

# An Everlasting Righteousness

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 51:1-8

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If you will, look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 51. I want us to consider verses 1 through 8 and speak to you about an everlasting righteousness. An everlasting righteousness. I hear some people say, "I wish we could go back to the time before the fall and enjoy once again that standing that Adam and Eve had before the fall." Well, do you know what? I wouldn't want to go back there because, at best, that is just a finite temporary standing. But more importantly the reason I don't want to go back there is that one has come, the last Adam, just as Bob read there in Romans 5, who has worked out a perfect righteousness and it has been imputed, put to the account of those that God has purposed to save and it is an everlasting righteousness. It can never be taken away. It is to God's satisfaction forever.

You'll notice as we're reading through Isaiah, we're getting closer and closer to chapter 53 which is all about the suffering servant, but one of the blessings of reading through the Scriptures verse-by-verse is that we see that all of Scripture points to this one who came, lived, died and rose again and ascended on high and it's all about who he is and what he accomplished in his coming; why he came; for whom he did it. It's all right here, but it takes the Lord giving eyes to see.

So in Isaiah 51, we see this message beginning with verse 1,

1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. 2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. 3 For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. 4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. 5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and

they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. 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.

So you can see why I have chosen that particular title, "An Everlasting Righteousness." Righteousness has to do with God's justice being satisfied and because it's satisfied, no longer there being any condemnation. That's an amazing and blessed state for any sinner to be found in. Knowing ourselves to be sinners and yet knowing that so complete has been the work of righteousness that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished that not even God's law, not even God himself can find any reason to condemn such as we are. We know that that's not possible by our doings. We're not speaking here of a righteousness that we produce but one that the Lord himself has accomplished.

So as we look at this particular portion, it is purposed to be an encouragement and a comfort to the Lord's people, to those that he has called and drawn near unto Christ because he has redeemed them and therefore has delivered them. We can see in verse 1, that they are called here those that follow after righteousness and so that's the very first point that I'd have you to look at here. A word of comfort to those that follow after this everlasting righteousness. You might be sitting there saying to yourself right now, "Am I one of them?" Well, there is the word here, let us see.

After having declared in the previous chapter the doom of the wicked and certainly there is a judgment, there is a condemnation of sinners that is foretold in the Scriptures. You say, "Who are they?" Well, those that trust in their own righteousness. Even as we saw in Isaiah 50:11, the last verse of the previous chapter, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that," what? "Ye have kindled." That's talking about the works of men's hands. There are some that walk in their own light. They feel proud of what they think they know of God and of salvation, of Christ and the Scriptures. They're all about us. They've got these little fires kindled and they're proud of it. They warm themselves with it. They heat their food with it. It's their profession and the Lord says, "Have at it. Keep at it. Continue to eat what your hands have made." But in the end, you read the last part of verse 11, "This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." It will not stand you before a holy God. Many shall say in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not done many mighty works in your name? Have we not cast out demons in your name?" The Lord will say, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you."

So in contrast to that, we see our Lord addressing this word in chapter 51 to those that follow after righteousness and you can see it's followed immediately with, "ye that seek the LORD." So to follow after righteousness is to seek righteousness from none other but the Lord. In Matthew 6:33, it says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and," what? "His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." So here the Lord is

addressing those that follow after righteousness. None of us would follow after the righteousness of God inherently, in other words, by nature. It is in our nature to do just the opposite, to do a work of our own. But here, the call is to those that follow after that righteousness which is of God and in so doing they seek the Lord.

You say, "Well, what is it to follow after?" Here's where we can get down to brass tacks and each person weigh in their own heart, "Am I one of these who has hearkened and who is following after this everlasting righteousness?" To follow after something, 1. Is a lack of it in yourself. You don't follow after something that you have. So were it describing some righteousness in here, we wouldn't follow after it. We follow after something that we lack. But secondly, to follow after something is out of a sense of want or need. There are many people that have yet to believe or see that they need a righteousness outside of themselves they are so proud of their own. So they continue to develop and work on just like these that have kindled a fire, keep it going, but it's something that they have kindled. Whereas those that seek after, follow after this righteousness which is outside themselves and in so doing seek the Lord, they do so out of need. I need a righteousness that is completely outside myself. I need a righteousness that God himself has approved and the Lord has taught me that need because I've been the other route and the Lord has shown me that all of my righteousness is but filthy rags. Has he so taught you? If he has, then you're not going to seek it in here. You're going to look there where Christ is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. John Bunyan wrote that testimony himself where for years he sought to work a righteousness in himself and he lamented the fact that he could never find one and then suddenly, as the Lord was pleased to teach him, opened his eyes, he stopped and considered, "Wait a minute, my righteousness is in heaven seated at the right hand of the majesty on high and he is all my righteousness."

So those that follow after this righteousness, they lack it in themselves and therefore they follow after that which God has ordained. They need it. They have a sense of the need for it and they desire it. They pursue it and it is to these that this word of comfort here is addressed. Now, the nature of this everlasting righteousness that is sought after, we see in the rest of verse 1, "look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." The picture there is of a quarry and of having been dug out of a quarry as precious stones would be and placed upon a foundation. So the reminder, if you will, the exhortation is that of the Gospel, that this is a matter of having been dug out of a rock and a hole of the pit and placed upon a foundation.

Now, there are some that quickly go to verse 2 and say that rock was "Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you." But that's not where the Scriptures point sinners, back to a man. Verse 2 is simply giving an example of two people that were well known to the Jewish nation who were caused themselves to look unto the rock from whence they were hewn and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged, but certainly the Scriptures are not pointing us back to Abraham as being our rock. In Romans 9, Paul said that, "They are not all Israel that are of Israel." It's not all those that are called the children that are children.

There is the children of the promise and certainly that's the case here, but it's a reminder to any who seek after righteousness that that righteousness is from the rock, that is, Christ, from whence ye are hewn. You know, Peter writes of those that are the Lord's being living, lively stones that have been taken and put upon the foundation. Every stone of the temple in the Old Testament was dug out of a quarry. Those rocks were dug out and brought to the place to be laid on the foundation but you remember that the Lord gave specific instruction that not one tool of man was to be used to try to reshape those stones. They were to be brought exactly as they had been dug out from the quarry and laid upon that foundation. No man was to put his hand to this work.

So it is with our righteousness. So it is with that righteousness which God himself has approved. It is of Christ. It is from him and Christ is that rock. He's the rock of ages, cleft for me in whom is everlasting strength. I don't have any. He is that rock to whom sinners look for salvation and for righteousness and strength. It was out of his pierced side that flowed that blood and water and so, in this sense, Christ is that rock. He was that rock that followed Israel of whom they were to drink the spiritual water and eat the spiritual bread.

Now, that's the nature of this everlasting righteousness. A rock is described in there in verse 1 as that which, the word is something that is a sure foundation and that righteousness which the Lord worked out is a sure foundation because Christ, the tried stone, the tested stone as we've already here in Isaiah, has been laid and upon him all that he has redeemed. Now, the reason, this would be the third point here, the reason that we're to trust him for this everlasting righteousness is given us in verse 2. As I said, it's not saying look to Abraham as that rock from which you were hewn but, "Look to Abraham," notice, "your father, and Sarah that bare you," and then see the words. Here's the reason you're to look to them. If we want an example of men and women or sinners who have been justified by a holy God and set apart just like being hewn out of a rock, set apart in him, I want to look to the Scriptures. At least I know this is God's word. I know many today run to modern testimonies. They're just sitting there with bated breath waiting for the next book to come out. I wouldn't pay a dime for men's testimonies today but I would trust this word.

You know, when it comes to this matter of how it is that God saves sinners, you can't go wrong with God's testimony and therein we look and that's why he gives the example here of Abraham. This is the reason, if you need a reason, and this shows the mercy of the Lord. The Lord doesn't even have to give us an example. It should be sufficient just to say, "Hearken unto me. I'm that rock and Christ is that righteousness which has been established." He came and established that he earned it and upon completion of his death, God the Father imputed it, put it to the spiritual account of every one for whom he died. That should be enough and yet the Scriptures say, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord."

In his mercy if there are any that doubt, he says, "Okay, look to Abraham." Verse 2, "Look unto your father Abraham, and unto Sarah that bare you; I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." The reason he's mine is because I did the work and

therein is the message or, if you will, the lesson that we learn from this. We look to Abraham as an example just as he trusted in Christ the Rock and therefore is the father of all them that believe so it is that we trust. It's the same faith that the Spirit gave Abraham that he gives any for whom Christ came and bore their sin and worked out this righteousness.

If you look over in Romans 4, just a chapter before the one that Bob read, this whole chapter has to do with how God justifies sinners and it uses Abraham as an example. You say, "Why Abraham?" Well, men tend to look to Abraham as an example of obedience. I don't know how many times I've heard a message, when Abraham comes up, everybody is talking about just what kind of faith Abraham had and look what he did and how he accomplished it and that's the same kind of faith we need to have. They're using Abraham to preach up works which is just the opposite of why God says, "Look to Abraham your father." He didn't say, "Look to Abraham your father as a good example how you can work out this righteousness." He says, "Look to Abraham and even look to Sarah." You remember what was said of Sarah? We're going to see it here in Romans 4, she laughed. She laughed when it was said that she was going to bear a seed in her old age. If God waited for sinners to have faith before he worked in them and on them, there would be none saved and yet Sarah is given here as an example, not of her faith or some work that she did but just as the rest of the verse says, "I called him alone. I blessed him and I increased him." Period. That's all that can be said.

That's exactly what Paul writes here in Romans 4:1, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works," if that were the reason to look to him, "he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." There are men that would love to build up Abraham's works as the reason to trust God but that's not why God gave him as an example. "For what saith the scripture?" verse 3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." 1. Abraham believed God. How would he have believed had not God given him that faith?

So that's the foundation. Just as over here in Isaiah 51:2, God says, "I called him alone." It wasn't that Abraham all of a sudden got a bright idea to follow after righteousness. No, it was revealed unto him. God put it there. He was flat on his face in front of idols when the Lord called him. He was yet uncircumcised. He wasn't a Jew. He was Assyrian. You see, that smacks the Jews in the face when they say, "We have as our father Abraham." He wasn't even a Jew when God called him. He was Assyrian. He was among the enemies when the Lord called him and brought him out.

So if it says Abraham believed God, it wasn't Abraham's doing. It was the Lord's. But secondly, it says there, "it was counted unto him for righteousness." If you go down to verse 9, you can see what was counted to Abraham, faith. That faith was attributed to him. The objective faith, the knowledge of Christ in connection with his death, all that was Abraham's righteousness was counted to him for righteousness. It was unto that righteousness that the Lord Jesus Christ would come and accomplish on his behalf.

So you can see in verse 4, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." If it really had been a work of Abraham's, then God owed it to him, but then it wouldn't be grace. I tell you these things and I think sometimes you wonder if I'm overstating. Maybe you don't. Maybe you've been around long enough to know what I'm telling you is true, but this morning, sitting and listening on the radio to a man who has a broadcast before ours comes on, he made this statement and I heard it with my own ears, he said, "Salvation is by grace but it's not by grace alone." You see, people preach grace but he went on to say it takes your obedience; it takes baptism, he was preaching salvation through baptism; and it takes faithfulness. So, in other words, God just gives everybody grace. It's like a mount that you go to with like a dump truck and you get it when you need it and then you continue to build your own way to heaven. That's not what the Scriptures say. If that were the case, then God would owe you salvation if it were by works. The problem is what God requires is perfection, not degrees of holiness but perfection. Perfection.

So we read here, verse 5, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." I don't care how spiritual sounding you make it sound and say, "Well, I just can't believe that God would justify a guilty sinner like me." Well, you're still in unbelief then because here it says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." In other words, that faith to believe just like it says Abraham believed God, is counted, it is attributed unto not a righteousness that's in here, but a righteousness that God himself has established. It's like one man told me, he said, "I don't know if could put all my eggs in one basket like you're telling me." Well, 1. We're not talking about eggs. Eggs are fragile. We're talking about a righteousness that one has come, that God has sent his Son to work out and establish and upon completion of the death, has already imputed to the account of those for whom Christ died and then God gives that faith to rest in that righteousness. Those aren't eggs in a basket. We're talking about a sure foundation, a righteousness of God. It's not even called Christ's righteousness, it's called God's righteousness because God has approved it. God has accepted it and therein I rest and that's what the Scriptures say to do.

So you can see how this parallels what we're seeing here in Isaiah 51:2. Reasons to trust him. Look to Abraham. Look to Sarah. There wasn't anything in themselves, we know that, but it was all in the grace of God and his unconditional love for them which it says here, he "called them alone and blessed him," Sarah was blessed in Abraham, "and increased him." Therefore it is our example.

Fourthly we see here the comfort for those who have Christ as their everlasting righteousness. Do you see it here in verse 3 of Isaiah 51? "For the LORD shall comfort Zion." I'll tell you, when the Lord comforts a people, they are comforted. It's not anything a preacher can give. It's not anything that you can work up in yourself, but when the Lord comforts, they are indeed comforted. And here's the comfort, it says 1. "He will comfort her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD." Sometimes I've had some people say to me, "Well, you're telling me that man doesn't have any part in his salvation?" Oh yeah. Our part is the sin. Our part

is the desolation. Our part is the rebellion. Our part is the hatred. Our part is the depravity. Our part is the lostness. And that's what's described here.

Yet it says it is to such that the Lord speaks comfort. He will comfort all her waste places. Again, the illustration historically had to do with what God would do to that land of Israel, devastate it by taking into captivity those people for 70 years by Babylon but then to bring them back in and restore them in that place, rebuild the temple. But all of that is a type. It's a picture of a greater work of salvation that the Lord has accomplished for his people. Mine is the waste place. Mine is the wilderness. Mine is the desert. But the Lord's is the comfort and the Lord's is out of that waste, making a garden like unto the garden of Eden. When you think of the garden of Eden, again, before the fall, it was a place of peace. It was a place of rest. It was a place of fellowship with the Lord and it says that Adam and Eve were naked and didn't know it. It didn't matter. We have apart from Christ, if we have a righteousness of our own, our nakedness is exposed. It is no covering before a holy God. But in Christ, with his blood which has paid the debt and his righteousness that he has worked out, there is no shame. God doesn't see my sin anymore. It has been put away. Such is my standing. So you can see why the garden of Eden is mentioned here. It is a garden in a wilderness.

That's how God looks upon his church. The Song of Solomon talks about the king coming into his garden. That's a type and picture of Christ who has come into this world and redeemed a people and owns that people. The whole world lies in wickedness but here then are these people that he owns and it is a comfort to them. The world passes by and knows nothing of it but here is this garden that he has produced, that he has made, that he has established in his Son and they are his joy and his gladness. You can see that in verse 3, "joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Not because of what they have done, but joy and gladness and thanksgiving and the voice of melody for what he has done.

Again, when we sing our hymns, I pick them carefully because we want the glory to belong unto Christ. Just as we sang hymn 52, "Majestic sweetness sits enthroned, not upon my brow." There are preachers today when you go and listen to them preaching, they're talking about earning crowns in glory, rewards in heaven. That's their motive for getting people to do what they do. For the Lord's people, our comfort having been separated out, being this garden of Eden in the middle of all of this wilderness, our comfort and our joy and our thanksgiving and melody is that that crown sits upon our Savior's brow. To him be all of the glory.

So that shows the comfort of those for whom this everlasting righteousness has been established. They seek it. Yes, the Spirit of God draws them to seek it, but it has been founded upon Christ and it truly is a comfort. I don't know about you, but I get nauseated when I sit and listen to somebody talking about any other kind of righteousness than that which God himself has established and worked out. It's like a bad smell in the nostrils, you've just got to get up and run out and either get out of there or throw up. That's how the Lord teaches his own.

But the final point I want you to see here is that this is a righteousness which has been established upon the law. It's not a righteousness where God just says, "Okay, I arbitrarily choose to save these people and I arbitrarily choose to pass these by and so you are saved." That would be an unjust judge. Just to arbitrarily stand up and declare some saved and some lost. That's not how God did it. In his mercy and in his grace, he chose a people here described in verse 4 as "my people, my nation." You read over in the book of Revelation that we've been studying on Tuesday nights, a people that has been redeemed out of every tribe, nation and tongue throughout this world. He has a people, his garden of Eden, if you will. But how have they been justified? How have they been established in this everlasting righteousness? It's based upon law.

It's a legal righteousness. It makes sense, doesn't it? It wouldn't be called righteousness if it were illegal. It's a legal righteousness and he describes it here saying, "Hearken unto me." The chapter began with, "Hearken unto me." So in case your mind has drifted, he says it again, "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people." What was that law that would proceed from him? Well, it was none other than Christ. God in the flesh. Remember, if you go back to Isaiah 42, it has already been described. This law that would proceed from him would be a law of righteousness. It would be a law that would be established whereby God could be just to justify sinners and that's why we read here in Isaiah 42, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." To the nations. That word "judgment" is the same word that we have over here, "and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people." In other words, here's a righteousness in which you can rest, O my people, O my nation.

He says in Isaiah 42, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break." That describes the lost sinner. You know, I'm a bruised reed but if I'm his and he chose me and sent his Son to die for me, he's not going to condemn me. He's not going to take that reed and just rip it off all the more. "And the smoking flax shall he not quench," notice, "he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." This is the law that would proceed from him, from the Lord. That law would be the salvation of sinners in a just and legal way so that when he says to that Samaritan woman, "Your sins are forgiven you," or that adulterous woman, "Your sins are forgiven," or to that thief on the cross, "Today you'll be with me in paradise," that was a law that proceeded from him based upon a just satisfaction that he would accomplish for sinners. That's so I can say it. That's why he did it.

It says, verse 4, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for," what? "His law." That's a message of peace and grace to sinners. You've helped a sinner when you tell that sinner, "There is no hope in yourself but there has been a law established whereby God can justly declare sinners righteous and that is in the Lord Jesus Christ and his shed blood and what he accomplished there at Calvary," and then shut up because there is no more to add. If the sinner sits there saying, "Well, you know, what about this?" You go back to the law. The Lord did not come to save the righteous but sinners and this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance,



that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and Paul said, "Of whom I am chief." If he saved the chief of sinners, there is nothing you could ever put up in front of him that would be a reason to condemn you if indeed Christ has paid your debt.

So you can see here that this is an everlasting righteousness that is established upon legal grounds, a just law that Christ satisfied, but coming back to Isaiah 51, you can see that it is a salvation or a righteousness of God. When we say of God, it means that he's the source and he's the one who has been satisfied by it. He says, "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." I've heard people explain salvation like a bridge, that it's there, it's available; God has made salvation available but you've got to cross that bridge. I've searched the Scriptures high and low and I've yet to see a verse that talks about salvation being a bridge so if you ever read about it like that way, go ahead and burn that tract because that doesn't have anything to do with salvation. Salvation is an arm. The arm of the Lord is not short that he can't save. It's an arm that reaches down and pulls up out of that miry pit one of his own for whom Christ has died. When it says, "mine arms shall judge the people," it's actually "make a judgment among the people." He knows those that are his so he'll reach in and save this one and pass this by. You say, "Well, how does he make his judgment?" Based upon those for whom Christ died.

He knows every one of them because he gave them to his Son and his Son will not have shed his blood in vain. You know, we fret about it. "I wonder if this one? I wonder when they're going to believe?" All that is just the depravity of our heart that is getting in the way. We need to just be quiet and wait upon the Lord and assuredly know that every one for whom Christ has paid the debt he's going to get. Wherever they are found. There is not one too far gone but what the Lord will reach him. Why? Because his arm is not short.

He'll have every one and think of the parable of the lost sheep. It's not the shepherd that is lost. People act like the shepherd is lost. They say, "Well, I found Jesus." Next time someone tells you that, just say, "Well, I didn't know he was lost," and see what their reaction is. "Where did you find him?" We didn't find him. If we're his, he found us and we were astray. We went astray in Adam. We've been astray. The psalmist wrote that we're born liars from the womb. I don't care how tender that baby is and how cute, it's a sinner. I shocked one of my associates the other day because she was saying, "Well, I bet you had a good Christmas and it was really fun playing with your grandchild and everything." I said, "Yeah, it was but, you know, I'm always mindful that there in my arms lies a sinner that needs a Savior." She kind of looked shocked. She looked shocked. Silenced. But it's the truth. Unless Christ has paid that debt, every child born in this world is born unto condemnation. Just because they come from our bloodline doesn't mean they're any better, in fact, the fact that they come from our bloodline is what condemns them. They're sinners. They come from a long line of sinners.

It's the Lord's arm and he's the one that does it. All else is sinking sand. You can see that in verse 6 here, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and

they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." You get people asking you sometimes, "Do you believe in eternal security?" Well, there is none more secure than those for whom Christ has died. I believe in the eternal surety, but most people when they talk about eternal security, they're talking about having made a decision, prayed a prayer and now you hold him to it. Or holding God to it, that's even worse. The idea that, "I did something. Now God has to, has to." Can you imagine your kids holding you hostage like that? "Well, I did this so now you've got to do this for me." What kind of attitude is that? But that's how people approach God. They think, "Well, he says that if I just pray the prayer I'm in." Anything you do in any way to try to contribute to your salvation is a condemnation.

No, it's not what I do, it's what he has done and it's eternal surety. He is the eternal surety. His salvation. Notice how it's put there, "my salvation shall be for ever." There are a bunch of people that have a salvation that they hope in but it's not God's salvation and they'll find themselves just like the heavens that shall vanish in smoke. If the heavens are going to vanish in smoke, can you imagine your state apart from Christ?

Again, look at the hearkens, there is one in verse 4, one in verse 1, verse 4 and again in verse 7. This is an important message, "Hearken unto me ye that know righteousness." How can I know it apart from God revealing it? But he does by his Spirit through his word. "The people in whose heart is my law." This is what God does. We already saw that the law that would proceed from him is none other than Christ himself, so when you read that in verse 7, "the people in whose heart is Christ." By what law do we live? Christ and him crucified. That law has been revealed in the heart so he says, "fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." Men are not going to get upset with you for being nice. They're not going to be upset for being a good neighbor. But where you see their wrath and where you see them getting upset is when you begin to tell them that their righteousness is nothing but filthy rags and that there's only one righteousness that God has ever accepted and that is the righteousness of his Son and apart from him having worked it out on your behalf, you stand condemned.

That's where you find people getting upset and they revile you but the Lord says, "Don't fear them. Don't listen to their reproaches. Don't budge." We're not to be swayed in any way by men's flatteries or by their frowns. We look to the rock from which we are hewn because, as verse 8 says, "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment." If you don't have the righteousness of Christ as your garment, it's moth ridden already and ready to be cast away. "The worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." Any that are in heaven, any that have a true hope of heaven, it's in this one who is God's righteousness and that is his Son and what he worked out there at Calvary.