

Isaiah 62:1-12

“Sought Out, Not Forsaken”

* Ladies and Gentlemen: God is faithful. I suppose that in no small measure it's our own *inability* to be faithful (meaning we so often fail & fall short) in so many areas that causes us at times to doubt *God's* faithfulness. & Somewhere in there that may bring some understanding to us concerning why the Bible is so replete w/the *assurance & reassurance* of *His* faithfulness... Our *inability* causes us to doubt *God's ability*. & God is so gracious that He assures us over & over again throughout His word, that you can count on Him, that if He says it, He'll do it. In fact, He goes on record reminding us that He's *not* like us.

“*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*”¹ Those are what we call “rhetorical” questions. The answer being obviously implied w/in the phrasing of the question. God doesn't *fail*, He doesn't *default* on His word, He's *faithful*. *

W/regard to where we're at in the book of Isaiah, God is reminding & reassuring Israel that He has thoughts of peace & not of evil toward them, to give them a future & a hope. That the Messiah (having been *rejected* at His 1st appearing) will come again (& be *received* at His 2nd appearing). He will then put down the evil & unrighteousness that is on the earth. He will establish His throne *upon* the earth & rule in righteousness for 1,000 yrs during which time Israel will be regathered, restored & prospered above every nation & Jerusalem will be the epicenter of His glory upon the earth.

Vs 1-3

We spoke a bit last week about the seemingly fickle nature of prophecy as it pertains to its respect for time (in that it doesn't seem to have any). Isaiah is prophesying from time in which Jerusalem is still occupied but corrupt. He then proceeds to tell of a time which Jerusalem will be desolate & it's people will be carried away into Babylonian captivity. Now, he reaches out farther still (to a time yet future for us) that we refer to as the millennial reign of Christ, to assure the nation of Israel (& the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem) that God's not *finished* w/them, He remains *faithful* to them & He won't rest until He's restored them & glorified them on the earth. “Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, & her salvation as a lamp that burns.”

Something else we touched on last time is the fact that God is a *finisher*. Once He begins a work, He won't rest until the work is complete (until He can put a “done” stamp on it).

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Nu 23:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

When God initiated the work of creation. He didn't begin by saying, "Let there be light", & then take a few thousand years off until He felt like picking up where He left off. That may be (in some cases) how *we* do things (we have those unfinished projects we started a while back, then just let them lie dormant until a convenient time that never seems to come around), that's not how *He* does things (& we *thank* God for that).

When He began the work of creation He stayed at it. When it was *finished*, that was when His work ceased. * Now, -- somewhere it seems I've heard something else about something being "finished". ☺ Oh yeah! It was when Jesus *finished* the work of redemption upon the cross. When He paid the price necessary for the redemption of every individual who ever lived or would live, having completely satisfied the penalty of sin for all of mankind... it was then that having ascended (the book of Hebrews [1:3] tells us) that He "sat down" at the right hand of the Majesty on high (sitting being a posture of rest).

The principle in place is that when God begins a work, He won't rest until the work is complete. Until it's finished... Of course, the overarching application is simple. If He's began a work in you, He won't rest until it's complete in you. He's transforming you from glory to greater glory into the image of His Son. His goal is to make you like Jesus & He won't rest until that's accomplished. Paul the apostle put that like this, "*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*"² The apostle John said it this way, "*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*"³ *

& Notice, "The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, & all kings your glory." The nations will know that God is faithful to His word. His work in Jerusalem will have a direct impact upon the nations. -* *Can I just tell you... God desires that His work in your life would have a direct impact/influence on the lives of others. That your righteousness would go forth as brightness & your salvation as a lamp that burns. When Jesus was teaching His sermon on the mount, He put the principle in place like this, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*⁴

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 1:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Jn 3:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 5:14-16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Again, to the Philippians Paul said, *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,”*⁵

So I suppose the question that you & I need to consider is this, does the righteous work of God in your life have any influence, any impact on the lives of others around you? If not, why not & what needs to be done to change that? – *

He says, “You shall be called by a new name.” The transformation of Jerusalem will be so complete that God will give it a new name. The Lord is into giving new names that reflect His new work in our lives. To Abram He gave “Abraham”. To Jacob He gave the name “Israel”. To Simon, He called him “Peter”. From Saul to “Paul”. Joseph (Joses) received the name “Barnabas” or “Son of Encouragement”. He was always bringing people together, fostering & encouraging the work of God in people’s lives... & When your transformation is complete, the book of Rev Ch 2 & 3 informs us that we’ll receive a new name as well. One that will match your completely transformed nature...

But so glorious, so special will Jerusalem be to God that He will regard it as a “crown of glory” a “royal diadem” in the hand of God. * – It’s no wonder that Satan does his best to make us feel worthless before God. Because God values us as a precious gem, of greater value than all the wealth of the world... Most people are familiar w/the idea of receiving a crown (or a number of crowns that the Bible makes mention of) *from* the Lord. But of how much greater wonder is it that we will *be a crown* (of glory) in the hand of the Lord? ☺

Paul speaks in a similar manner in the book of Ephesians. He says there (1:18) that it’s his heart for believers to understand the hope of the Lord’s calling & what are the “riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”. Not *our inheritance in the Lord*, but *His inheritance in us!* Satan may want you to *feel* worthless, but the truth is that you are more *precious* to God than could possibly comprehend. (If you doubt that, may I present to you exhibit “A”, the cross).*

Vs 4-5

Here it is again. God delights *in* you; He rejoices *over* you! Israel has known the cost of war, the feeling of being forsaken & desolate. But they will be transformed, from desolation to delight, from forsaken to faithfully married. He says, “You shall be called ‘Hephzibah” which means “My delight is in her” (not one you’re finding in your baby name books ☺). “& Your land Beulah” which means “Married”. They’ll know the unbroken presence of the love of God for them. (Even as God would have you to know the unbroken faithfulness of His love for you in Christ Jesus).

⁵ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Php 2:14-15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The picture here is one of newlyweds & the great joy they experience over one another. – I know that sometimes we feel like the Lord *reluctantly tolerates* us. But the truth is that the Lord *rejoices over* us. If you're like me, that's hard to receive, but it's true!

Vs 6-9

We touched on this last time as well. The Lord loves justice. Loves to right things that have been wrong. It's not uncommon to tell people who feel overlooked or mistreated, "Life isn't fair". But Isaiah is telling us that the day is coming when life *will be* fair. Everyone will have their own portion; everything will be made right & everyone will be satisfied.

& Because there are none higher than the Lord He swears by His own right hand & by the arm of His own strength that He will bring it to pass.

... I want to develop something with you out of Vs 6-7. He says, "I have set watchmen on your walls". We know that watchmen were set in place for protection. But notice He says, "They shall never hold their peace, day or night." They will have a constant unrelenting duty. He says, "You who make mention of the Lord." Or "Put the Lord in remembrance". (The idea is that of constant petitioning & prayer before the Lord.) "Do not keep silent, & give Him no rest till He establishes & till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

They're not critics who are constantly complaining, they're prayer warriors who refuse to quit praying until the Lord brings to pass every jot, every tittle, every detail of His promise. "Until He establishes & makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth."

Do you see what's happening here? God says, "I won't hold *My* peace, *I* won't rest (Vs 1) until the work is done. Therefore, I don't want *My people* to hold *their* peace or to rest in their prayers until it's complete." God is (in essence) saying, "Don't stop reminding Me of My word." He's literally inviting us to pray & pray; & encouraging us to *never stop* praying until the *fullness* of His *plan*, His *purpose* & His *promise* comes to pass.

Perhaps you recall that when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He said, **"When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven."**⁶ Of course, it wasn't a script to be recited & verbatim repeated. It was principles of prayer that He was setting in place. "Your kingdom come." Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for God to establish His kingdom on earth. Ladies & gentlemen: we're reading of that kingdom in Isaiah 62.

⁶ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Lk 11:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But * I'm wanting you to see that God invites, we might even say that He *insists* on persistent prayer. Let me take it one *step* farther. We might say that *persistent* prayer is *prevailing* prayer. God invites us to press Him, to urge Him, to "wrestle w/Him", "give no rest" to Him in prayer until we see His purpose/plan come to pass.

It made me think of that strange yet wonderful & fascinating scene in Genesis 32. (We won't go there you might write it down & read it later). But what we find there is Jacob *wrestling*, literally wrestling, tangibly entangled w/the Lord, & he wrestles w/Him all night! As the morning was dawning the Lord said, "You've got to let Me go, it's a new day, it's time to be done." & Jacob says, "No, I won't let You go unless You bless me!" So the Lord says, "What is your name?" He says, "Jacob", "Heel catcher" "Deceiver". So the Lord says, "You're not going to be called Jacob anymore, but Israel (governed by God), for you have struggled w/God & w/men, & have prevailed." Persistent prayer is prevailing prayer. He wouldn't let go, wouldn't stop clinging to the Lord, wrestling w/the Lord until something changed, until he was different, until God did a work in his life... *

*I was thinking the other day about the role/responsibility of the pastor. To teach, to preach, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. And you're always studying a text, seeking the Lord to open your understanding that you might comprehend His word. & Yes, it's a blessing to you, but really, you're seeking Him for it for the sake of those He's entrusted to you. You don't want to waste people's time, & you certainly don't want to waste God's time by coming into this holy moment unprepared (not having put your very best foot forward). So, you're praying for insight, understanding, illumination, application, wisdom, knowledge, what to say, how to say it... That God would ordain your thoughts from the 1st word to the final word.

& In that same vein, it's like you're wrestling w/God & you just won't let go until He blesses you. I think that's got to be your heart. Meaning that you're going to wrestle w/the text, seek after the Lord, pray for understanding & application. & You have to be *persistent!* But that's just one element of life. The same would hold true for you (or me) in any arena of which we're seeking the Lord. *

Jesus taught this same principle on persistent prayer in Luke Ch 11. Let's look at it together. Luke 11 (Vs 5-10)

* Vs 5-10

Btw those verbs, "Ask, seek, knock" they're in what we refer to as the "perfect" tense, the "active" voice & the "imperative" mood.

Which is a lot of fancy jargon that means it's a command (not a suggestion) & it's an ongoing action. The idea is, "Ask & keep asking", or "Seek & keep seeking", "Knock & don't stop knocking". Jesus is exhorting us to be persistent in our petitions, our prayers.

Ok. At this point people can get confused. They say, "Does this mean that God is like a man who doesn't want to be bothered, is completely inconvenienced by our pestering Him but because we won't leave Him alone, He'll finally "rise up" & respond? No. – Jesus is saying that if *persistence* can move the hand of an individual who doesn't want to help you at all, *how much more* will God (who *loves* you, is never bothered or inconvenienced by you) rise up & meet your need if you'll persistently pray & petition Him? *

Now, people want to know. Why does God work this way? Why have us ask & ask & ask? Why not just do what needs done or respond after the 1st request. My answer is. I don't know. ☺ What I *do* know is that God wants a relationship w/you & relationship involves communication. & Intimate relationship involve a lot of communication, vulnerability & transparency... *I'm also persuaded that in some regard, God allows our fortitude to be tested. Meaning, we're always asking God to do things, but we won't really pursue them as if they're a priority. Well. If it's not important enough to pray about persistently, passionately, then why should God make it a priority? It's not important to you (when the chips are down) but you want it to be important to Him. Probably won't happen that way.*

But God invites us to seek Him, to "wrestle" w/Him, to "give Him no rest" until He establishes His work in our lives. (Of course we need to understand, if we seek Him for things that we have no business seeking Him for... It probably doesn't matter how much you seek Him. It's not going to happen. Any more than your toddler really wanting that shiny new razor blade. It's not going to happen. [You've got to realize that anytime Jesus is speaking of successful prayer, He's speaking to His disciples. The 1st prerequisite of being a disciple is "deny yourself".] But you get the idea here.) If God's got it in His heart to do something in your life, in the church, in your family, at your workplace... When you pray, keep praying, see it through to completion.

God says, "Give Me no rest until the things that are upon My heart are accomplished." Makes me wonder how much *isn't* established in our lives simply because we stopped praying. How many miracles, how many blessings never came through because we stopped knocking. We fell short of cultivating that relationship of faith, perseverance & passion...

Vs 10

* Underline the words, “Prepare the way for people, build up the highway, take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples.” The idea here is that salvation is coming, prepare the way for people, remove every obstacle that they might come easily, swiftly, w/out difficulty to the Lord.

Don't miss this. God likes to get things out of the way, to remove obstacles that hinder people's access to Him. It's easy for us to make it more difficult than it is. Some people make you feel like God's really not interested in who you are until you dress in your nicest apparel. (It's not a problem to dress nice, but it's not a stipulation to be saved or walk w/God either! He sees you in your underwear at home just like He sees you in your suit at church!) If it's a personal conviction, great! But we can't impose it on everyone else. For someone who maybe can't do that, can't afford it or simply isn't interested in that, you've made it an obstacle. “If that's what I got to do to be a Christian, I guess I won't be a Christian.” You see?

... Maybe I'm super strong in my opinion that has nothing to do w/the elements or aspects of salvation. & Rather than smooth that over, I couldn't care less how many people I offend. So, in insisting on my opinion, I put obstacles in front of people in order to defend my position. The Lord's salvation *was* coming, but I put up a blockade! The Pharisees did this kind of thing all the time. People who were genuinely wanting to be right w/God, they made them jump through every hoop, every religious rule & regulation they could come up w/so that by the time they'd dotted every “I” & crossed every “T” they felt like they didn't need a Savior! They'd earned everything on their own! So Jesus said, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”*⁷

We're to take out the stones, build up the highway, prepare the way for people, lift up a banner for the people. Raise up the flag that signals, “Hey! Salvation is here! Believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved!”

The way I say it is, “We're to build bridges, not walls.” Become all things to all men that you might win the more to Christ. The things you do, the way you act, the way you speak, are you building bridges or walls? *

Vs 11-12

“Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is w/Him”.

⁷ [The New King James Version](#) [Mt 23:15]. (1982). Thomas Nelson.

If this sounds familiar to you it's because the book of Revelation is steeped in passages & pictures from the O.T. & We read in Rev 22:12, "*And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*"⁸ Listen, the Lord is coming again. & When He comes we will appear *before* Him, our works will be judged *by* Him & each of us will receive the fitting reward according to our work. Paul the apostle speaks to this in 1 Cor 3...

The Lord will test our works as by fire & we'll see what our motives were made of. I'm sure that most of what we've done will burn in a fervent heat. But there will be those things motivated by the *love* of God. Truly done for the *glory* of God. They'll be gold, silver, precious jewels, eternal rewards.

So give God *His* way in *your* life. You are a holy people, Redeemed of the Lord. Love Him w/all your heart, all your soul, w/all your mind & w/all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Great will be your reward *then* & God will be glorified in your life. Both *now...* & *forever*.

Prayer Points:

God we're grateful for Your word. The *assurance* of Your word. That You are *faithful* to Your word. We so often fail, but You *never* fail. Thank You for loving us. Teach us to be persistent in our prayers. Passionately pursuing You, cultivating our relationship *with* You, that You might be glorified in us. May we be those who build bridges, build up highways & prepare the way for the people.

If you've not turned from your sin, you've not surrendered your life to Christ, I can't think of a better time to do that than right here, right now.

⁸ [The New King James Version](#) [Re 22:12], (1982). Thomas Nelson.