

September 12, 2021 Praying God's Truth, Over My Fears Pt. 2
Isaiah 41:8-10

This is another passage to which I turn, time and time again, when I am in pain, which is often in this stage of life, when I doubt my gifts, and my effectiveness as a servant of God, which is often because the flesh is weak. In the midst of a storm it becomes so easy and so tempting to believe we are a dull instrument, unable to do its job. Yes, I turn to the Old Testament and the prophet Isaiah, for encouragement. There are so many words to be underlined in these 3 verses, because of what they say about God's love for you, for me, and the simple truth that our lives are in God's hands, not our own, not the world's, not the hands of circumstances beyond our control.

The 8th verse begins, "But you O Israel, my servant." Two days ago I wrote that phrase out by hand. I underlined the words MY SERVANT. Isaiah is speaking for the Lord God to the people of faith. In Jesus Christ, we are the children of the new covenant. The Lord God has claimed us and redeemed us.

In fact that verse goes on to specify, that we are the descendants of Abraham, whom God calls, "my friend." Such is the love and the grace of God that HE sees you, and me as linked to HIM in a relationship that can only be described as the friends of God. He also says, I chose you, to be my friends. The apostle Paul makes the point that the love of God is poured out upon us and into our midst for one single reason: we have

made the choice to believe HIM, to believe God, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did. God chose you. HE chose me. That is the reality of our relationship to HIM through faith in Jesus.

Vs. 9 says, “From the ends of the earth I took you. From the corners of the earth I called you. I said, you are my servant, I chose you.” Eugene Burrell must be smiling. He loved to remind me that predestination was a fundamental piece of the Presbyterian declarations about faith. And what predestination is really about is the fact of God’s having chosen you. It is not as simple as your forbears made a choice to emigrate to Canada. God says, that was me, I took you from over there to here. I brought you to this land, and your experience of me in this new place, or continuing from your experience of me in the old place. “I chose you!” You matter, you count. God loves you. That’s why HE chose you.

In fact God’s Spirit, speaking through the word wants to make something perfectly clear. “I have chosen you and not rejected you.” The King James Version says the Hebrew word for word...”I have chosen you and not cast you away.” You are in the hands of the Lord God who made the heavens and the earth, who sent Jesus into the world to redeem it, to save you. HE chose you. HE has not cast you away. HE has not rejected you, nor has HE forgotten you.

Isaiah 41:10 piles up the commitment God has made about you. About me. “So do not fear, I am with you.” That is a statement that describes the relationship we have been called

to enjoy. The Lord is with you. What has David taught us to sing in the 23rd Psalm? I will fear no evil, for YOU, the Lord my God, are with me. No matter where I am. No matter what may circumstances may appear to be.

HE goes on to declare yet again, "I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, I will uphold you with my strong righteous right hand." The marvelous echo is found in the first verses of Psalm 121. "I look to the hills. Where does my strength come from? Answer for the man and the woman of faith. My strength, or my help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip... He who watches over you....will not slumber or sleep." O how special is the saving love of your gracious God. HE so loved the world, HE sent HIS Son Jesus into the world, that you might be made safe. No matter what appears to be happening.

Let us pray God's truth, over our fears.

Lord God our Creator, Jesus our Saviour, Holy Spirit our Comforter, hear us as we pray. Lord we thank YOU and praise YOUR holy name for making us YOUR servants, for choosing us, for befriending us even as YOU befriended Abraham. Lord, we thank YOU for bringing us together in this place we call Canada, in the province of Ontario, in the community in which we live. We acknowledge YOUR gracious hand upon us, leading us to where we are. YOU called us, and we will not forget that YOUR Spirit still calls, us to worship YOU, to serve YOU, to be a blessing to those to whom YOU lead us. YOU are our strength, YOU and YOU alone. We shall not be afraid. May we always

give to YOU, the honour, the glory and the praise. May we celebrate YOUR grace in the fellowship of YOUR church. In Jesus name we ask for YOUR continued blessing. Amen