

## *Midweek Message*

*“But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, ‘You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off’; fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

*(Isaiah 41:8-10 ESV)*

I sometimes wonder how frequently we forget who we are in light of our redemption through Jesus and our restoration to the Lord with all that it brings. This passage is a wonderful reminder of how precious we are as God’s people and should also bring us great encouragement especially as we navigate the storms of life, especially in the midst of this current pandemic.

When God called the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, to Himself they were collected from ends of the earth, the farthest corners. The phrase is meant to remind them of their humble beginnings as being “the fewest of all the nations of earth” (Deuteronomy 7:7). In other words, God didn’t call them because they were great or powerful or worthy, but simply because He chose to set His wondrous love upon them and make them His own special people.

What a beautiful picture of God’s redeeming love toward those upon whom He has set His affection. He calls us, not because we’re worthy of His love, but simply because He chooses to love the likes of us. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, beginning in verse 26 the Apostle Paul writes:

*“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’”*

You see, it’s never really about us, who we are or what we’ve done, but is simply about God’s mercy, love and grace toward us. It’s all about our God who is moving forward with His plan and purpose to redeem a people for Himself, a people in whom He delights and blesses with salvation.

As I’ve heard some say, God is in the business of saving His people, of rescuing them from an eternity of everlasting judgment. Beginning with our first parents, Adam

and Eve, after they had fallen into sin, God promised them that He would rectify the situation. In Genesis, chapter 3, verse 15, He told them in His statement to the serpent what He would do when He said this: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

This is the first mention of the gospel as it points us to the cross on which our Savior gave His life in order to pay the price of our sins in full. In the cross, Satan struck the heel of Jesus bringing about His death through the crucifixion. However, in the same event, Jesus crushed the serpent’s head as our Lord fulfilled His calling as the Lamb of God who bore our sins and, in His resurrection, overcame death for all who’ll believe in Him.

You see, since God Himself has paid such a significant cost for our salvation we should be greatly encouraged in knowing that we’re held secure in the grip of His wondrous and amazing grace. Our eternal destiny is completely assured as God will never cast us off regardless of how great our sins may be or how unfaithful we can often be as we live each day. As we’re told in Romans, chapter 8 and verses 38, 39:

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

I know that our current situation is difficult for all of us and even more so for some of us. This time in which we find ourselves can create a lot of confusion, chaos, uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and sorrow. However, we who believe in and follow Jesus have every reason to hope as this God who has redeemed us and secured us in His love for us is also there to strengthen, help, and uphold us as He walks along with us every moment of every day.

You see, it’s really about our perspective in life and whether or not we’re actually focused on who we are and whose we are. As the Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Colossians, chapter 3, beginning in verse 1:

*“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

So, keep looking up as God is always there to fill us with hope for today as well as for tomorrow.

***Pastor Mark***