

“You Can Trust God”

Isaiah Chapter 26

Sunday, November 6th, 2022

If you're not familiar with the names Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, you really should know something about them. They were English pastors who went to the stake for doggedly proclaiming Christ as Lord to the English Queen Mary, known better as “Bloody Mary.”

In October 1555, Ridley was burned at the stake because of his witness for Christ. On the night before Ridley's execution, his brother offered to remain with him in the prison chamber to be of assistance and comfort. Nicholas declined the offer and replied that he meant to go to bed and sleep as quietly as ever he did in his life. Because he knew the peace of God, he could rest in the strength of the everlasting arms of his Lord to meet his need. So can we!

The theme of today's message from the 26th chapter of the Old Testament book of Isaiah is **trust**. In particular, the theme is **God's trustworthiness**. You can trust God, dear brothers and sisters, for He is most trustworthy; He is dependable; He does not speak out of both sides of His mouth. You can trust God because He is the one and only living God! That also means you can trust Jesus Christ... because **He** is God. And you can trust God the Holy Spirit... *why?* Because He is God.

God is one - and He is triune - God is one in three Persons - God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. These Persons are often referred to as the Godhead - again, one God existing in three Persons all at the same time in one Being.

We've been working our way through Isaiah for several months. Today, we're up to **Isaiah Chapter 26**. (*By the way, have you noticed the cover of today's worship bulletin? Isaiah 26:3 is the verse used! That is not something we planned; it was simply the next cover. What a confirmation that we should be in this book.*) Back on track - the Old Testament has much to say about Jesus without revealing God the Father as Jesus. The Bible has two testaments - the Old and the New. And the God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament. Jesus is often clearly referred to in the New Testament as God.

Isaiah 26:1-21:

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

“We have a strong city;

God will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.

2 - Open the gates,
that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

3 - You will keep *him* in perfect peace,
whose mind is stayed on You,
because he trusts in You.

4 - Trust in the Lord forever,
for in Yah, the Lord, *is* everlasting strength.

5 - For He brings down those who dwell on high,
the lofty city;
He lays it low,
He lays it low to the ground,
He brings it down to the dust.

6 - The foot shall tread it down—
the feet of the poor
and the steps of the needy.”

7 - The way of the just *is* uprightness;
O Most Upright,
You weigh the path of the just.

8 - Yes, in the way of Your judgments,
O Lord, we have waited for You;
the desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name
and for the remembrance of You.

9 - With my soul I have desired You in the night,
yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
for when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 - Let grace be shown to the wicked,
yet he will not learn righteousness;
in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly,
and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

11 - Lord, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see.
But they will see and be ashamed
for *their* envy of people;
yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

12 - Lord, You will establish peace for us,
for You have also done all our works in us.

13 - O Lord our God, masters besides You
have had dominion over us;
but by You only we make mention of Your name.

14 - *They are* dead, they will not live;
they are deceased, they will not rise.
Therefore You have punished and destroyed them,
and made all their memory to perish.

15 - You have increased the nation, O Lord,
You have increased the nation;

You are glorified;
You have expanded all the borders of the land.

16 - Lord, in trouble they have visited You,
they poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening was upon them.

17 - As a woman with child
is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
when she draws near the time of her delivery,
so have we been in Your sight, O Lord.

18 - We have been with child, we have been in pain;
we have, as it were, brought forth wind;
we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth,
nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

19 - Your dead shall live;
together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
for your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20 - Come, my people, enter your chambers,
and shut your doors behind you;
hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
until the indignation is past.

21 - For behold, the Lord comes out of His place
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
the earth will also disclose her blood,
and will no more cover her slain.

Tim Hansel writes in his book, *Holy Sweat*, "One day, while my son Zach and I were out in the country, climbing around in some cliffs, I heard a voice from above me yell, "Hey Dad! Catch me!" I turned around to see Zach joyfully jumping off a rock straight at me. He had jumped and then yelled "Hey Dad!" I became an instant circus act, catching him. We both fell to the ground. For a moment after I caught him I could hardly talk.

When I found my voice again I gasped in exasperation: "Zach! Can you give me one good reason why you did that!?"

He responded with remarkable calmness: "Sure...because you're my Dad." Zach's whole assurance was based on the fact that his father was trustworthy. He could live life to the hilt because I could be trusted. Isn't this even more true for the Christian? - (Tim Hansel, *Holy Sweat*, 1987, Word Books Publisher, pp. 46-47).

MP 1 - Jesus is Our Rock (verses 1, 4 & 5)

MP 2 - Jesus is Our Peace (verses 3 & 12)

MP 3 - Jesus is Our Resurrection (verse 19)

Verses 1, 4 & 5 teach us that **Jesus is our Rock**. Verse 1 - "In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; *God* will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks." Isaiah here describes a mighty fortress, the same kind we sang about at the close of last Sunday's service of worship - "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Bulwarks are defensive walls - "a bulwark never failing."

Like **Isaiah Chapter 25** before it, **Chapter 26** is a song. And that song, at least as far as believing Israel is concerned, is a joyful song. It is not a funeral dirge. The first stanza of this present song (which would include all of verses 1-6) is about two cities. The strong city of verse 1 is the new Zion, the city of God of the future that will rise above the ruins of the lofty city described in verse 5, the human city which God will have destroyed by His judgment. That's what we find in verse 5 - "For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust."

Look again with me at verse 4 - "Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, *is* everlasting strength." "Yah" there in the center of the verse is a shortened form of Yahweh, which is a Hebrew name for God. You can trust God forever because He is the Lord. "Everlasting strength" at the end of verse 4 can be translated, "Rock of Ages" which is one of the great hymns of the Christian faith written by a man by the name of Augustus Toplady in the year of our nation's declaration of independence, 1776.

We see who may reside in this city of God described in these opening verses of Chapter 26. Verse 2 teaches that not everyone is allowed entry into this city. "Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in." If these gates reflect the gates of heaven, only the saved may enter through them; only those who've been redeemed by the blood of Jesus have access to glory. Death isn't the requirement to enter heaven, Jesus and His righteousness is! We don't gain heaven simply by living and later dying without being first brought to spiritual life by the Holy Spirit at some time during our journey through earth. We must be born again; born anew to be equipped for a life that pleases God.

So, **Jesus is our Rock**. The obvious metaphor of the rock points to Jesus being strong, steadfast, and consistent, not easily moved or shaken and a refuge for those in need. Moses wrote, "He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just, a faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He." (**Deuteronomy 32:4**)

This afternoon, I will preach John Sproston's funeral service. One of his favorite hymns was "In Times Like these You need an Anchor." Here are a portion of the lyrics:

"In times like these you need a Savior,
In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

This Rock is Jesus, Yes He's the One,
This Rock is Jesus, the only One;
Be very sure, be very sure,

Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these you need the Bible,
In times like these, O be not idle;
Be very sure, be very sure,
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

We can trust Jesus because **He is our Rock**. This chapter also teaches us that **Jesus is our Peace**. The best known verse of this chapter is verse 3 - “You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on You*, because he trusts in You.”

“Only those who have trusted Jesus Christ will enter the city of salvation; and because they believe, they have peace (**Romans 5:1**). The Hebrew word for peace (*shalom*) means much more than a cessation of war. It includes blessings such as wholeness, health, quietness of soul, preservation, and completeness.

In a few moments, we will sing the hymn “Peace, Perfect Peace,” which is based upon this verse of Scripture. Stanzas 1 and 3 are especially helpful.

“Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin? The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.”
“Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round? On Jesus’ bosom naught but calm is found.”

One Sunday in August of 1875, Edward H. Bickersteth listened to a sermon on the subject of peace based on **Isaiah 26:3**. That afternoon, he paid a visit to an aged, dying relative. The ill man was in a deeply depressed and disturbed state of mind. Eager to be of spiritual help and comfort, Bickersteth picked up his Bible and read the portion of scripture used in the morning’s lesson. Then, while his relative slept, he took a sheet of paper from a desk, quickly jotted the lines of this poem, and read them to the sick man after his awakening.

The Apostle Paul in his New Testament letter to the Ephesian Christians refers to Jesus in this way, “For He Himself is our peace.” Jesus is our Peace!

“Verse 12 is a beautiful affirmation. God is the One who has done everything for His people. He has made it possible for them to have true “peace” and to accomplish significant things. Apart from His grace and goodness, they would have been just one more insignificant people group in the ancient world.” (Oswalt, 299)

Finally, this text teaches us that **Jesus is our Resurrection**. This is found in verse 19 - “Your dead shall live; *together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

In the Gospel According to John, Jesus declares that He Himself is the Resurrection. **John 11:25**, “Jesus said to (Martha), “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”

We are awaiting Jesus' return from heaven to earth, His second coming. When Jesus returns for His Church, those believers who are still alive on this earth will not die, but will be instantly changed. All of the dead will be raised and our bodies will be transformed in the general resurrection. This is where we reach our final state, for our resurrected bodies will be united with our souls and will remain like that forever.

Because Jesus came to earth fully God and fully man, He was able to live for - and die for - and be raised again from the dead for (resurrection) the people He came to earth to save.

Friend, if you are a Christian, it is because God gave you to Jesus before the world even existed. God is your Rock, He is your Peace, and He is your Resurrection.

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, then none of what we've discussed here today applies to you. However, It won't be wasted time if God the Holy Spirit saves you from the punishment due to you for living a sinful life. That must happen before you die in this life. Only those in Jesus will be resurrected to glory; those who do not live a life of righteousness for God's glory on this earth, will be resurrected to an eternity in the pain and torture of hell.

This text has given us three reasons for why you can trust God. He is our Rock, protecting us from all harm; He is our Peace, giving us that quiet assurance and confidence that He will save you in the end. And Jesus is our Resurrection - this life is not all there is; you will be with God and all who sleep in Jesus for eternity. Those are powerful reasons for why you can trust God.

Trust Him when dark doubts assail you,
Trust Him when your strength is small,
Trust Him when to simply trust Him
Seems the hardest thing of all.

Trust Him, He is ever faithful,
Trust Him, for His will is best,
Trust Him, for the heart of Jesus
Is the only place of rest. - Source Unknown