

Series: Isaiah

Title: Fear Not Reproach

Text: Is 51: 7-16

Date: Jan 19, 2025

Place: SGBC, NJ

**Isaiah 51: 7: Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.**

This is the Lord's word to his elect, regenerated people at the very time they were captive in Babylon. That is important to know. This is the Lord's word to his people when they were bound by a people that did not know God. It is the Lord's word to his people when they were held captive in the pit that the enemy had dug and flung them into. This is the Lord's word to his people when the enemy was not giving them enough bread to eat. We see their fear and anxiety in verse 14. The Lord's people were captive exiles. Bound by the Babylonians in the pit. They had little bread to eat. They were anxious and hastened to free themselves.

**Isaiah 51: 14: The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.**

It seems like they had good reason to fear the reproach of man. By this description it would appear they had good reason to fear man's reviling. But not so! The Lord says to his people who know Christ is their Righteousness; the people in whose heart the Lord had written his everlasting covenant of grace.

**Isaiah 51: 7: Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. 8: For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.**

**Isaiah 51: 12: I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; 13: And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? 14: The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. 15: But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name. 16: And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.**

Again, it is important to know this was the Lord's word to his people when they were captive in the pit in Babylon. This was God's word to them when they were in as bad a condition as a man could be. It is important because if this was the Lord's word to them in that condition then we can be sure it is his word to us whatever we suffer.

**Subject:** Fear Not Reproach

**Proposition:** Our Lord Jesus was reproached and reviled of men and he told his people that we shall be yet he says to us, "Fear not the reproach of men." Here is the reason why, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (Pro 29: 25).

**Divisions:** 1) Who do we forget? 2) Who gets the glory for comforting us? 3) What is the result?

This is the third time our Lord has said, “*Hearken unto me.*” When reproached and reviled by men, the Lord says, “Listen to me, not to them. Hear the Lord and shut out the voice of the reviler.”

We saw at the end of the chapter before that they were in darkness. Captivity in Babylon was their darkness. Remember in Romans 7 when Paul spoke of our old man bringing us into captivity? He cried out, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” This passage is an example of our Lord Jesus delivers us from the captivity of our old man of sin. When we are in darkness the only way the light of Christ shines into our hearts is by the effectual, irresistible word of our Lord, commanding, “*Hearken unto me.*” Oh, may the Lord speak to us now.

## **WHO DO WE FORGET?**

**Isaiah 51: 12...who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man...**

The fear of man makes us forget who we are and whose we are and how we became thus. So the Lord renews our new heart with the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ.

Verse 7 is the word our Lord speaks into our hearts, “*Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.*” Have you been made to know Christ is your only Righteousness? Has God written his everlasting covenant of grace on your heart? If so then this is the word of our Lord to you, personally.

How do God’s saints (how do you) know Christ is our Righteousness? How do you have the everlasting covenant of grace written in your heart? In verse 16 the Lord says, “*I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand.*”

We were the reviler! We once had reproach in our hearts toward Christ and toward his people. That is why men reproach and revile us now. They hate Christ our Righteousness. Unregenerate men and women hate to hear the good news that Christ is the only Righteousness of his people, apart from man’s works. Lost men and women hate to hear that we must be born from above in order to know God. They hate to hear that God must preserve us or else we shall surely perish. In short, they hate that salvation is of the Lord.

But, brethren, that was me and you as we came into the world born of Adam. We would not and we could not hear the gospel and bow to Christ.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Who made us to differ? It certainly was not anything we did; we were spiritually dead sinners. This is how the Lord renews us and delivers us from being fearful of men. He reminds us who we are. The Lord renews us to remember who he is and what he has done for us. He renews us to know whose we are. As Ephesians 1: 14 declares those Christ redeemed are “the purchased possession” of our Lord Jesus Christ; he bought us with his precious blood and sealed us by the Holy Spirit “unto the praise of his glory.”

Our Lord alone had power to create in us a new heart. Remember what he said of Abraham in verse 2, *“I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.”* He used nothing of our old nature. By his power our Lord created a new spirit in us. He wrote his everlasting covenant of grace on our new heart thus putting his words in our mouth. *“Hearken unto me, ye that know Righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law”* (v7). *“I have put my words in thy mouth”* (v16.)

Jeremiah 24:7: And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 32:39: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: 40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Left to ourselves, the reproach and reviling of men has a terrible effect upon us, even now. It makes the new believer fearful to confess Christ publicly when he has family or friends who reproach him for believing on Christ. It made Abraham tell an Egyptian pharaoh that Sara was his sister and almost had dire consequences but for the Lord intervening. Peter denied knowing the Lord due to the fear of man. A fear of man can even make one of God’s saints shun a fellow brother if a mentor or guide who has influence over him does not like that certain fellow believer. If put in a situation like the children of Judah were in, the fear of man would even make us depart from our Lord.

But we just read our Lord’s promise in Jeremiah 32: 40, *“I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”* In our text, we see how our Lord keeps us fearing him rather than men. Our God not only had power to create a new heart in us and put his fear in our hearts, our Lord also has power to renew our hearts and keep his fear in our hearts so that we shall never depart from him.

He renews us to remember we belong to Christ our Redeemer. We are protected by our God who had power to reveal Christ our Righteousness within us and who has power to continue to renew us by his grace. He sends forth his command into our hearts, *“Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, ...I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people”* (v7, 16).

If anyone thinks the Lord speaks of a righteousness that is of us then read verse 5, *“My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people.”* Read the end of verse 6, *“my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.”* Again at the end of verse 8, *“my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.”* The only way God could say to us, *“Thou art my people”* (v16) was to make us the righteousness of God in and by his Son. That is exactly what our Lord Jesus accomplished. He is our Righteousness.

As he declared in verse 4, holy God had to *“make [his] judgment to rest for a light of the people.”* Holy God had to honor his own law. He had to pour out justice on his people. Holy God had to be just if he would show mercy to his people. That is what holy God accomplished by sending his only begotten Son who took the place of his people on the cross.

Romans 8; 33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34: Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Hebrews 10: 16: This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17: And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18: Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,...

**Isaiah 51: 7: Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart *is* my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. 8: For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.**

God declares that men who reproach and revile the Lord's people are dead men who are dying and shall soon be eaten up like a moth eats a garment. The only hope for a man in that condition is the saving grace of God.

But God has given us faith to rest in Christ our Righteousness. He has made an everlasting covenant in our hearts, declaring, "*My righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.*" When we fear men this is the gospel with which the Holy Spirit renews us again. He speaks into our hearts, "*Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man.*"

## **WHO GETS THE GLORY FOR COMFORTING US?**

**Isaiah 51: 12 I, even I, *am* he that comforteth you:**

All the glory in salvation goes to God alone. He gets the glory for redeeming us, regenerating us and renewing us. The glory for renewing us and keeping his fear in our hearts goes to God alone.

When we are overcome with a fear of man, we are overcome with unbelief. We give man the glory that belongs to the Lord alone and forget the LORD who made us. So only the Lord can comfort us and renew us to see things as they really are. He declares in our hearts,

**Isaiah 51: 12 I, even I, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass; 13: And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where *is* the fury of the oppressor? 14: The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail. 15: But I *am* the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts *is* his name.**

The Lord comforts us by making us see how foolish we are to be afraid of man. "*Who art thou, that shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the LORD thy maker...*"

The Lord comforts us by reminding us who he is. He is our sovereign Creator who "*stretched forth the heavens.*" Our Refuge is our sovereign Savior who "*laid the foundations of the earth.*"

He reminds us he is our God, *“I am the LORD thy God.”* The Lord renews us to remember that his creation obeys him; this is he, *“that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The LORD of hosts is his name.”*

Brethren, our Maker is able to protect us and preserve us, especially against man who is weak as grass. Never forget the Lord’s power. He rules all providence and he does it for our good. Always remember his promises. He has promised to be our Shield and Defender, to never leave us nor forsake us. Instead of thinking on the man who reviles, think on the Lord’s goodness and grace toward us. Remember how he has delivered us from so great a death and continues to deliver and promises he shall yet deliver us. Think on these things.

The LORD comforts us by making us know the oppressor has no power. We only imagine he does. The Lord says it is only “as if” he were ready to destroy. *“Who art thou that thou...hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?”* Where is the fury of Pharaoh now? God drowned him in the Red Sea. Where is the fury of Sennacherib king of Assyria? God used him like an ax and when the Lord finished he destroyed Sennacherib justly.

The children of Judah are in Babylonian captivity. So where is the fury of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon? In his fury he cast Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego in the fiery furnace. But his fury was just *“as if it were ready to destroy.”* He looked into that fire and saw “the Son of God” in that fire with his people. That is what the Lord promised in Isaiah 43: 2, “I will be with thee...when you walk through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall flame kindle upon thee.”

The Lord delivered those three out “whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.” (Dan 3: 27). And the Lord made Nebuchadnezzar praise the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar declared, “There is no other God that can deliver after this sort.” (Dan 3: 29) After the Lord abased Nebuchadnezzar and restored his understanding, that one who was the oppressor then said,

Daniel 4: 34...blessed [is] the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: 35: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?...37: Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Brethren, remember, the oppressor was made by the LORD our Creator. So the oppressor is ruled by the LORD to keep us trusting the LORD alone. And when the Lord is done with the oppressor he will either save him or destroy him. So it is just *“as if he were ready to destroy.”* We have to turn again to Isaiah 54.

Isaiah 54: 14: In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. 15: Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. 16: Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. 17: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

## **WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN GOD COMFORTS US?**

When our Lord speaks this good news into our hearts, he renews us, revives us, wakes us up. The result is we call on him to save us! The result is we look to him alone to save us! As we call we begin repeating his wonderful works of the past and giving him glory! We see this sure result of God's renewing grace in verse 9-11. This is the Lord's people calling on our Savior because the Lord comforted and renewed them in heart.

**Isaiah 51: 9: Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. *Art* thou not it that hath cut Rahab, *and* wounded the dragon? 10: *Art* thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?**

We even begin looking to the future and glorifying God for what he has promised he shall do.

**Isaiah 51: 11: Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; *and* sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

**Amen!**