

Isaiah Chapter 43 v 2(B)

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

Date: 15 January 2017

Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Music Well, good morning.

Good morning.

Good morning. If we are Christians this morning, then we have new birth, new life.

And that new life is guaranteed. That new life is as certain as the life of our Lord Jesus Christ who conquered death and who lives forevermore. And so we are people of the risen King.

And our first hymn is going to come up on the screen as we sing together of this truth, that we are those who share in the resurrection of Jesus and who have that newness of life from him.

[1 : 58] So let's stand as we sing together this hymn. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. ■ical Governance Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. ■ Lee St ■ Let every tongue rejoice, one heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice.

[3 : 20] Come young and old from every land, men and women of the faith. Come those who pull all empty hearts, drive the riches of His grace.

Over all the world His people sing, just to show we hear them call. The truth of Christ through every age, our God is only known.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice, one heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice, one heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice.

Rejoice! the Lord Jesus Christ invites us to come come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest so let us come to God in prayer now let us all pray it's an amazing thing oh Lord our God that you invite and call us to come to you we thank you oh Lord for this amazing experience that we have of being able to draw near to and to come close to the living God you oh Lord are a consuming fire you oh Lord are holy and majestic and mighty you oh Lord are beyond our comprehension and understanding you oh Lord are the God who is angry with wickedness every day and yet you are the God who welcomes and calls us into your presence and Lord we are sinners we are foolish we are selfish we are proud we are rebellious we are unholy we're the very opposite of you and yet oh Lord rather than pushing us away rather than pouring out your anger against us you invite us come to me all you who are weary come people of the risen king come those young and old come whoever we are we thank you for the way that has been made for us to come to you the Lord our God and we know that way is one single way one narrow way one one perfect way which is through your son the Lord Jesus Christ we thank you that he himself declared I am the way the truth and life no one comes to the father except through me so we do not come oh Lord to you this morning thinking that we come because we are acceptable in ourselves coming because we have a right to come we come oh Lord humbly we come oh Lord marveling at the grace of God who came to us in Jesus who came to us as that babe that we celebrated just a few weeks ago who came to us as that suffering man who bore our sin at the cross one who was and is always God and is fully man we thank you that we can come to you today we can come to you any day we can come to you in the middle of the night we can come to you oh Lord because we come as children of a heavenly father we want to come and confess our sins and ask your forgiveness and we thank you for the assurance that through the cross our sins are forgiven we want to come and ask for the help of your Holy Spirit the one who gave us that new birth when we put our faith in Jesus at the very beginning of the journey of the experience of Christian living we ask that your Holy Spirit would come afresh upon us that he would open our

eyes a little bit more and unstop our ears a little bit more that he would soften our hard hearts that he would speak to us in such a way that we cannot ignore we pray Lord that from our hearts and lives oh Lord your Holy Spirit would give us worship and praise adoration that oh Lord as we come into your presence once more we may oh Lord bring our lives as living daily offerings to you for that is what you are pleased with not just a part of our lives not just an hour on a Sunday you want us all because you've bought us all and paid for us all body mind and soul and we pray Lord that you would indeed have your way here this morning in our lives that we would not reject you or be stubborn against you but that rather oh Lord we might be pleased to meet with you and for you to go with us into the week ahead hear us as we ask these things as we bring our praise and thanks as we rejoice in all your goodness through Jesus Christ your son amen we're going to read together now from God's word and if you'd like to turn with me to the book of

[8 : 37] Daniel the book of Daniel and chapter 3 and if you've got one of our church bibles that's page 886 page 886 and we're going to read quite a long section uh through to verse 27 from chapter chapter 3 of Daniel chapter 3 of Daniel beginning at verse 1 through to verse 27 an event you will have heard of even if you've not read this before yourself in the life of some of God's people so let's read from Daniel chapter 3 verse 1 king Nebuchadnezzar he's the emperor of Babylon made an image of gold 60 cubits high and six cubits wide 60 cubits as we're told 27 meters high so that's big big gold statue and he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon he then summoned the satraps prefects governors advisors treasurers judges magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up so the satraps prefects governors advisors treasurers judges magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up and they stood before it then the herald loudly proclaimed nations and peoples are every language this is what you are commanded to do as soon as you hear the sound of the horn flute zither lyre harp pipe and all kinds of music you must fall down and worship the image of gold that king Nebuchadnezzar has set up whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace therefore as soon as they heard the sound of the horn flute zither lyre harp and all kinds of music all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worship the image of gold that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up at this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the jews they said to king Nebuchadnezzar may the king live forever your majesty it has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn flute zither lyre harp pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace but there are some jews whom you've set over the affairs of the province of babylon shadrach meshach and abednego who pay no attention to you your majesty they neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you've set up furious with rage

Nebuchadnezzar summoned shadrach meshach abednego so these men were brought before the king and Nebuchadnezzar said to them is it true shadrach meshach and abednego that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold i've set up now when you hear the sound of the horn flute zither lyre harp pipe and all kinds of music if you are ready to fall down and worship the image i made very good but if you do not worship it you'll be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand shadrach meshach and abednego replied to him king nebuchadnezzar we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter if we are thrown into the blazing furnace the god we serve is able to deliver us from it and he will deliver us from your majesty's hand but even if he does not we want you to know your majesty that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you've set up then nebuchadnezzar was furious with shadrach meshach and abednego and his attitude towards them changed he ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up shadrach meshach and abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace so these men wearing their robes trousers turbans and other clothes were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace the king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up shadrach meshach and abednego and these three men firmly tied fell into the blazing furnace then king nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisors weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire they replied certainly your majesty he said look i see four men walking around in the fire unbound and unharmed and the fourth looks like a son of the gods nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted shadrach meshach and abednego servants of the most high god come out

come here so shadrach meshach and abednego came out of the fire and the satraps prefects governors and royal advisors crowded around them they saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies nor was a hair of their head singed their robes were not scorched and there was no smell of fire on them and god bless to us the reading of his word we've thought already oh lord our god about the wonderful promises that you give to us that we can come to you and seek your face that we can draw near to you and know you and we thank you for the great blessing of prayer it's not simply the unburdening of ourselves to you we thank you that it's part of that because you do not want us to be burdened or anxious or fearful but your word tells us to bring all things before you with thanksgiving we thank you that lord when we pray we are asking you the almighty the incredible god to do things that we cannot do in prayer we're recognizing our weaknesses our inabilities our lack of strength our our lack of wisdom and understanding our lack of resources we're recognizing oh lord again that in this world even in the very practical things never mind the spiritual things in the very practical things lord we are those who depend upon you rely upon you and receive from you such goodness we want to thank you for our our own lives we want to take just a moment even now in the quietness of our hearts and give you thanks for this past week thanks for the things that you've done for us help us to do that sincerely and genuinely we thank you oh lord that prayer is more than giving you thanks and praise and worship though it shouldn't be less than that prayer is being able to bring to you the needs of ourselves and of our families and loved ones and so again we thank you that we can cast all our cares on you for you care for us and so once more lord we spend just a few moments in the quietness of our hearts bringing to you our prayers the needs that we have personally the needs that we have concerning our loved ones and our families lord we bring them before you again assured that you will hear an answer we thank you oh lord that we are people that you've placed into this world at this time in this situation and circumstance because oh lord your desire is for us to be involved and engaged in the world that you have created the world in which your kingdom is being built and your church is growing and so lord we thank you that we can pray for the for the world in which you've placed us we can pray lord first of all for our brothers and sisters in christ around the world we think of those that are suffering persecution and opposition under the hands of isis and of bokoram and other forces and powers and wicked and evil men and women we ask that there lord your people may be so aware of the very presence of their god that lord those who are imprisoned lord in your grace and mercy you would bring about their deliverance and rescue we thank you that we can pray lord for the world and for the nations of this world which your word tells us are but a drop in the bucket they seem so great and huge and fearsome and general lord to you they are nothing we pray lord for the united states or america as they inaugurate their 45th president this coming week we pray for him mr trump and we pray lord for that nation a nation which has known great blessing from you which has known many uh good uh wonderful uh works of your holy spirit in revival lord but a nation which is in so many ways very liberal and worldly and godless we pray for this man that oh lord in your mercy and grace that you would turn his heart to seek you that he may not trust in his own wisdom or power or understanding or riches but may see that he is a man who has been bequeathed a great privilege and responsibility for which no man or woman is capable without the help of god have mercy upon that nation we pray and guide and lead it in the days ahead we pray for our own nation as we go through all the changes of brexit and uh concerns and fears maybe even for the future for finance and for for relationships with europe and with the world we pray again as a nation we too have been blessed so much by you and yet have forgotten and neglected and rejected the blessings of a christian heritage that we too may see oh lord that to return to you is our greatest need to turn our hearts to you not to finance or money or europe or to anything else but to turn to you the god who alone raises up nations and brings them down the god who alone is at work in this world to transform and to change we pray for our town of whitby again we pray lord for the opportunities that we have in this year to present your gospel think of the mission that we're planning in may and for the opportunities that we have even now lord please help us and use us and all the christians in whitby to help us and use us to be faithful to your gospel to share and proclaim the wonderful good news of jesus we pray again oh lord that even now as we come to your word that you would open our minds and our hearts that you would speak to us and that our lord you would work in us for we ask these things in the name of jesus christ our savior and lord amen let's sing together as we come to god's word 859 i saw a new vision of jesus a sight i had not seen here before 859 i saw a new vision of jesus a new eye i saw a new vision of jesus a new eye not seen here before in kim

It was then that I saw him in newness Regarding him fair and so dear For yonder a light shines eternal Which threads through the valley of blue Our Jesus, risen and dead and free love Drives near far away from the tomb Our God is the end of the journey His present and glorious domain O there are the children of the sea

[22 : 22] And praise him for Calvary's reign Last Sunday morning we began looking at a verse in Isaiah 43.

And I'd like you to turn back there even now. And we're going to read from Isaiah 43 verses 1 to 5. It's page 7 to 9. If you have the church Bible, page 7 to 9.

And in your own Bibles, Isaiah 43. I'm going to read from verse 1 through to verse 5. Verse 5. But now this is what the Lord says.

He who created you, Jacob. He who formed you, Israel. Do not fear. For I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. You are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. The flames will not set you ablaze.

[23 : 34] For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Sheba in your stead.

Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid.

For I am with you. Now last week, in the very first part of verse 2, we looked and considered God's promises to us when we pass through the waters, and when we pass through the rivers.

The illustration that the Lord uses there of waters and rivers refers, as we said last week, to the sufferings, the turmoil, the troubles, the troubles that all of us encounter every year of our lives.

Those troubles and trials that threaten to overwhelm us like a great wave of the sea, threaten to flood our lives to such an extent that we feel as if we are drowning in those trials and sorrows.

[24 : 44] In preparation for the suffering that was to come for the people of God, here that Isaiah writes to the Israelites, the Lord gives them a promise, that if they will trust Him and believe in Him, that it will deliver them from all fear.

And the promise is simply this, I will be with you. There in verse 2, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you. But rising water levels and bursting riverbanks weren't the only threat on the horizon for God's people then, or for us in 2017.

Isaiah uses another picture, another illustration of future troubles to come in the year ahead, when he speaks about fire and flames.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze. What is God meaning by that illustration of fire and flames? Notice first of all that there is a different verb that is used in the journeying through those things.

When we were to pass through the rivers and the waters, here we are to walk through the fire. Walk is a different analogy. Fire is something that you don't cross over like a river.

[26 : 09] It's not like walking by the beach or walking in the sea, where the water level rises up, whether it be ankle height or neck deep. Fire is something to be walked through.

The Bible's expression of the word walk comes out again and again to mean our everyday, daily life. In fact, often in the newer translations that we use, like the NIV, where originally the AV would have walk and the literal Greek word is walk, then the phrase is changed to life, live.

So in Ephesians 5.15, where if you have an AV, it says, be careful how you walk. In the new, it says, be careful how you live. So these fires are things that we live with.

They're things that are part of our daily lives. But what does it mean to walk through fire? What sort of situation is God talking to us about even now?

I don't know if you've ever seen anybody fire walking. It used to be very, very popular. I don't know if it's so popular now. Walking barefoot over a bed of hot coals. Corporate training days and days away we do that sort of thing.

[27 : 24] But it has a very long history in the East. It was something that was used, especially in the cultures in the Far East, as a test, even a proof of faith.

It was viewed as a mystical experience, something unexplicable, for a person to walk over hot coals or embers without being hurt. It was a sign of their holiness, a sign of their devotion to their God.

Well, walking through fire, as it's put here, I believe, speaks about those times in our lives, which will come in this year, when our faith is put to the test.

When we are tried, by the situations and circumstances in which we live, tried to the point where we find it hard to trust, to continue, to believe, to walk with God.

Certainly, Peter, we read from the very beginning or near the beginning of 1 Peter, in his letter, that same letter, goes on to say, speaking about the trials that the Christians here would face.

[28 : 35] He says, Though for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials, these have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

In one sense, we could say that the fiery trial is brought about by the surging floodwaters. The rivers and the waters that come into our lives, those things that seek to overwhelm us, or we feel would overwhelm us, those trials and sufferings are outward, but they produce in us the test of our faith, which is the fire with which we must walk through.

It's a theme that runs throughout the whole of the Bible. In Psalm 66, the psalmist there writes about a time when God tested and tried his people.

For you, O God, tested us. You refined us like silver. We went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.

These inward trials, these inward tests, these flames which we struggle with and which purify and test our faith are far more dangerous to us than the outward sufferings, the outward trials, the physical pain we go through.

[30 : 07] Back in 2002, 20 managers in Australia of the Kentucky Fried Chicken fast food chain had to receive treatment for burns on their feet caused by fire walking during a corporate training event.

That wasn't the idea, I think, for the organizers. Fire is dangerous. We teach that to our children from the very start. Not to play with matches. Not to go near the fire.

We know that it is a terrible, powerful, consuming thing. But the reality is for you and I that just as we must suffer trials and tests and rivers and waters, because we have done every single year of our lives and will do this year, so we shall, dear friends, find our faith sorely tested by fire as well.

In our lives will come such times of trouble that we will find our faith tried. We will feel the heat of the flames of doubt and of fear coming ever so close to us.

Yet, to God's people here, who themselves would be put through the fire, the testing of their faith, and just as ourselves who will be tested with fire, God speaks to us the very same command.

[31 : 31] Fear not. There it is in verse 1. Fear not, or do not fear, for I have redeemed you. Later on, verse 5, do not be afraid, for I am with you.

And because that word that comes from God is a word that we can trust, then we find that it has a promise attached to it. We are not to fear because God assures us there in verse 2 that when you walk through the fire, you will not be burned.

The flames will not set you ablaze. The promise is not that we shall escape the fire. The promise is not that we shall not pass through the fire or walk through the fire.

The promise is not that we shall not be tested, but rather that as we are tested, as we go through that fire, as we go through that time of intense doubt and struggle within ourselves as to the faith and trust we have in God, the Lord assures us that these flames, with the potential for such harm, shall not be able to destroy our faith.

They shall not be able to destroy our faith. Though they are hot and though they are near and though they seem to be all-consuming and powerful, God promises us they shall not burn us, they shall not consume us, they shall not rob us of our trust in God.

[33 : 00] For that reason I read from Daniel 3 just a few moments ago, that wonderful event, that historical event, it's not a myth, not a story, historical event, in which Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, three godly, God-fearing men, who had been taken from their home in Judah, in Israel, who were taken to Babylon in exile, and were told they had to worship a false god, a false idol, would not, but rather trusted God, and were put in that fiery furnace, which we're told was heated seven times hotter than usual, so that the strong men who carried them in while they were tied up were consumed themselves.

They came through that fire without even a bit of scorching of their hair or smoke on their clothes.

Do you realize that when you read that at the end of chapter 2, sorry chapter 3 in Daniel, they came around the people who were there, came around them, looked at them, and examined them.

They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their head singed. Their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Now why were they protected in that amazing way?

Why were they protected in that miraculous way, from that furnace which killed other people around about them, but didn't touch them? Well, we're told why, weren't we? Because as they fell into that fire, Nebuchadnezzar, standing at a distance, is able to see into that furnace, and what does he see?

[34 : 32] Four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods. Who is that in the fire?

It's not one of the soldiers. It's clearly the Lord God himself. He's clearly the Son of God. There he is, with his people, in the fire.

And because he is with them in the fire, they are not consumed by the fire. His presence with them was the assurance, the guarantee, that they were safe. In fact, what we learn from the very event in the life of these three men, and what we learn as we go through the Bible again and again, that the fire that God brings into our lives, the fires that we walk through, the doubts and the testing and the proving of our faith, our faith are for the very purpose of strengthening our faith, of enlarging our faith, of growing our faith.

They are designed for our good. That's why Peter, when he writes there about that trials that they go through, these have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Now, it doesn't feel like that at the time. When our faith is under stress, when we feel ourselves doubting and struggling in trusting God because of what's happening around about us, we feel anything but strengthened, we feel anything but helped, we feel anything but that this is doing us good.

[36 : 10] We feel it's tearing us away and pulling us away from the Lord, but actually that's not the case. On what evidence do I say that?

How can this be true? On what foundation can we take these words of God for ourselves into the year and be assured that when we walk through the fire we will not be burned and when we feel the flames they shall not set us ablaze?

On what evidence? On what reality? Because of who makes the promise? Because of who says it? It's not me who's making that promise to you.

It's not anybody else. It's not the Pope making that promise to you. It's not the government making that promise to you. It's not Mr. Trump making that promise to you. It's the Lord himself who makes that promise. Do not fear for I have redeemed you.

I have summoned you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you. When you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned. The flames will not set you ablaze for I am the Lord your God.

[37 : 20] And who is this person who makes this promise? Well in three titles the Lord our God describes himself and his relationship to us. That are guarantees for us that we can trust him that in the fire we shall not be burned.

When the flames come we shall not be consumed. And the first thing he says about himself in relation to us is that he is our creator. Chapter 43 verse 1 of here Isaiah.

Verse 1. Now this is what the Lord says. He who created you Jacob. He who formed you Israel. Now that is certainly true of the nation of God's people Israel.

Another name for them was Jacob. They were the sons of Jacob as you know. It was God himself who created that people for himself. It was God who initiated that involvement in the life of Abraham their forefather.

Who spoke to him while he was in Ur of the Chaldees far from God. It was God who brought him to himself. It was God who gave him the son Isaac by that miraculous. That miraculous child born to him when he was in his hundreds.

[38 : 27] And through him Jacob. God formed and fashioned and made a people for himself. That they might be a unique people in all the earth. A people who will love him and serve him and worship him.

A people who will share the good news of who he is. To all the nations around about who were lost. There is much more to that title than that isn't there? Surely that is speaking to us about the fact that God is the creator of all things and all people.

He is the one who has alone made the universe in which we dwell. He is alone the one who set the stars in their place. He is alone the one who built this amazing incredible planet. And the people who dwell upon it.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Every scientist, every technician, every doctor. Realises that the body is beyond our comprehension. It is so intimate.

It is so intricate. It is so carefully and cleverly put together. It is not blind chance. Or as some might say, evolution.

[39 : 27] Because that's all evolution is. Blind chance. This is the God who made us. And the testimony of the whole of the Bible declares that God is creator. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 3.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command. If we remove God from that intimate involvement in the creation of the universe.

And particularly his intimate involvement in the creation of human beings. Which bear his image. And surely there are severe repercussions for that. If we lose sight of God as a creator.

Then we lose sight of almost everything that he is. Because God is our maker. It means not only that he made us and created us. And that we are here.

But that our whole lives are directed not by luck or by chance or by fate. But our lives are directed under the will of the God who made us. Psalm 139.

[40 : 27] Which holds, for you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. And as creator. It means that God is not just the one who engineered and made this world.

And the human beings on it. And then left it to run its course like a watchmaker. But rather as the psalmist goes on to say. All the days ordained for me. Were written in your book before one of them came to be.

The God that we believe in. The God who is our creator and our maker. Who formed us as a God. Who is involved in this world now. Involved in your life now. The God who has his fingers in every single pie.

Who touches all things. He sustains the universe. He keeps it ticking. He keeps you breathing. He keeps you able to walk and to live.

For any moment God was to remove from you. The life that he has given you. Then you would cease. To live. You and I. Every moment of every day. Receive our breath from God.

[41 : 32] And wonderfully dear friends. He is the God who has a purpose for our lives. We are not just sailing as it were.

Where the wind blows us. We are sailing with the Lord our God. Purposing. And there is purpose in that fire. He has a purpose in that flame. He has purpose in that testing.

As we walk daily in our lives. We don't want to be tested. If we had a choice we would say no. I don't want my faith to be put under that sort of rigor. I don't want my faith to be stretched in that way.

I don't want to have to struggle with the doubts that I face. I don't want to have to go through it. But God knows what's best for us. And so he is the one who sends those very tests to us.

As Peter wrote there. These have come so that. There is a reason and a purpose. Behind all things that go on.

[42 : 29] And though we do not see it. We have good reason to trust the God. Who walks with us in it. He says I am your creator. But he says also here. I have redeemed you.

Verse 1. I am your saviour. Verse 3. To redeem is to buy back. Like paying a ransom for somebody who has been kidnapped.

And God is our redeemer. Who to secure our everlasting salvation. To secure for us eternal life. God has redeemed us. Has paid a price for us.

Which is beyond any price that we can pay. Beyond any price that the whole of the universe can summon up. When we think of the word redeem.

And saviour. We are pointed to directly the greatest act of redemption. The greatest price that was paid. The very giving of the son of God.

[43 : 28] Laying down his life. To purchase men and women. From ransom. To redemption. To salvation. In Revelation in chapter 5.

As we are given a view into heaven. And we hear all those who love God. Singing and worshipping and rejoicing in him. This is what they have to say about the son of God. About the Lord Jesus Christ.

You were slain. And with your blood you purchased for God persons. From every tribe and language and people and nation. The very purpose of the coming of the son of God into this world. Was not only to show us the reality that God exists. But was to come and to give his life as a ransom for many he declares. To pay a price. With his blood.

That the debt of our sin may be wiped clean. That we might be set free from the slavery that we have. To going our own way and living our own lives.

[44 : 28] That we might be set free from the repercussions of everlasting hell. Which wait before us. And are coming to us. That we might be purchased for God. That we might be his.

The infinitely costly price that God paid for you. Is the proof positive that God loves you. How can we be certain that he will bring good.

Out of the fiery trials of our faith in 2017. Because he loves us. Because he has redeemed us. And proven his love for all time to us. By the fact that he has paid for our salvation.

At his own expense. With his own life. With his own blood. And therefore the third description that God gives of himself. Which should surely above all other things.

Wipe clear from our minds fear and anxiety. Concerning doubts that we may face. He says this. I am the Lord. Your God.

[45 : 32] I have summoned you by name. You are mine. God in his great love has saved us.

Not simply from hell. Marvelous, wonderful, eternal praises we will bring to him for that. But he has saved us for himself. He has saved us to bring us into a personal union with himself.

To bring us into an everlasting covenant with himself. A relationship that can never be broken. How we see again and again agreements that are broken. In one sense the Brexit is a long lasting agreement.

Now it's broken. We see around about us the sorrow and the sadness of people making promises to one another. And then breaking those promises becomes almost acceptable. But God it is not acceptable.

The promises he makes that can never be broken. And so he says I am your God and you are my people. We are one with him. We are one with him. We are cemented to him.

[46 : 35] Concreted to him. Glue to him. We are more than that. We are bound into his very personal nature. There is nothing between us. Nothing can come between us.

Nothing can separate us from him. And that was done because of the price that Christ paid. To redeem us. Notice what God says here.

What delightful phrases he uses concerning his people. Verse 4. Since you are precious and honored in my sight. And because I love you.

This is what God is saying to you and to me dear friends this morning. We look at ourselves in the mirror on a Monday morning and go. And God looks at us on a Monday morning and a Tuesday morning and a Wednesday morning.

And whenever it is and he says you are precious in my sight. Because of what Christ has done yes. Because we are in him and united with him yes. But we are spoken to in that way by God.

[47 : 37] Honored in his sight. Precious in his sight. Loving. Loved by him. That's why when we pass through the fire and the water we shall not be harmed.

That's when we go through those times of great testing. We cannot be consumed. We cannot be overwhelmed. We cannot be destroyed. Why? Because the one whom we are united cannot be destroyed.

When Jesus spoke to his disciples just before his return to the Father in heaven. As he sends them out with the good news of the gospel and says preach it to everybody. He says look.

Behold. Surely I am with you always to the end. How is that possible? Because they are one with him.

You see if the fire can burn him only then can it burn us. If the waters can overwhelm God then they can overwhelm us. If we are united and tied and one with him that's only when he falls will we fall.

[48 : 40] Only when he gives up will we give up. Only when he is weak shall we be weak. That's the essence of the Christian life. That's the whole difference between saying I am a Christian and being a Christian.

One is simply standing alone and saying I believe in God. The other one is being united with and brought into the new birth and new life. The everlasting life which is God's that becomes ours.

So closely united are we that our safety depends totally solely upon him. Can God be overcome?

No. Can God be defeated?

No. Can God be caused to doubt? No. Can God lose his faith? No. Can God be destroyed? No. Are you one with him? Have you put your faith and trust in him alone as your savior?

Have you said Lord Jesus Christ be mine. Let me be one with you. Let me enjoy the forgiveness that you brought for my sins. Let me enjoy that righteousness that says that I am right with God.

[49 : 42] Not because of anything I've done but because you've done. Please oh Lord save me.

Let me say to you dear friends what he says to you. Let me say to you. Let me say to you dear friends what he says to you. Nothing in all the world can take you away from him.

No fire, no flame, no flood, no river. For this is the word of our Lord Jesus Christ again. I give you eternal life.

And you shall never perish. No one shall snatch you out of my hand. My father who has given you to me is greater than all.

No one can snatch you out of my father's hand. I and the father are one. So there's only one thing that remains isn't there?

It is simply to entrust ourselves to our God. It is simply to be able to give ourselves afresh over to him.

[50 : 45] Lord Jesus, yes, for 2017 I trust you. Lord Jesus, for my health and the issues concerning it, I trust you.

Lord Jesus, for my family, those that I love, I trust you. Lord Jesus, for my job, for my home, for all things, I trust you.

Do not fear, he says. I am with you. Let's spend just a moment quietly before God, doing just that.

Doing just that in prayer before him. Giving to him our fears, giving to him our anxieties, giving to him our concerns. Let's entrust ourselves afresh. And perhaps even for the first time, into his care.

Amen. We're going to sing as we close.

[52 : 01] We sang this hymn last Sunday morning, but it's so appropriate. We're going to sing it again. 600, 612. How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord.

It's laid for your faith in his excellent word. What more can he say than to you he has said, you who unto Jesus for refuge have fled. And there we have verse 5.

When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie. My grace all sufficient shall be your supply. The flame shall not hurt you. I only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

Let's stand and sing. Let's stand and sing. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[54 : 19] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. The flames will not set you ablaze, for I am the Lord your God.

Amen.