God's Word, man.

Father in heaven, I pray that we'll take Your Word home with us tonight. And by the Holy Spirit, just begin that process of applying it to our lives because there was just so much here tonight for us and just so many life lessons, so many takeaways that we can begin to make real in our lives.

So Lord, I just pray that You'll take this to the next level, as only You can and are always so faithful to, especially for anyone that's really struggling and discouraged, that there would just be an encouragement that You're going to have the final word.

And when You say it, that settles. Lord, thank You that You're, so gracious, so merciful, so long suffering, so patient. We love You so much, in Jesus name, Amen.