

Isaiah 43:8-28

“Worshipping, Or Wearying God?”

The *faithfulness* of God... & the *foolishness* of forsaking Him. We might consider that a very broad contextual premise of the passages we've been looking at as of late. In Vs 8 God says...

Vs 8-9

The idea being, “Build your case & bring it before Me.” Which way is just & true? Is it right to *follow* God w/all your heart, all your mind, all your soul & all your strength? Or is it best to *forsake* God & follow a different path, have a different priority? Justify your own position. Or say of *God's way, God's word, God's witness*, “It is true.”

He says, “Bring out the blind people who have eyes, & the deaf who have ears.” This calls our attention back to Vs 17-19 of Ch 42. It's a reference to people who've forsaken God & turned to idols, placed other priorities over Him. The psalmist (Ps 115:4-8) spoke of the fact that though idols have eyes, they can't see, having ears they can't hear. Mouths they have, but they can't speak, feet they have but they can't walk. & He said, “Those who make them are like them.” They have eyes & ears, but they're *blind* to the things of God, they're unable to *hear* the Spirit of God. They've turned a “deaf ear” to the truth of God.

* You make something else your god other than the True/Living God, this becomes your spiritual condition. You become insensate, unable to truly *discern/distinguish* the things of God. You become desensitized to the *Spirit of God*. To the Corinthians Paul put it this way, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”¹ In Ephesians he said it like this, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk (live your life) as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”² Insensate. Blind & deaf to the things of God.

It's the result of having *rejected* God, having placed other priorities in our lives *over* God. & God is saying, “I want you to justify your rejection of Me as the Lord of your life! (& Bring out your witnesses to aid in justifying what you've done).” * – & We've developed this principle in previous passages...

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 2:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Eph 4:17-19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God is basically saying, “Explain to Me why you’ve chosen to worship any other *thing*, any other *person*, *principle*, or *philosophy* other than Me. Is the object of your worship able to declare the things of old? Or able to demonstrate its faithful deliverance in the past? Is it able to speak of what’s to *come*? Or assure your salvation *presently* (much less *eternally*)? Then why? Why worship *before* it, why give your allegiance *to* it, why dedicate your life to *pursuing* it?”

& It’s a relevant rebuke to our culture today! * Americans notoriously seek after pleasure, we seek creature comforts, we want the latest greatest. If we need to work more hours to get it, if we need to sacrifice time away from our family or the church body or whatever the case may be, so be it... Now, there’s nothing wrong w/working hard & making a good living. In fact, as believers our witness should show that we’ve worked hard, haven’t left responsibilities undone, we’ve given it our best effort (& all of that).

But the bible is clear (Prov 23:4) that we’re not to work ourselves to death to try & become rich. – It’s a real problem in America today. But Paul told Timothy, “...those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”³ To paraphrase our Lord, “You can serve God, or you can serve money, but you can’t serve both. You’ll wind up loving one & hating the other, being loyal to one & despising the other.” It’s been said (& I believe it holds true), money makes a great servant, but a terrible master.

You work so hard to get all this stuff, meanwhile your life is passing you by. Opportunities w/family, to build into the kingdom eternally are slipping through your fingers. Before you know it, life has passed you by. You find yourself w/more years behind you than you have in front of you... for what? No gain eternally, & more than enough pain & sacrifice in your family...Again, work hard. Leaving an inheritance is biblical. I’m simply saying, what’s your priority? *

If it’s not the Lord, God says, “Justify yourself. Why have you put any other thing before Me?”

Vs 10-13

The idea here is this. The idol worshipers can say nothing, testify of *nothing* as witnesses. Because their gods can’t do anything!

³ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (1 Ti 6:9–10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But God says to *His* people, “*You* are My witnesses. You’ve *seen* what I can do. You *know* that I have declared & it’s come to pass. That I have delivered you, saved you & whatever I’ve determined, nothing can stop it.” If Israel would only recall, only remember the great things that God has done *for* them, done *among* them. The things they’ve seen & experienced personally from His hand... Each wonderful work would cause them to testify as witnesses to the world that there’s only One true God, full of grace & power & there is no other.

& Don’t miss this. That’s the reason God *chose them!* He didn’t choose them so they could sit around & glory in they were chosen! He chose them to *serve Him* as witnesses to the world. “My servant whom I have chosen.” He says, “I want you to *know Me*, to *believe Me*, to *understand that I am God*, there were none *before Me*, there will be none *after Me*. I (the word “even” isn’t in the Hebrew. We might understand it, “I... I am the Lord) & besides Me there is no savior... *I’m* the One who proclaimed among you, *I’m* the One who has declared & saved, no foreign god. Therefore, you are My witnesses, that I (alone) am God.”

They were to serve the Lord, in witnessing to the truth of these things to the world around them. God tells Israel, “You are My witnesses.” Now. Make the connection. Jesus said, “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit...*”⁴ * If you are in Christ Jesus. It’s not because you chose Him, it’s because He chose you. But there’s a *reason* for which He chose you. He’s “appointed” you. He wants to you “go”. The idea is that we serve Him. “Why do you call Me ‘Lord’ & not do the things that I say.” We’re to *serve the Lord*. – In what capacity? Acts 1:8, Jesus speaking to His disciples,

“*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”⁵

& What is it that you’re to serve as a witness of? That there is no other god, no other Savior... All sin & fall short of the glory of God & there’s only one way to be saved from the penalty of sin. “*Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’*”⁶ Besides J.C. there is no other Savior.

There is no foreign god, there are no minor deities or anything of the sort. There’s only 1 God, One Savior. Not my opinion, God’s Word. ... & It’s imperative that we’re truthful concerning that. Imagine telling people you’re having a get together at your house. They say, “I’d love to come! How do I get there?”

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 15:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Ac 1:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 14:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So, you say, “Well, all roads lead to my house. Just pick one & as long as you’re sincere we’ll all arrive at my place.” How many people do think will show up? Only the ones who knew the right way... Jesus is clear, “There’s only 1 way, 1 road, 1 path that leads to the Father. We get there by Him. No other way, no other route.” For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved... God keeps it simple for us, there’s only one way. It’s narrow, it’s straight, you can’t get lost, you won’t get confused, it’s Christ alone. *

Concerning our text, it wasn’t Baal who led them out of Egypt. It wasn’t Molech who parted the Red Sea. It wasn’t Ashtoreth who brought them across the Jordan or led them into the Promised Land. It was the Lord!

Think back to *your* experience. You didn’t cry out to your money when you were at the end of you. You didn’t ask Buddha to rescue you, J.C. has saved you. You are *His* witness that He alone can save. He alone can deliver, bring healing, hope & wholeness to your heart.

Vs 13

Deut 32, “*Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*”⁷

I love the fact that all things work together for good to those who love God. I love the fact that God can take what others mean for evil & use it for good (Gen 50:20). But when *God* works, none can reverse it. God can reverse the work of the enemy, but there are none who can turn what He purposes to accomplish. There are none who can deliver from His hand.

God made a promise to preserve Israel. Despite the best efforts of the Babylonians, the Persians, the Grecians, Romans, the Palestinians, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran or anyone else. He works, & none will reverse it.

Vs 14-17

I would remind you that God is telling Judah that they are going to go into Babylonian captivity. But He’s telling them this over 100 yrs before it happens. Currently Babylon is still a Jr power of the known world. Assyria was the super-power when Isaiah wrote this. *But Babylon would become the dominant power of the world in the years to come... What’s fascinating about this (outside of what I just mentioned) is that God is already speaking of the judgment of Babylon & they’re not even in contention for power yet.*

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Dt 32:39]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God says, “For your sake” because of what they’ll do to Judah, I will send to Babylon & bring them all down...” He says, “Don’t forget what I did in Egypt. How that I made a pathway in the sea, through the mighty waters, brought forth the chariots, the horses, & the army & extinguished them all.” He’s saying, “I overwhelmed and judged Egypt, & I’ll do it again to the Babylonians.”

The take home here is this. If we just remember God’s faithfulness, His power, His grace & mercy toward us in the past. We can justify trusting Him now & still yet in the future. He’s never failed, & He never will. (& We love all these titles that God takes to Himself here. The Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One, Creator, your King.)

Vs 18-21

Did you catch what happened here? God went from, “Look back & remember” to “Do not remember the former things!” We scratch our head & say, “Which is it! Do we remember or do we forget?” & The answer is, “Yes!” 😊

The idea here is this. * When it comes to looking back, don’t focus on your failures, remember His faithfulness & realize He has a work that’s yet future for your life. As it pertains to our lives, God would have us to set our focus on what lies ahead (Phil 3:13-14). The enemy is always reminding you of your past. Satan wants you to remember & reflect on all your past failures w/all its defeat & discouragement. God would have you set your sights on what lies ahead, “Behold I will do a new thing!” The only thing God wants you to remember about your past is *His faithfulness*. Because His past faithfulness strengthens our resolve to trust Him for the future.

But when you are (& I am) stuck in the failure, the sin or discouragement of the past, we’ll never move forward in the new thing God has for us. Listen, when God *forgives* you, when God *restores* you, be His *witness* in the present, stand on His *promises* for the future!*

“But I don’t know how God’s going to do it.” Don’t worry about that. Let Him worry about that. He’ll make a road in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. He has resources of which we know nothing about! –

* Too often (I fear) God wants to do a new work, but we won’t allow it because we’re bogged down by past traditions or routines. & You’ll begin to hear phrases like, “We’ve never done it that way before.” Or “This is the way we do it here.” These kinds of phrases can be the death knell of a church. The sure sign that you’re on your way (if not already there) to becoming old wineskins. Unable to get away from the past, unable to flex w/the new work God wants to do in your midst.

Don't be afraid to bury traditions. It's not noble to do something the same way or do the same thing year after decade if God is no longer doing it. God will move on, but we'll stay stuck because we don't want to flex. God says, "Behold, I will do a new thing." *

Talk to my staff, ask Pastor Russ, Joseph, Jody. I'm always asking them to evaluate the events we do, or the way we do what we do. I get nervous when we do the same thing, year after year, after year. Something goes great & we try to replicate it over & over again... Just because we've done something for 10-20 yrs doesn't mean we need to do it again next year. We can be guilty of clinging to our tradition at the expense of something new/different God may want to do. Pray, seek the Lord. "God what do *You* want to do?" Sometimes we get on lock w/what we've done & it becomes a rut we can't get out of.

Being faithful is great (if God is in it). If He's moved on, we're no longer *faithful*, we're *failing*, not following Him in the new thing He wants to do. We've become old wineskins. (Has nothing to do w/age, everything to do w/an unwillingness to flex w/a new work of the Spirit of God).

Having said that... we've got to be careful always chasing some new thing as well! We can make an idol out of the "new". We can err as the people of Athens did. We learn in Acts 17 that they spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear of some new thing. "What's the latest news, what's the latest technology? What thing is the most happening in churches currently? We gotta get on that!" Be careful... I think the balance lies in seeking the Lord & doing what you can to remain sensitive to the unction, the goading & leading of His Spirit. Allowing His word to serve as the guide rails along the way.

& Btw, last week we mentioned that we were created for God's glory (Vs 7). Fulfillment is found in leading your life for the glory of God. Here (Vs 21) we have a subpoint under that. Part of fulfilling your purpose is declaring God's praise. When you're declaring His praise, it gives Him glory, fulfilling the purpose for which you were created. *If God has *saved* you, then you should *praise* Him! ... You should praise Him through worship. You should praise Him through the giving of your time, your talents, your treasure. All that you *are*, for all that He's *done*...

It *should be* the natural inclination of our heart *toward* the Lord having been saved, delivered, set free & redeemed *by* the Lord. But too often such is not the case. People begin to get bogged down at the idea of *servicing* God, *giving* to God, lavishing praise & honor upon God,* notice.

Vs 22-24

This is why I tell people that times & cultures may change, but the human heart remains the same. God's word appeals to the heart of man & the heart of man is the same today as it's always been. * You would think that having been saved, set free & made new by God, there would be standing room only every week! You'd think people would be chomping at the bit to serve, to give of their time, their talents, their treasures to the Lord!

(& I'm not heaping condemnation; I'm simply making an observation of the nature of man.) God says, "You haven't called on Me. You've been *wearry* of Me." People consider serving & obeying the Lord a wearisome thing! The flesh convinces you it's a burden to serve the Lord! His ways are so oppressive, so limiting. You just need a break! People will say, "I just need a break..." A break from what? From the Lord? Listen, we all get weary *in* the work, but never weary *of* the work. Jesus took His disciples away for times of refreshing. But not away from *Him*, they were refreshed by spending some alone time *with* Him. It is an honor (of the highest order) to serve the Lord! We should be *blessing* the Lord, but we think He asks too much.*

*Listen, it's not uncommon for people to struggle w/feeling connected in a church body. But many times, they're the people who come to church at the last minute. They're quick to scoot out & they don't serve in any capacity. You should realize that connections, & community are generally found through service & fellowship. When we serve the Lord, the Lord blesses, builds us up, fulfills certain needs/longing in the human heart. You just can't out give God. But instead, people tend to view serving as a burden, a wearisome thing.

It can be symptomatic of being out of step, out of sync w/the Lord. Jesus said, "Come unto Me all you who labor & are heavy laden & I will give you *rest*." If following God always seems like some great wearisome burden, then may I submit to you that you really aren't following Him. I'm not saying you aren't saved... But could it be that you may've slipped into some religion of your own making? That you're struggling to keep up w/your self-imposed standard or something... Serving the Lord *isn't* burdensome.*

"You have bought Me no sweet cane w/money." This was used in the anointing oil for the furniture of the tabernacle, the consecration of the priests... When we are weary of the Lord, it often shows up in our giving, & in our moral compromise... ("you have burdened Me w/your sins.")

It's as if God says, "You think I've burdened *you*! You've burdened Me w/your *sins*! You've wearied Me w/your *iniquities*!"

Vs 25-28

We've gotten the roles wrong. We're the ones who sin against the Lord. He's the One who "blots out our transgression". He's doesn't add to the weight we carry. He relieves us of the burden, the oppression of sin!

"I... I am He who blots out your transgressions (notice) for My own sake." What mercy, what grace, what love is this? God doesn't blot out our transgressions because we somehow appeased Him & made it better through some meritorious, praiseworthy act of our own. "For My own sake I will not remember your sins." What will God do w/such a hard-hearted, rebellious people? Despite all their sin, all their disregard for God, He will forgive them at the earliest opportunity. He will cast their sins away & remember them no more. God longs for the humble return of His people to Himself.

(We're out of time but this is where you'd want to write down & refamiliarize yourself w/Luke 15:11-31). *God can wipe our sins away, remember them no more because of the finished work of J.C. upon the cross on our behalf. [Close]

"Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together." "Come now, & let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Ladies and Gentlemen: It's impossible to justify ourselves. You were flawed from the factory. Your 1st father (Adam) sinned so all of humanity has a sin nature. The only answer is to humble yourself & believe on the Lord J.C. – "Your mediators have transgressed against Me." The priesthood, the people you're thinking can help you, they're sinners as well! There's only 1 Mediator between God & men, the Man Christ Jesus.

If repentance is refused, there's only one result, the curse & reproaches. We sow, we reap... So let's be a people of repentance. If you haven't, turn from your sin, find forgiveness, the blotting out of your transgressions, the putting away of your past & new life (a clean slate) in J.C. *

Prayer Points:

God open our hearts, our minds, give us clear perspective on what it means to serve You. To honor You, to give willfully, joyously of our time, treasure & talents to You. That we understand the blessing & not be distorted in our minds to perceive serving You as a burden. Forgive us for falling into that mindset, renew our minds, change our hearts, be glorified in our lives.

If you need a clean slate, new life in J.C. turn from your sin, believe on Him today & be saved. Christ died for our sins, was buried, & rose again the 3rd day. He was delivered up for our transgressions, raised for our justification. You can stand justified before God, but only in Christ.