

A Glorious Liberty

Book of Isaiah

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Bible Text: Isaiah 65:17-25

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I'd like to invite you to look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 65. Isaiah 65. I want to speak with you about the glorious liberty that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ. The glorious liberty that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. I know this is the fourth message that I will be bringing on this particular portion of Scripture and the reason is simply because of its importance, laying the foundation and understanding its context as it pertains to the Lord Jesus Christ and the work that he came to accomplish.

There is a construction project that is going on right across the street from where my office is and they've been working on putting in, leveling the ground and putting in a parking lot and laying some rebar and doing this for almost 9 months and if you drive by it, it looks like they're not making any progress but the location and what they had to do to move dirt and level and make sure that a good foundation was laid was all a necessary part of that work and I fully anticipate that within a short while we'll see the walls go up and you'll actually be able to see what it is that was envisioned by the owner when he started. There's a little sign there and you can look at it. It's a strip mall that they're putting in but the point being that no detail is spared in laying the foundation and certainly that's the case here.

So as we read this one more time, I want us to consider here the glorious liberty. Bob just read about it in Romans 8, that glorious liberty of the sons of God which Christ has worked out. But begin with me in verse 17 of Isaiah 65,

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my

people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Most of the world aspires for a utopia, you've heard that word used, and a time where there is no more war; where there is no more disease or death to be conquered and where men live peaceably one with another. In fact, you may remember that old Negro spiritual, "I ain't going to study war no more, study war no more. I'm going to shake hands around the world down by the riverside." You look at some of the lyrics, the hope was of a time when everybody would get along. Of course, you've heard politicians speaking of the day when swords will be turned into plowshares. It's interesting how they quote Scripture. That's taken from Isaiah 2:4 and the plowshare being a symbol of tools that men use not for destruction as with the sword but for building a better life and certainly this is the aspiration of the world. And yet we know from reading the Scriptures that as long as this world exists and remains under the curse, Bob read about it in Romans 8, that the whole creation groans awaiting its final day of redemption. When you talk about redemption, you can talk about having been redeemed. When the Lord Jesus Christ to shed his blood, he paid the sin debt for his people but included in that death is a world which will be without sin and even as described here in verse 17 of Isaiah 65, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." That's difficult for us even to fathom, that the former world, the world with its sin and its curse and condemnation in Adam would no longer come into mind. So there's some when they read this particular portion of Scripture, they envision also a world in this world which they say when Christ comes again, he's going to reign in this world and there's going to be a millennium of peace and no more death, no more disease and that for 1,000 years. Of course, they refer to Revelation 20 to describe that. Some would see this particular portion here in Isaiah 65 as fitting into that time and yet when I read, for example, in verse 20 of a child dying an hundred years old, there's still death being described here. When I read here that a sinner being 100 years old shall be accursed, it must be speaking then of something different than this world for a supposed kingdom in this world where sin and death are no more known.

So that's what I want us to look at. How are we to understand this particular portion? Now, that symbolic language. When you read here of a wolf and the lamb feeding together, a lion eating straw like a bullock, these are things that are being done against nature and so therefore it must be describing a great work of God for this to happen. So how are we to understand this portion? I don't believe we can understand it apart from verse 17 and we understand the context of the previous verses. We understand that Israel was facing a time of desperation when they would be taken into captivity and the Lord would bring them back. There are some that look at this historically and say, "Well, this was when it was fulfilled." The Jews, when they came back from Babylon were settled again in peace in their own land and that was what would usher in the new world. But it

may have had some application but that wasn't all of it. Here very specifically in verse 17, the Lord speaks of creating new heavens and a new earth, not just a new earth and this is something that God would do.

I do believe it has a twofold application. Many times in Scripture, especially when it regards prophecy, there is a twofold application. There is that eternal application and I'd like to have you look back there because Bob just read this in Romans 8:18-23. Do we look for the consummation of time as we know it in a new heavens and new earth? Absolutely. It wouldn't be written here in Isaiah 65 were that not the case and so I believe a parallel portion we find here in Romans 8 where Paul says in verse 18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." So there is a comparison between what now is in this world. All we know in this world is going to be suffering. Any notion that somehow you're going to be able to live in a bubble as God's child and never have to face affliction or persecution or disease or death is a fictitious notion. We live in this world just like everybody else does and are part of the curse of this world. You know, when I plant a garden, I get tares growing up in that garden. I get thistles. I get the ones just like anybody. That's just part of what the Lord said in cursing this ground and "by the sweat of your brow, you're going to bring forth your bread."

So when Paul's talking about, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time," he's talking about all that it is to live in this world. I believe it's more than that. For a child of God by the Spirit of God, there is a suffering that this world doesn't know and that's the weight of sin. We carry about in our bodies a dead weight and I don't know about you but the longer I live, the heavier that weight seems to get. A number of years ago I had a dear friend who has passed on now but we would talk and he would say to me, "Ken, has the Lord ever brought you to the point of crying out to him that if he could kill you so you could stop sinning, you would desire him to kill you?" I have to say that at the time, I didn't fully understand what he was talking about but since then, that seed being sown, I can tell you there's times where so weighty and heavy has been that burden of this flesh and what it is to carry around the body of this death that that has been my cry, "Lord, if you could stop me sinning," and that's not just what we do, it's what we think. It's the thoughts of our heart that become so putrid like an upset stomach only spiritually. If you could just vomit it out and be done with it. "And, Lord, if it would take killing me to do it, take me." That's what Paul, I believe, is talking about here, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

But notice, "For the earnest expectation of the creature," or the creation, "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Right now this world doesn't consider the sons of God. I see people being favored in lines because they have a certain importance in life, "Oh yeah, go to the front." Yet you stop and think if you're the Lords, you are a child of the King. Our Father owns the cattle on 1,000 hills and for a time he lets the world enjoy these temporary blessings but I'm telling you, if that's all it is, those will be gone one day. The world does not consider who are truly the children of God, in fact, just the opposite. Often the children of God are persecuted and maligned for the Gospel that the Lord has

taught them. You know that. You understand that. Isolation. They have nothing to do with them.

So all of this is summed up here in verse 19, "the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." One day it will be revealed who are these sons and who it is that Christ for whom he shed his precious blood. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." You know, if somebody could go back and undo the fall, undo what Adam did, his disobedience. Adam tried to do it. He tried to go back in and act like nothing had happened. He went back and went among the trees and clothed himself with fig leaves but there was no doing; the Lord had to chase him from that garden and put angels there with a flaming sword in every direction to protect the tree of life. You say, "For how long?" Well, until that sword of God's justice struck into the very heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Shepherd had to be spent and his blood shed. There had to be that shedding of the blood of the Son of God in order to undo the curse.

So the whole creation, it says here, "was made subject to vanity," put under the curse, the fall of Adam, "not willingly." In other words, no one among sinners would say, "Well, this is a good thing that has happened." But it says, "by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." That's God. He's put all of creation under this curse that those who are his, that he has chosen, that Christ has redeemed, might hope in someone outside of themselves and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." That, I believe, is what is being described here in Isaiah 65. There is that time when we shall be entirely free from the curse. Right now we're not. We're free from the curse as far as its penalty, the curse of sin. We are free from the power of sin in that it cannot destroy us. Again, Romans 8:1 begins with that, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But we have not yet been delivered from the presence of that sin. That we wait for. That day is yet future when we shall be finally delivered.

But I see here, coming back to Isaiah 65, that while we look forward to that final redemption and accomplishment of what God has purposed through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have no doubt that it shall be, yet I believe very much that this portion of Scripture is describing how the church has already a taste, if you will, a foretaste of this glorious liberty of being a son of God even now in this sin-cursed world. Yes, it says, "I create new heavens and a new earth," but even as we saw already in 2 Corinthians 5 and I'll just have you go back there so that we can review it, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was the beginning of a new era. You see, it's not the kind of world that the world is looking for. They're looking for no more war; they're looking for no more physical disease. And men in their lost estate never give even a thought of consideration to the greatest deliverance of all which is deliverance from our sin. But I believe that when Christ came because the Scriptures say in the last days he came, we don't look forward to the last days, the last days began when the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh and laid down his life.

There was a new creation that took place as we see here in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," new creation, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." You say, "What old things are passed away?" Even applying it here in Isaiah 65:17, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Well, it's the curse of the law. It's the penalty of our sin. So complete was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in laying down his life that those for whom he paid the debt now truly are liberated. You see, this is the glorious liberty that right now we enjoy all the while we wait to be taken out of this world in that eternal glorious state which is yet to come. That's why I say there are 2 aspects to this. We look forward to what this world will be, the new heavens and new earth, but I don't want you to ignore, dear brethren, that right now some people might say it's a taste of heaven on earth and that's kind of trite but right now, we enjoy already the effects of Christ's death and that glorious liberty that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ which sin cannot touch, death cannot touch, hell cannot touch, Satan cannot touch. The law of God finds no fault as a result. I'll tell you what: if the Lord ever shows you that which Christ has accomplished and you see that it was done for you, that wretched lost sinner, you'll rejoice in the Lord and you'll rejoice in what he has accomplished.

I believe that's the sense here. It's in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that those old things have passed away. I'm still who I am. You're still who you are. You get up in the morning and you still have bad breath. Just because the Lord redeemed you it doesn't mean you don't have to brush your teeth. It doesn't mean this body isn't going to decay. Those are physical things about living in a sin-cursed world but I'm telling you: spiritually what does the Scripture say? We're seated with Christ in the heavenlies. There's the new heavens. Seated with him, why? Because as our representative, he's seated there and he rules and reigns above all things.

Alright so, I believe that's the sense. That's what Paul was speaking about here in 1 Corinthians 3. If you'll look with me, 1 Corinthians 3. Here were the Corinthians all arguing with one another about which one was better; which preacher they liked better. I love the epistle to the Corinthians because every possible problem that a church could ever have was all in one in that congregation. In fact, as the Lord taught me the Gospel, I went back and started reading the Scriptures and he directed me to 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians and I realized that you really didn't need any other epistle as far as knowing how to pastor a congregation. There is nothing new under the sun so whatever arises, it ought not to surprise us, it's already been done and you can go back and read it here in 1 and 2 Corinthians and the Lord give wisdom and direction in dealing with his church.

But rather than focus on people, rather than focus on problems, rather than focus on the effects of the curse in this world, what does Paul say here in 1 Corinthians 3:21? "Therefore let no man glory in men." In other words, let's not look to men for our peace, even the supposed best of them. Let's not look to the flesh or any earthly acquaintance or focus on any one person. Why? It says, "For all things are yours." Now, this is an amazing perspective here because we're always taught we'd better run from the world, we better not have anything to do with it. People kind of try to protect themselves, acting like

the ostrich that's got its head in the sand and, "Don't confuse me with the facts." They have a pretended protection they think when in reality their heart...they carry sin around with them.

But what a perspective here that we see in 1 Corinthians 3:21 and following. Consider this concept that all things are ours. I was speaking about this with the men just before the service, how the Lord is using the Internet to cause the Gospel to go out and for God to feed his sheep over the Internet and modern technology where we can be here and a brother in Malawi be worshiping with us. Technology. And you think about the man or the men that developed this technology, they had no interest in the Gospel. They had no interest in Christ. They were using what wisdom the Lord gave them to allow us to have devices today that pretty much keep us in touch with the world 24/7. I can't tell you how many times I've had people talk to me or call me and say, "Oh, you use the Internet?" It's like it's evil. Well, you know, it's like anything in life: it can be used for good or for evil. I just know that the Lord has purposed it and that he is using it to get the Gospel out into the world in an unusual means. I kind of like it because I've been on that 60 hour flight in the air getting from one place to another to preach the Gospel. Maybe in my younger years I could do it but I as I've gotten older, I'm thinking, strap yourself into a metal rocket and shooting across the ocean and sit there and get out tired and then face disease and all these other kinds of stuff, that's tough on the body.

But I believe this is the sense we have here when Paul says, "all things are yours." In other words, God has given us and this is part of that glorious liberty that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ, to enjoy even now this world and enjoy all that he has given us, life and breath, to glorify his name. That all of these things are of his hand and that's why he says here in verse 22, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." You look at that and say, "Okay, that's talking about preachers of the Gospel." We're not to focus in on any one preacher or elevate one above the other. Paul was saying, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas." You know, men tried to pit Paul against Peter and Cephas. Paul was a preacher to the Gentiles, Peter to the Jews, so there were cultural differences and Apollos was considered kind of the middleman. He was the one that kind of got along with both sides so some liked him but he's saying that our focus shouldn't even be on a preacher. We should never elevate a preacher above measure, that if the Lord uses a man to open his voice and communicate the Gospel, you can put Ken Wimer in there. "Whether Ken Wimer, Paul, Apollos or Cephas." That's not what's important. Forget the man. It's just a means that the Lord has used to bless his people.

But notice in verse 22, "or the world." That's that dirty word, the world. "I mean, God uses the world to his glory?" He'd better. "With all of its wickedness?" Yup. He's the one giving the breath to that reprobate out there as much as he's giving breath to one of his elect. It is his world, that's the point. "Or life, or death, or things present, or things to come." What does he say here? All the universe. I'll tell you, you talk about taking a load off your shoulders because we get too focused about what's wrong. Here's the thing, dear friends: there is not a thing out of order. As wrong as it is, there's not a thing out of order because it's exactly as God has purposed it. Exactly. Even as Bob read there, he subjected all things. He took vanity in this world, that we might hope in Christ the Savior. You say,

"Why is this world a fallen world?" Because God purposed it to be. It didn't sneak up on him, the fall. He purposed the fall that out of it, this is beauty out of ashes, that out of the fallen world he would glorify his Son and what? Oh, there is that dirty word, save sinners.

I saw a sign driving the other day outside, a billboard that said, "Sinners welcome," and I thought, "I wonder if they really mean that." I'd love to go in there myself and just find out how accepted I'd be. You know, when you stop and think about it, David would not even be accepted in most congregations today. "You were what? You were an adulterer? Say again, you killed somebody? You're a murderer? Oh, go on down the road. We need a pure church here." That's the way that religion thinks. Just like the Pharisees looked upon that woman who came into their house and wiped our Lord's feet with her tears and dried it with her hair. They in themselves said, "If he knew what kind of woman this was, he wouldn't have a thing to do with her." I'll tell you, if that's your view of things, you're still blind and lost because the number 1 thing that the light of Christ shows is that I am that needy sinner. I am that one that even if all the rest of the world were righteous but me it would have still taken the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to pay my debt. But now, I enjoy that glorious liberty. How beautiful are those words that say, "There is therefore now no condemnation."

But the world is ours because the word is the Lord's. You might even think about in John 8 when they brought the adulterous woman to Christ, they brought her with a view of condemning her. That was their view. But who was working even in those Pharisees to bring that woman to Christ? Here they were doing it out of spite and out of rejection of Christ to put him on the spot but even that, they were accomplishing the purpose of the Lord in bringing her and leading her there. The reality is when it was all said and done, he looked up and they were all gone. They were just a delivery tool. They were a vehicle to bring her to Christ and he said, "Where are these thine accusers?" They are gone. He said, "I don't condemn you. Go and sin no more." In other words, I believe, "Stay out of trouble with them." There's one place a sinner needs to be and that's in Christ. In Christ alone.

So this is the glorious liberty, I believe, of which it speaks and verse 23 says that in 1 Corinthians 3, "And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Now, if the Lord will bring this home to our hearts, really what problem is there? When you stop and think about it, our problem is we get our eyes off of Christ and we forget whose we are and we forget what it is that Christ has accomplished for us and we let this world get under our skin. We let reprobates who will never know Christ determine our joy or happiness in a day. That ought never to be. Never. How we need the Lord to cause us to rejoice.

So coming back here to Isaiah 65, how is described this glorious liberty that the Lord's people enjoy? Here and now. You've got to look forward to the new heavens and new earth but even now there is this joy and rejoicing and that's how it's described in verse 18, "But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create." That means now. "Lord, get our eyes off of ourselves," or as Paul said, "the things that seem to be." Afflictions now are nothing in comparison to this glorious liberty that we enjoy. And this is where, I

believe, verses 20 down to verse 25 are imagery. Not only is there joy in this glorious liberty but there is life. Verse 20 describes what men consider to be untimely death. Here it speaks of, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." You know, when you realize that it's God's hand that is directing all things, there is no such thing as an untimely death whether it be an infant or whether it be an old man. It's interesting, you'd think that if someone lived to be 100 years old they had fulfilled their days but talk to a 100-year-old, they still want to live.

I've got a gentleman that's 93 years old. When I go and work out in the early morning, he's been a Marine. He was over there and fought in Saipan. He saw lots of people die. He's from Mansfield. He went straight from Mansfield, Louisiana to Saipan. He said it was a wake-up call. He's as surprised as anybody that he ever made it back. In fact, when they dropped him back off in San Diego after the war, he didn't want to go right back to Mansfield because he said, "If I get back to Mansfield, I'll never travel again." So he got on a Greyhound bus and traveled the United States, zigzagged all the way north and south to get back to Mansfield, Louisiana and then he went to work for a national paper. He's been there ever since but here he is in his mid-90s out exercising in the morning on the treadmill and I'll stop and talk to him. He's a pleasant gentleman. He was telling me this past weekend he went back and visited his dad's church. His dad is long gone and dead but he wanted to visit his dad's family. He named the family, I don't remember the name right now. When he got there and looked around, he didn't see anybody he recognized and so he asked after his dad's family and the preacher told him, "Well, they're all out there in the graveyard." They're all dead. He said, "I took a look at that graveyard and," he said, "I thought, 'Well, I hope I can keep going because I sure don't want to end up there.'" That was his thinking. He's already in his mid-90s but he's still not ready to die.

As it says here, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." You see, this is the thing that the knowledge of Christ and the liberty of the Gospel gives us is that whenever the Lord is pleased to take us we can say we've lived a full life and that the Lord has blessed us. In fact, we're blessed above measure because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and who he is. It says, "For the child shall die an hundred years old." All that's saying is that it is as if the child when he dies has led a full life. There will be no saying that, "Well, he could have lived a little bit longer," or "It could have been different if only this or only that." No, when you understand that it's the Lord who is sovereign and directs all things and even our days are already written in his book. I think of a preacher friend of mine whose son was killed in Vietnam shortly after he had been sent over there. I don't know exactly how long, if it was just a matter of weeks or months. They brought his body back and this preacher preached the funeral of his son. It would have been a difficult task but afterward, someone said to him, "Isn't it a shame that his life was so quickly snuffed out at age 21?" And this preacher responded and said, "No, it was as the Lord purposed. I thank God for the 21 years he gave me with my son."

I think about that. You know, some the Lord might be pleased to take young. Some he might be pleased to take old. I don't even know. I never expected to live as long as I've lived but here I am. Again, I have to not be thinking about it. You know, you always

think about how the Lord is going to take you out. Is it going to be a slow death or is it going to be suddenly? Either way, I know that it will be exactly the amount of time that the Lord has purposed and I will rejoice. I trust he gives me that dying grace to rejoice no matter what. I believe that's the sense that we see here.

"But the sinner," it says, you see, the contrast here is the glorious liberty that is ours in what Christ has given us compared to the rest of the world. I don't care if a sinner is talking about one who is outside of Christ, lives to be 100 years old. They like to ask these guys, these centenarians, "How is it that you happened to live so long?" Not a one of them gives the glory to God. I remember George Burns, I don't remember what age he died, he was over 100 years old but he said, "Wine, women and cigars," are what kept him alive that long. You sit back and say, "Whoa." But no matter how long, given 100, 120 years. I heard somewhere recently that's the oldest person in the world now is somewhere around 120 years old. That's a long time to live. But outside of Christ, notice it says here, "shall be accursed." That life, that longevity, physical longevity, means nothing at all to one who is outside of Christ.

It says here again, the glorious liberty that is ours, "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." You know, the disciples asked Christ, "We have given up houses and lands. What's our reward?" And the Lord reminded them that, "Wherever you go, can you find one of the Lord's. You have houses. You have lands." All this is speaking of here is something more than just the temporal. It's talking about longevity of life. We have something that goes beyond. How many times has somebody started a house to build it here in his life and never lived in it? And yet, "they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." This is talking about the Lord's blessing in blessing the work of our hands in this life to his honor and glory where we're able to see the fruit of these labors. "They shall not build and another inhabit." We're talking about an eternal habitation here. "They shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

There is no could-a, would-a, should-a when it comes to this glorious liberty that we have in Christ Jesus. Don't ever look back and say, "Well, that failed." Or, "I put my hand to this and it failed." No, it accomplishes exactly what God has purposed and it will serve to the Lord's honor and glory. If he's paid our debt, if we're his redeemed ones, it will serve to his honor and glory forever. I believe that's the sense.

"They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." This is talking about the church and it's talking about their offspring. It's talking about that seed which God in his grace has chosen and Christ has redeemed and that will yet bring forth. I don't know whether my children are the Lord's or not but I can't say I've labored in vain by teaching them the Gospel and reading the Scripture to them and even now pointing them to Christ. I just know if one of them or all of them are the Lord's, in his time he's going to bring them. You see, that's what it's speaking of, "their offspring with them." Those that are the Lord's. It may not be in my lifetime. It may be that after the Lord has taking me out that

he be pleased to reveal Christ to one of them or all of them, I don't know. We're not to fret about these things or wonder, question, go back and say, "Well, I wonder what I could have done differently." You see, there you're in that vicious cycle of thinking there's something that you should of done. No, the Lord is going to cause that fruit to bear forth as he sees fit.

It says here, verse 24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isn't that the way it is? Bob, you read it in Romans 8. We don't know how to praise God. To think that the Lord is directing. He is answering even before it comes out of our lips. And we can rest in that. I can lay my head on a pillow at night and rest in this glorious truth that I'm as free as I'll ever be in that freedom that the Lord has given me in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then it says in verse 25, we'd better wrap it up, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together." You talk about opposites. Look around this church building, the fact that we're meeting together here. There's no reason in the world we ought to know each other, I often say that, other than in the Gospel. I mean, what is there that we have in common? We hardly see each other anyway during the week. Everyone is going one direction or the other. And if it weren't for the grace of God, we might be at each other's throats. You know, one might be a wolf and one lamb. We might be going back and forth. But I just know that what's described here is the peace that God establishes with sinners and with those who would otherwise be enemies of the Gospel. He brings them together.

And it says there, "the lion shall eat straw like the bullock." In other words, doing that which is against nature. Our nature would be to run headlong into hell as rebellious sinners and yet now, the lion shall eat straw. We're feeding like lambs in the green pastures with the Lord as our Shepherd. That goes against what this nature is. Why is it that you rejoice in this Gospel but another doesn't? Well, the Lord has made this to be the children's bread, the lamb's food, whereas another won't touch it because of their nature.

Here's the glorious truth right here: "the dust shall be the serpents meat." Didn't Christ say, "Now is the prince of this world cast out"? When he died on the cross, what did he do? He crushed the serpent's head and Satan cannot have any part with those that Christ has redeemed. He's been defeated. He's been cast out.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." They might be able to kill the body but they can't kill the soul. Not even sin, what I experience in this flesh still, can destroy what God has purposed. That's an amazing thing. Hell will be where the worm dies not but in his death, the Lord has so graciously delivered sinners such as we are that not even sin, as much as I struggle with it in this flesh, can have anything to say or accuse one of the Lord's. What a glorious liberty that it is.

I believe that's all summed up here in this particular portion. There's a lot more here than what we can cover in the time we have but I pray that what we've heard, the Lord willing, can be a blessing to our hearts.