

# Virus or Victory?

Text: Isaiah 43: 1-7

**Introduction:** Right now, our nation, and the world for that matter, is going through a situation most of us have never seen in our lifetime.

The *Coronavirus* has reached around the world and appears to be getting worse. Fear has gripped the hearts of many people as they see people lying on hospital floors in Italy as they have run out of beds and supplies. Can that happen here in America? No one knows for sure. The great question is how do we as believers deal with fear?

## Isaiah= "Salvation of Jehovah" or "Jehovah is salvation"

- Greatest of the writing prophets
- Quoted more in NT than all other prophets combined (over 300 times)
- Speaks of the Messiah more than any other prophet
- Prophet primarily to Judah; ministered for 50+ years
- His life spanned the reigns of 4 kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah In Isaiah 's day, the northern kingdom was swiftly heading toward captivity, and Judah was moving steadily down the same path.
- In Isaiah 's day, the northern kingdom was swiftly heading toward captivity, and Judah was moving steadily down the same path. God's people were in rebellion, and they needed a renewed vision of who God is.

Through Isaiah God sent a message which He echoed fifteen times, an average of almost one repetition of the same theme every four chapters. The Lord sent a word of comfort and encouragement urging His children to "fear not." This communiqué from Glory was one often repeated in other parts of the Bible. In fact, no less than one hundred times God tells us to apprehend apprehension, using the words "fear not" or "be not afraid" or "do not fear." If we include the times God sought to eliminate worry from His children, the actual number of times He broadcast the blessing of the freedom from fear would most likely double that number of one hundred occurrences. What does this tell us? God does not want His people to live in a state of anxiety, agitation or trepidation – no matter the circumstances.

Fear, however, is a real problem in life. It stretches across all age groups at a time like this. From a child who fears things that go bump in the night, to senior adults who fear losing their savings, to the fear caused by an pandemic like that we see in the world right now, we need to know God's will for us and God's way of getting us past it.

Dr. George W. Truett was one of the greatest preachers in American history. He pastored the great First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, from 1897 till 1944. Under his leadership the church grew to more than 10,000 members. Once he was asked to preach at one of America's premiere colleges. He wrote to the president and asked that the students choose the topic which interested them most. A survey was done and the students said, "Tell the preacher to tell us how to deal with our fears." (20 Centuries of Great Preaching, vol. 8, p. 160)

Most of you are familiar with the former CBS football commentator John Madden. A former player and National Football League coach, Madden is afraid of flying. When he had to travel from New York to California to do commentary of a game, he left a few days early and rode on a special bus. Someone asked him why he was so afraid of flying. In true Madden style he answered, "At an airport one day I was standing in line to buy some flight insurance when I noticed that there were three airline pilots waiting in the line in front of me (related by Paul Harvey, "For What It's Worth," p. 86.).

God does not want his children living in fear. The Lord would have us to overcome anxiety and exhibit our confidence in God's goodness and grace!

In the passage before us today, we note that God gives us sufficient reasons for placing our trust in Him and His promises. Isaiah was inspired to tell us exactly why fear is nothing more than...

F ... False      E ... Evidence      A ... Appearing      R ... Real!

F ... Fixed      A ... Assurance      I ... In      T ... The      H ... Heart!

1. **Isa 43:1** ¶ But now thus saith the LORD that **created thee**, O Jacob, and he that **formed thee**, O Israel, **Fear not**: for I have **redeemed thee**, I have **called thee** by thy name; thou *art* mine.
2. **Isa 43:2** When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* **with thee**; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
3. **Isa 43:3** For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba **for thee**.
4. **Isa 43:4** Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have **loved thee**: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.
5. **Isa 43:5** **Fear not**: for I *am* **with thee**: I will **bring thy seed** from the east, and **gather thee** from the west;
6. **Isa 43:6** I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;
7. **Isa 43:7** *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have **made him**.

## I. HE CREATED YOU (ISAIAH 43:1A)

Carl Sagan, the late evolutionary spokesperson admitted: "The information content of a simple cell has been established as around 10 to 12th power bits, comparable to about a hundred million pages of the Encyclopedia Britannica." (Impact January, 1992 Dr. John D. Morris-Inst for Cr Res)

In other words, you are too much complex to have arrived at this point in time by accident. God made you, and He did so with a system so complex that the greatest minds in the world find it hard to fathom. Since He Created you, don't you think He can take care of you.

## II. HE REDEEMED YOU (ISAIAH 43:1B)

In May 1779, three soldiers of the "Black Watch" - then known as "The 42nd" - were condemned to die for mutiny. Three empty coffins were carried to the site where the men were to be shot and the condemned men were marched along behind them. They arrived at the place for the execution and the firing party raised their guns awaiting the word to "Fire." Sir Adolph Oughton stepping forward drew a paper from his breast, and read aloud: "In consequence of gallantry displayed by the 42nd Regiment, it has pleased His Majesty to pardon the rebels." The men were released, in virtue of the gallantry of their comrades. So sinners are freed from sin's condemnation, on account of Christ's obedience unto death (Rom. 5:19).

Even if the bullets were fired, those redeemed by Christ would not have died - as Paul said, "...to die is gain" ... for the Christian. Fear must not have a grip on our hearts in circumstances like those we are facing today. Our Lord has already pronounced our release!

## III. HE CALLED YOU (ISAIAH 43:1C)

God called you to come to Him by name. In Matthew 10:31 we are told that God has every hair on your head numbered. So, if hair number 1,001 falls out, he knows the day and hour it happened. He knows you that well.

The Lord cares about you as an individual. The Lord knows more about you than your neighbors, more than your parents ever knew, even more than you know about yourselves. When God called you, He knew exactly who you were, where you were and what you needed. If He loves you that much, do you think He will desert you in a time of trouble? Do you think the Coronavirus can win against you? No, He will never leave you nor forsake you.

## IV. HE PROMISES YOU (ISAIAH 43:2)

In this hour of hardship, we must think of God's will, our families, fellow believers, our neighbors ... we must not hoard items in fear - for that might keep them from people who need them just as much as we need them. We need to check on the elderly and weak among us. Let this be a time of helping rather than hurting, a time of sharing and not selfishness, and a time of ministry rather than misery. God's promises to be with you, guide you, counsel you, help you, protect you and take you to be with Him one day are not empty words. You can never be what He saved you to be if you are worried all the time about the circumstances in your life. Trust God. Serve God. Love God. Believe God. Keep reading His promises and put them to work in your life by praying for and helping others.

## V. HE LOVES YOU (ISAIAH 43:3-4)

One of the most important truths we can ever get into our hearts and minds is the fact that God really loves us. He loves you as if you were the only one to love and He loves me the same way!

An elderly couple who had been married for sixty years were rocking on their porch. The husband looked over at his wife and thought of all the happy days they had together and said, "Honey, I'm proud of you." His wife who was hard of hearing said, "What did you say?" He said a little louder, "Honey, I said I'm proud of you." Again his wife could not hear what he was saying so she replied, "What did you say?" So this time the husband in a rather loud voice said, "HONEY, I SAID I WAS PROUD OF YOU!" His wife looked at him and said, "Well I'm tired of you too!"

***God is never tired of you!*** In every situation He is trying to tell you that He loves you. Even in a time like this, God's love is at work and He can use this to draw the world to Him. We must be the examples of faith and fearlessness to show them the peace God gives to those who accept His love in Christ.

## VI. HE IS WITH YOU (ISAIAH 43:5)

God will not leave us. He is with us, even when he cannot see Him or even feel that He is there. You are never alone if you belong to Christ. He is present. He is with you. He will not leave you. You may forget He is there, but that does not remove His presence. You may ignore Him, but you cannot remove Him. Open your spiritual eyes right now and you will see Him. He is a Friend closer than a brother.

## VII. HE WILL GATHER YOU (ISAIAH 43:6-7)

One day the Lord is going to call us home. One day He will beckon to us and we will fly away. Fear not little child, God is coming for you and He will take you to a place He has prepared for you. Whether in death or in the rapture, He will gather us to His side. We have a great, marvelous future awaiting us. The likelihood is that we will live through this experience, but even if one or more of us should be chosen to depart, we know exactly where we are going. God will never leave us and He will gather us to His side where no germ, no bacteria and no virus can ever touch us again.

**Conclusion:** Of course, there are some people here today who have no hope in the face of fear. You have never trusted the One - Jesus - who came to die in your place on the cross. If you do not know Christ as your Savior, it is time right now to turn from your sin and place your trust in the only hope this world has - Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Psalm 27:1 is the confident message of a saint who asks, "Whom shall I fear? The Lord is my light and my salvation."

John 14:27 Christ stated plainly that He left us His peace so that we would not have to fear.

If there is a Christian in this place who is under great stress because of this terrible virus, or some other issue you are facing, take a fresh step to the side of the Friend that is closer than a brother. He loves you. He will comfort you. He will give you His peace.