Fear not

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev A.G.Ross

[0:00] 43, and the first three verses. But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Isaiah 43, and verses 1 to 3.

And these words were addressed originally to Israel, to the literal Israel, to the people of God in the prophet's day, to the church of God in the Old Testament. But such words as these have their deepest meaning when applied to the church of God throughout all ages. In other words, to the spiritual Israel of God, and even more so when these words are applied to individual members, individual people within the church of God throughout all ages. These words are like crystals, that when crystals are broken down, each little piece retains its crystalline form.
And when these words are broken down and applied to individual people, the words retain their crystalline form, as it were. They express to us the abounding love that God has for us. As this verse says, the one who created us and the one who formed us. And who can love us more than the one who formed us in the womb. Now all this is introduced by a divine command. A command that is as loving as it is divine. And it is, fear not. But thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not. Do not fear.
Now this is a loving command that is to be obeyed by all who do fear the Lord. For it is only right and proper for all who fear God to fear nothing else.
And speaking to those who fear God, he says, fear not. As far as other things are concerned, fear not. And the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, gives us three good, solid reasons why we should not fear. In verse one, it is because of the salvation he has provided. In verse two, it is because of the preservation he has promised.
[3:26] And in verse three, it is because of the declaration he has made. I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

And in verse two, it is because of the salvation he has made.
The salvation God has provided. At the very near the very end of verse three, God refers to himself as our Savior. I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior.
And here in verse one, he is talking about the salvation which as Savior he has provided. Look at the constituent parts as we have them here in this first verse. There is first of all, redemption.
Fear thou not, for I have redeemed thee. There is redemption. And redemption is deliverance by ransom. It is deliverance at a price. It is deliverance because of a price. And what a price as far as our redemption is concerned.
[4:59] But here God says, I gave Egypt, as far as the nation of Israel is concerned, he says, I gave Egypt for thy ransom.

I gave Ethiopia and Seba for your deliverance. Now when God sought a nation which could be the depository of his saving truth, he could have chosen Egypt.
For Egypt was a very ancient nation. It was the most civilized and cultured nation of its day in such things as literature, art, architecture, science.
And the very ruins of Egypt today are still the wonder of the world. It was a very advanced country. A very cultured and civilized nation.
But God did not choose Egypt as the depository of his saving truth. He passed Egypt by and also Ethiopia and Seba and made choice of little Israel.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[6:10] But even more so, he made Egypt a ransom for the deliverance of Israel. He made Egypt pay in a terrible way for its treatment of Israel during the bondage under the Pharaoh.

Not only with those awful plagues that he sent upon Egypt, but by the angel of death who slew the firstborn throughout the whole land.
Even the firstborn of the king on the throne. And when Pharaoh and his armies pursued after Israel, they were trapped in the Red Sea.
The horse and the rider were drowned in the Red Sea. Indeed, I gave Egypt for thy ransom. The price Egypt had to pay for the deliverance and for the release of Israel was a heavy price.
The firstborn in the land. The destruction of the armies of Israel in the Red Sea. I gave Egypt for thy ransom. And he has given the Lord Jesus Christ for ours.
[7:16] Let him not go down to the pit. I have found a ransom. And when God looked around for a ransom, he didn't choose an angel or an archangel.

And when he looked within the Holy Trinity, he didn't choose the third person, but he chose the second person. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the psalmist says in Psalm 89, I laid help on one that is mighty.
And I anointed him my servant with my holy oil. I have found a ransom. Redemption was provided.
I have redeemed thee. But it was redemption by blood. For as blood was shed in Egypt on the night of Israel's release, blood was shed outside Jerusalem on the day of Christ's death.
And in virtue of that blood shedding, God says, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. And all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, all whose trust and confidence are in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, have already been passed over by the angel of death.
[8:35] And have already been visited by the Prince of Life. For we have been ransomed, if we are believing people this morning, we have been ransomed from the power of the grave, from the power of sin and death.

The transaction has been done. The price has been paid. And the Lord is saying to us this morning, Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I shall not die, but live.
And shall the works of God discover. And when God the Father looks at the print of the nails, still visible and eternally visible in the hands of his Son, he then looks at us and says, I have redeemed you.
Fear not. We might well ask, why did he do it? Well, of course, because of the love he bore. We can't understand that.
But we believe this, that he chose us because of his love. And he loves us because of his choice. He redeemed us because he loved us.
[9:47] And he loves us because he redeemed us. And if we have fears about the future, about our future state, about our future destiny, those fears can be stilled immediately if our faith is in Christ.

For he says, Fear thou not, I have redeemed redemption. The second constituent part in our salvation is calling.
I have called you by your name. Now here we have the application of redemption. The provision of it was Jesus on the cross.
And here we have the application of it. And whatever we know in our soul's experience of the redemption provided, it is due to the call or the summons of God.
And the first step in the application of redemption to us as individuals lies here in the summons and call of God. Our experience of what God has done for us in Christ is due, not first of all to our will or to our faith, but to the summons and call of God.
[11:06] Fear thou not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name. Now God's call, God's summons to us to believe in the Lord Jesus, a summons that comes to us through the gospel as that is applied by the Spirit.

God's summons is not like a court summons. All that a court summons does is to require us to attend the court on a certain day and at a certain hour.
And it leaves the responsibility of being there with ourselves. But God's summons enables us to attend to these great matters of salvation.
For his summons is invested with his own power. And by his summons invested with his own power, he brings us willingly to Christ and to the redemption which Christ has provided for us.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now this call is called by the Apostle Paul, for example, a high calling. The high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And this tells us two things about the call.
[12:15] It speaks, first of all, of its lofty origin. It's a high calling indeed because it's the call of heaven. It's the call of the God of heaven to us. That's where the call originates.

And that's why we should give heed to the call. Because it comes to us from heaven and from the Lord himself. That not only does this speak to us of its lofty origin, but also of its lofty objective. The high calling is an upward call as far as we are concerned. It's a heavenward call. So that God's summons is a summons that sets us among the princes of his people.
I have called thee. And if the Lord has made his call to us an effectual living, saving call, we have been set by that summons among the princes of his people.
But what Isaiah is saying here is this, that the call is a personal call. For it is, I've called thee, I've called you by your name.
[13:17] By your name. It was only when Jesus called Mary by her name that she recognized him and said, Rabboni, Master.

It was when God called little Samuel by name and said to him, Samuel, Samuel, that the boy said, Speak, for thy servant heals.
And when God calls us, he calls us by name, which I take to mean that he calls us individually and he calls us singly and personally, for we are not saved in the mass.
And if we belong to the Lord Jesus, then he has already called us. For he who knows the number of the stars and names them everyone, has called us by name and has graven us on the palms of his hand.
That's the second thing. I have redeemed thee. I have called thee to lay hold upon that redemption. And the third thing here is this.
[14:33] It is ownership. You are mine. I have called thee by thy name. You're mine. Divine ownership and divine possession is part of our salvation.

Because of the purchase made, he says to us, you are mine. And that means we are no longer the devils. Which in turn means that if we do not belong to Christ, we do belong to the prince of darkness.
My dear friends, what a solemn thought. There's no halfway house. If we don't belong to the Lord, we belong to the chief adversary of God and of God's people.
But if we belong to the Lord, having heard his call and having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then he says to us, you're mine. We are no longer the devils. And more than that, we are not even our own.
We don't even belong to ourselves. For you are not your own. Says Paul, you have been bought with a price. And because of that price, we have been brought into the family of God.
[15:45] And he says to us, you are mine. You are my son. You are my child. You are my daughter. And you have a right to all the privileges of my children.

Heirs. Heirs of God. And joint heirs with Christ. Now, we remember this. That the Lord, who created us, the one who formed us, is not ashamed to say, you are mine.
I will be to you a father. And you shall be to me a son. He makes this clear, crystal clear.
He is not ashamed to own us as his people, as his children. Can we say the same thing about him? Are we ashamed of the Lord?
If we are not, then there is no reason for us to fear whatever the cause of the fear may be because of the salvation he has provided.
[16:59] That's the comfort we have then in the first verse. And I trust that that is a comfort that every one of us this morning can take. Let's take it to ourselves.

May it be true of every one of us. That verse one is referring to us. We know all about it. We know, well, we know something about it. There's much more for us to learn, but we know at least the basics.
He has redeemed us. He has called us. He has, he says, you're mine for time and for death and for eternity. No wonder, no wonder the verse comes in. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.
I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. Now the second solid reason for not feeding is in the second verse. Not only because of the salvation he has provided, but also because of the preservation and protection he has promised.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned.
[18:03] And neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Let's look then at this second great reason for not fearing. This preservation that he has promised us.

Now if verse one is a statement of fact, I have redeemed you, then verse two is a gracious promise. But we ask ourselves, why does, why does he promise and why is it necessary for God to promise preservation after such a foolproof statement about atonement, redemption, and ownership?
Why does he need to say, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee? Since he says, I am, since he says, you are mine. Well, for this very good reason that nowhere does God ever say that redemption and ownership grant immunity from trouble.
He says that nowhere. In fact, quite the contrary. In the world, he says to his disciples, to those whom he has called to himself who belong to him, in the world, he says, you shall have tribulation.
Let us look at this then for a moment. And the first thing we see here is this, that our troubles or our tribulation can be expected. Tribulation can be expected.
[19:30] He doesn't say in this verse, if you pass through the waters, I will be with thee and through the rivers. If on occasion you find the way hard, if it happens occasionally that you may find it hard, I will be with you, not at all.

He doesn't, there's no if of uncertainty here, it is rather the when of absolute certainty. When thou passest through the waters, there's no if about it.
We therefore understand that what the Lord is saying is that our trials, whatever they are, great or small, they are to be in some way expected. We've got to meet them, we've got to go through with them.
There is no bridge across troubled waters. There is no tunnel under the rivers. We've got to go through the waters and through the rivers.
Now, it's not for nothing that Paul speaks about soldiers, soldiers of Christ, having to fight the good fight of faith, having to endure hardness.
[20:41] It's not for nothing that Paul says we are not only to believe on Christ, that's a great privilege, but also we have the privilege of suffering for his sake. and it's not for nothing that the Apostle John records his vision on Patmos of a great multitude who came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

So when our gracious God calls us to believe and calls us into his family and giving us a right to all the privileges of his children, when he calls us to that estate, he also calls us o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea.
Day by day, his sweet voice soundeth, saying, Christian, follow me. All our life's wild, restless sea, the call calls us and summons us.
So our troubles, our difficulties are to be expected when you pass through the waters. And the next thing is this, that our troubles are varied. There's a variety about them.
And the variety is brought before us here as in terms of fire and water. And there's nothing so different as fire and water.
[22:13] So he says here, the waters and the rivers represent our troubles, our tribulations, whatever they are. Waters and rivers. Well, waters may be still, but they can run deep and they can be so cold as to numb.

when we enter them. And my dear friends, we can have trouble to the extent that it leaves us numb. It leaves us incapable of action and even incapable of proper thought.
We can be numbed by cold waters, by cold rivers. And the waters and the rivers, of course, may not be still, they may be fast flowing, they may be in spit, ready to sweep us off our feet.
We were singing there in Psalm 1, 2, 4, the raging streams with their proud swelling waves had then our soul overwhelmed in the deep. So there are the kind of troubles we can have that are brought to us by the waters and the rivers.
And also he speaks about fire and flames which tell us that our troubles can have a singeing, burning, scarring, scorching effect upon us.
[23:32] The Apostle Peter speaks about the fiery trials. Trials like fire that will try you. Trials that will lick round the roots of your very faith.

Trying to burn up your faith. Trying to burn out your love. Trying to bring to ashes your hope. Well, we needn't go over this.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

we know that from experience that our difficulties and trials and troubles are varied but the great comfort here is in the third thing that our troubles are controlled and controlled by the Lord.
They are not given free range and this is the promise of God. He says, when thou passest through the waters I will be with you and through the rivers they shall not overflow you.
When thou walkest through the fire you shall not be burned and the flame shall not kindle upon you.
Do you see the control? A divine control upon the troubles and trials and afflictions that may well be ours.
[24:44] He doesn't say I'll dry up the waters for you or I'll put out the fire for you but in the loving wisdom of our God he allows us to pass into the waters and to pass into the fire in order no doubt to cleanse us to purify us to strengthen our character and to encourage us to a greater dependence upon himself.

But he says I will be with you. We were singing there in Psalm 32 and verse 6 surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him unto him whose trust is in the Lord who has the fear of God in his heart.
And so the Lord says to us I will be with you who therefore or what therefore can separate you from me and my love no floods and no rivers can separate you I will be with you who therefore will destroy you who will and what will overwhelm you no matter how great your troubles and triumphs they shall not overwhelm you as waters and rivers may overwhelm a drowning man.
And he says you shall not be burned or destroyed or consumed any more than the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace were burned or destroyed or consumed.
not even the smell of burning was on Shadrach Meshach and Abednego when they came out of the fiery furnace. And I believe this that the only thing that will be burnt up as a result of our fiery trials will be the alloy in us.
[26:33] It's therefore a good thing when we are afflicted if it's going to burn up the alloy that our soul our faith our hope our love shall be kept intact.

But he says I will be with you. Will you notice the word through in this verse when thou passest through the waters and through the rivers and through the fire we don't only pass into these we pass out of these we pass through them and out of them for at least a season.
But then you see the promise is for season after season of the water and fire experience until finally we are brought to a wealthy place.
Through the last water the river Jordan to a wealthy place. Beyond fire beyond water beyond sorrow and sin. So there you have in the second in the second place a solid reason for not fearing.
Not only because of the salvation he's provided but because of the preservation he guarantees and promises. Let's take this to heart and again may we be found in a position to make use of this great promise.
[28:08] It's a tremendous promise. He understands everything about us he knows how troubles will come he knows they are buried but he's in control. That's the comfort.

And so he says fear not. And the last reason is this and a very important one too. We fear not because of the declaration he has made where he says in verse 3 for I am the Lord your God the Holy One of Israel your Saviour.
Notice in this declaration made by the one who formed us and by the one who created us and by the one who redeemed us and by the one who preserves us he says I am the Lord your God the Holy One of Israel your Saviour.
First then we have here a declaration of his greatness. A declaration of his greatness. Striding through the fire and through the water with us is the Lord our God Jehovah.
I am Jehovah. That's what it means I am Jehovah your God. I am the Eternal the Almighty the Unchangeable who is in control of the fire and the water and those who are in them.
[29:38] He is also the great I am I am Jehovah your God. He is self-existent for whom everything is present and nothing is past or future.

and his self-existence gave us existence and he exists to bless us and in doing so to magnify his glorious grace.
A woman may forsake her sucking child but this great God says I will never forsake you but I am Jehovah your God and so the promise this promise of verse 2 comes direct from a God of that quality and who is a God like unto our God I am Jehovah your God fear not and then there's a declaration about his holiness he says I am the holy one of Israel now God's holiness undergirds

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

every promise he makes this is the point of it here I think his holiness is the pledge that every promise of his will be kept because as a holy God he cannot lie his holiness as it were commits him to the keeping of his promises or if he broke his promises he would cease to be holy his holiness is the pledge that he will not change his mind or depart in any way from what he has promised and what he has uttered with his mouth that's the importance of it that's the importance of this declaration the very holiness of God guarantees that what he has said he will do otherwise he would cease to be holy a declaration of his greatness a declaration of his holiness and finally a declaration of his saviourhood for he says
I am the holy one of Israel your saviour now Jehovah our God this great and almighty God who formed us and who created us this God is God our saviour and in these verses before us these verses we've been thinking of we see the kindness and love of God our saviour and this kindness and love of God our saviour has appeared to all men it has appeared to all the world whatever the gospel is preached the gospel proclaims and declares the saviourhood of God he is God our saviour and all in any part of the world who turn to him will know him then and for the first time as God their saviour and having saved us at such a cost
Jesus for our ransom having saved us at such a cost he will preserve us at all costs he will never no never no never forsake for he says I am God your saviour I wonder if every one of us here this morning knows him in this light not just as creator benefactor sustainer the giver of all good and so on but specifically as our saviour if we don't know God as God our saviour don't you think it's time because we are all approaching the last piece of water the last river the river of Jordan and if we haven't got
[34:00] God as God our saviour what are we going to do in the swellings of Jordan are we ready for this then by laying hold and there's only one way of being ready by laying hold upon Christ and upon the redemption that he has provided he is calling us to that redemption through the gospel oh may he take from us our rebellious hearts our self righteousness or anything else that keeps us back and there are many things that keep us back that may take them from us so that we would embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel and then claim that second promise of preservation and be comforted enormously by this great declaration that the promise of preservation and the fact of redemption have come to us from a

God of infinite greatness of infinite holiness and a God who is God our savior who gave Ethiopia for Israel's ransom and Egypt Egypt for Israel's ransom Ethiopia and Seba likewise may we lay hold upon the ransom that he has provided and so be able to say I shall not die but live let us pray oh lord our god make these truths meaningful to us may they come home to our hearts today help us lord to see ourselves as in need of god our savior and what a savior and what a god jehovah our god and what a god who is not ashamed to call us his people his heirs and to make us joint heirs with his beloved son words fail us oh lord to understand to express our gratitude and thankfulness our minds fail us to understand the greatness and loftiness of thy provision and of the love the eternal immutable love that lies behind it all but we thank thee that thou hast revealed it to us and revealed it to us in the simple clear terms of these words we have been thinking of this morning make these words a real blessing to all of us and as we all approach the river jordan as we all have to face its swellings may we take heart may we be encouraged may we be assured that the god in whom we put our trust will never leave us then as he will not leave us now hear us and bless us and part us with thy blessing remembering this afternoon the outreach work and those who enter into it keep us who have a concern for this in prayer seeking the advancement of thy kingdom by this little effort that we seek to do in thy name and may it be to thy glory through
Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host