

Banking Our Lives Upon the Rock that is Christ!

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[0 : 00] A voice says, cry. And I said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows on it. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flowers fade. But the word of our God will stand forever.

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news. Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news. Lift it up, fear not.

Say to the cities of Judah, behold your God. Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will tend his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms. He will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

[1 : 05] Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighted the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who has measured the spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand?

Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales.

Behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

All the nations are as nothing before him. They are accounted by him as less than nothing in emptiness. To whom, then, will you liken God?

[2 : 04] Or what likeness compare with him? An idol, a craftsman, casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and casts for it silver chains.

He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot. He seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.

Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out like the heavens, like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown. Scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth. When he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him, says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high and see. Who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.

[3 : 30] Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God. Have you not known?

Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might, he increases strength. Even youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted.

But they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Jeremy and Julie. And good morning, Watermark family. It is great to be with you, as it were.

[4 : 29] Welcome to our third Sunday of Church Online. I want you to know that we are recording this live as we speak, as you're watching it.

This isn't some pre-recorded production that we have neatly put together. This is about as real and as raw as it gets, as we as a church family are across the city gathering together, primarily to worship our God and King.

In our homes, to lift our voices, to raise our sights onto who God is, to bring Him the worship that He is worth, to adore His name, and to hear Him speak to us from His word.

And so it's great to be with you, and we're so glad that you have joined us this morning. Before we do anything else, let's pray. Let's come before our Father in prayer, and ask Him to speak to us this morning.

I need it. You need it. We need it. Let's come before our Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Sovereign God, Majestic Father, Holy Spirit, God, we come before you this morning in such need of you.

[5 : 39] God, as Dan reminded us, God, our world is so full of angst and anxiety at the moment. We are full of angst and anxiety.

God, the foundations have been shaken. So many things, so much uncertainty all around us. God, we come before you this morning because we are in such desperate need of you.

God, you are the rock upon which you can build our lives. You are a sure and steady anchor for our souls. Christ, this morning as we come to your word, we pray, God, speak to us.

Take these words which are on the pages of Scripture and write them on our hearts, God. God, for those of us that are anxious and weary, those of us that are exhausted and are feeling faint, Christ, won't you come and scoop us up, God?

Won't you carry us in wings like eagles? Won't you bring us to your throne room, God, and open the eyes of our heart to see you, to behold you, to gaze upon you?

[6 : 47] God, we're in such desperate need of you today. Come and minister to us, we pray, God. Come and have your way. Amen.

Amen. Amen. This last week, as I have been thinking about this morning and praying for it and preparing for it, I really have carried this burden on my heart for us as a church.

And I feel like God is wanting to do something in us as a church community during this time. In some senses, it's almost like a felt God saying, don't waste the season that you're in.

What a pity it would be if, as followers of Jesus, we hunker down, we do what we need to, we get through this difficult season that we as a city and as a world are facing, get through the other side, and then just carry on life as normal.

I feel like God is saying, there's something I want to do in you as individuals and as a church. I want to shape you and your heart for my mission in the city.

[7 : 55] And so as we've been thinking and pondering about this, one of the things that I feel like God wants to do with us is to call us back to himself and to call us to root and to anchor our lives and our souls in who he is, in the bigness and the majesty and the sovereignty of our God.

And so in Matthew chapter seven, Jesus tells this very famous parable. He gets the end of a sermon on the mount and he tells this parable where he says, those that listen to my words, follow me, love and trust me, like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And the rain fell and the storms came and the wind blew and the floods increased, but that house rooted on the rock of who I am stood firm. Conversely, those that trust or hope in other things, like a foolish person, built their house on the shifting sands.

And the rain falls and the storms come and the winds blow and the floods rise and that house comes crashing down. Jesus unequivocally, unashamedly calls us to bank our lives on him, to root who we are in him, to find our hope and our confidence in him.

Friends, it's not hard to see that the time in which we're living, not just with the virus around the world, not just with the deep division that we experienced last year as a city and as a nation, not only with the typhoon of economic uncertainty that's coming our way, but just with general uncertainty, we're very aware that we are in the storm, the storm that Jesus spoke about.

[9 : 33] And so the question is, how are we going to weather the storm? Jesus makes this radical claim and he calls us to bank our lives on him, to build our lives on him, to find our hope and our confidence, to anchor our soul in who he is.

And he says that in doing that, we get to weather the storms of life. Now the question is this, why do we find this so hard? If you are a follower of Jesus this morning, this won't be new to you.

Throughout the scriptures, Jesus calls us to find our hope and our confidence in him, to anchor our lives to him. But it's one thing to say that, but to actually do it is so hard.

Why do we find it so hard? I don't know if you've ever been hiking or maybe walking along the beach and you're walking amongst the rock pools of the beach and you step on a rock and as you step on it, you think it's secure, but as you stand on it, it topples a little bit and you suddenly realize, oh my goodness, it's not as secure as I thought it was.

In times like this, times of uncertainty reveal to us the certainty or the steadfastness of the rocks upon which we are building and banking our lives.

[10:48] The life of the Christian is really a life of growing in certainty and confidence that the rock of Jesus is rock solid and we are able to carry, he's able to carry the weight of our lives and our hopes and our expectations.

Jesus is a rock that is not going to topple over when we put the weight of our lives upon him. But as we grow in our faith, we grow in conviction about who Jesus is. And so this morning, as we do that, I want us to look at this passage in Isaiah chapter 40.

And it's an amazing passage that helps us to see something of who is this rock that calls us to put the weight of our lives and our hope and our expectation upon him.

And so let's examine this rock and see why it is that Christ calls us to anchor our lives in him. Now, the context of Isaiah 40 that Jeremy and Julie read to us earlier is very similar to the context of Habakkuk that we looked at last week.

The context is that Isaiah, this prophet, is speaking to the nation of Israel. The Babylonians, this hasty and ruthless nation from the north, are going to come down.

[11:58] They are, in the years to follow, going to attack Israel, destroy Jerusalem, bring down the temple. And most of the Israelites are going to be taken back to Babylon as exiled slaves.

And so things aren't looking good. Isaiah is warning Israel about this situation. But that doesn't mean that God has abandoned his people because God promises this is only going to be the case for two generations.

In 70 years' time, I will bring you back to Israel and I will restore my people. And so while this promises to be a difficult time, a time of pruning, a time of refining, all of this is under the watchful care of the sovereign God.

And so look at what God says here in verse 27 of Isaiah chapter 40. He says, Why do you say, Oh, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, My way is hidden from God.

My rights are disregarded by my God. Friends, have you ever felt like that? Have you ever felt like your way is hidden from God? That he's abandoned you?

[13:01] He's forgotten about you? That your life has fallen off of his agenda? Maybe God has fallen asleep? God, where are you? My way is hidden from you.

Can't you see what's going on here? Have you disregarded me? That's how Israel felt. In light of the storm that they're staring into, God's people feel like he's forgotten them.

He's abandoned them. He's completely disregarded them. But into this context, God brings a word. And it's an amazing word of surety and confidence.

And so look at verse 9. Look at what he says. He says, Go up on a high mountain, O Zion, O herald of good news, lift up your voice with strength. Jerusalem, herald of good news, lift it up.

Fear not. So God gives them a message. And he says, Go on a high mountain and declare this message to the people of Israel. I've got a word for them. A gospel. He calls it good news.

[13:58] And what is this good news gospel that he's going to bring them? Is it, Don't worry. The stock market is bad now, but it's all going to be fine. I promise you, you won't lose any money.

Is that God's good news message? Is God's good news message, Don't worry, the Babylonians are only going to get, only going to take out the really bad guys.

But you guys, your lives will be uninterrupted. Don't worry. Everything's going to be fine. Or maybe the good news is, What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger.

Is that God's message? No, friends. That's not the good news. Look at what he says. He says, O herald of good news, lift up your voice with strength.

Say to the cities of Judah, say to the people of God, Behold your God. You see, when Isaiah comes with a good news message, it's not a message of health, wealth, and prosperity.

[14:54] It's not a message of comfort and ease. Don't worry. Everything's just going to be fine. He calls the people of Israel to lift their sights and to take note. Behold means to look, to see.

Look at who your God is. See who it is that's in the heavens. Behold your God. He's not a puppy dog God. He's not a genie that you rub the lamp and he gives you three wishes and makes sure your life's all fine.

He's not a God that is a servant that's trailing behind you, picking up all the pieces, making sure that your life is neatly manicured. No, friends. Behold your God.

And what about this God? Look at verse 10. He says, Behold, the Lord God comes with might. His right arm rules for him. His reward is with him and his recompense goes before him.

It's a picture of a military king that's just been on a campaign and he's won. He's defeated his enemy and now his spoils of war are trailing behind him.

[15:54] The defeated enemies are in procession going before him. He comes with his reward with his spoils of war. He is a victorious, mighty king and nobody can defeat him.

Behold your God. And in the rest of this passage in Isaiah, Isaiah is going to employ imagery after imagery after imagery showing us the bigness and the majesty and the incomparableness and the unrivaledness and the sovereignty of who this God is.

The word sovereign means that God is totally in control. There is nothing in all creation, in all of life, in all of the history of the world which is outside of or beyond his control.

There's nothing about which God looks or thinks about something and wishes that things could be different but he doesn't know how to bring that about or how to change things.

God is sovereign and in this passage he invites us to consider who he is and he compares himself to ourselves and the things that we hope and trust in.

[17:10] Look at what he says in verse 13 and 14. He invites us to consider his wisdom. Look at verse 13. He says, Who has measured the spirit of the Lord?

Some translations say, Who has directed the mind of God? Who has told God or given him advice about how he should go about things? What man shows him his counsel? Who did God consult? Who made him understand things? Who taught God the path of justice, what's right and wrong with the world? Who taught him knowledge or showed him the way of understanding?

In other words, has God ever needed advice or counsel on how to handle things? Has there ever been anything in which God needed somebody to show him how to go about it or how to do things? No, friends. This God is sovereign. There is nothing about which he is confused. There is nothing which catches God off guard which he didn't see coming.

[18:10] Furthermore, there is nothing with which God needs our help or our assistance because it's beyond him. And what about the nations? What about other nations that disregard God and are bent on destroying the gospel, wiping out Christians and destroying God's people?

What about those mighty superpowers, the nations in the world that have no regard for God and want to trample him and his people and are bent on destroying the work of God and the nations? What about them? Look at verse 15. He says, Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket. They are accounted as the dust on the scales.

The imagery here is, imagine you go to the wet market and you want to buy some fruit and some vegetables and so the fruit seller gives you a basket and you pile up the basket with your vegetables or your fruit and you give it back to them and he puts it on the scale to weigh how much the vegetables are so that he knows how much to charge you, how much you must pay.

Now imagine you've got a big basket of oranges there and as he's weighing it, you say, Hang on, hang on. You haven't cleaned the basket. There's still some, there's some specks of dust in there.

[19:33] You're trying to rip me off. You're trying to make it heavier so that I will pay more money so that you can get more money. No, you must clean the dust off the basket. I don't want to pay extra.

Nobody does that. Why? Because specks of dust are so insignificant, they're so inconsequential, they're not going to make any difference. If there's one speck of dust or two specks of dust or five specks of dust, that's not going to change the weight.

It's not going to change how much you pay. It's utterly meaningless in the consequence, in the grand scheme of what's happening. Friends, look at what God is saying here. He's saying, all the military and political strength and the might and the determination of the nations, at the end of the day, they are like dust on the scales.

They are utterly inconsequential. They have zero significance as to whether God is going to accomplish his plans or not. All the nations are as nothing before him. Their power is accounted by him as less than nothingness and emptiness. This God is sovereign. Look at what he says.

[20 : 39] What about other gods? Things that we are tempted to hope and trust in. Sometimes you might think, okay, I'll worship and trust Jesus, but I'll also have a plan B in case God doesn't come through for me.

Maybe I'll worship and trust Jesus, but I'll also pray to my ancestors because I don't want to bother the spirits. I've got to keep them happy. Maybe I'll trust Jesus, but I'll also burn some jostics at the temple just in case.

I'll trust Jesus, but I'll also just keep this other thing on standby in my life. Look what God says about those other things that we're tempted to trust in. Verse 18.

To whom then will you liken me? What likeness compares with him? An idol? A temple? A jostic? Oh, an idol, a craftsman casts it.

A goldsmith overlays it with gold and he casts for its silver chains. If someone is too impoverished for gold, he chooses special wood, wood that won't rot. Then he goes and seeks out a skillful craftsman and he sets up the idol and he makes sure that it will not fall over, will not topple down.

[21 : 51] God is pointing out the irony here that we look to these gods, these man-made gods, but then we've got to watch them very carefully to make sure that they don't fall over. If the craftsman doesn't make it well, maybe in the wind it'll fall over, it'll topple down.

And so we've got to watch it and keep a steady eye on it to make sure that the god that we trust in doesn't fall over. Friends, maybe we don't go and burn incidents at the temple, but what are the things we hope and trust in?

What are those other plan Bs, those other gods in our life that we think, I just got to keep that on standby? Friends, are we not the same? Do we need to watch them, keep a steady eye on them, carefully manage them and analyze them, stay up late to find out how they're doing in the US or wake up early?

Are these things that we hope and trust in not man-made gods that are just as fallible as the gold and the silver of ancient days? And yet, contrast that to Yahweh, the sovereign God, who is the maker of heaven and earth.

Look at verse 21. He says, Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.

[23 : 15] He says in verse 26, Lift up your eyes on high and see. He's asking them to look at the stars in the night sky. The Babylonian culture used to worship the stars. They were an integral part of their mythology and their worship and they would ascribe to the stars divine status.

And God says, Lift up your eyes in the heavens and see these stars. Who created all these? Who brings out their host by number? Who calls them by name?

And by the greatness of His might because He is strong, not one is missing. Friends, in contrast to the gods and the idols that we're tempted to hope and trust in, the sovereign God doesn't need our assistance to manage and make sure that He's still on the throne and He doesn't topple over.

Rather, it is He who is holding the universe together. It's He who's holding the cosmos together. The stars and the galaxies are held together by Him. Friends, do you not see what He's saying here?

In times like these, we may feel like, God, I've got to keep my life together and God is inviting us to see He's the one who's holding our lives in His hands. Look at verse 23 here.

[24 : 29] He talks about rulers and nations. He says, this God brings princes, kings and premiers and presidents to nothing. He makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

There's this amazing passage in the book of Daniel, chapter 5. Daniel was a young man and he was taken to Babylon as part of one of the exiled slaves. And so, Babylon attacks Jerusalem, they take all these young men, or they take everyone as slaves, but they take a bunch of the young men and enroll them in the palace of Babylon to teach them Babylonian mythology and ways and to try and get them to adopt the culture.

And so, Daniel is one of these young men that is in the palace. And he lives in the palace 70 years. And Nebuchadnezzar is the king that brought Israel to Babylon.

And Daniel is having a conversation with Nebuchadnezzar's son, a king called Belshazzar. And he says to Belshazzar, he says, O king, the most high God gave your father, Nebuchadnezzar, kingship and greatness, glory and majesty.

And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, all nations and languages trembled and feared before your father. Whomever he would, he killed. Whomever he would, he kept alive. [25 : 46] Whom he would, he raised up. And whom he would, he humbled. So Daniel's saying, Belshazzar, don't you realize your father, Nebuchadnezzar, was sovereign over the known world.

He was the king of the superpower. Whatever he said went. If he wanted somebody dead, they were dead. If he wanted somebody alive, they were kept alive. There was nothing that your father wanted that didn't happen in all of the known world throughout the Babylonian empire.

talk about supreme authority. But then look at the next line. He says, but when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne. His glory was taken from him until he knew that the one true God, the most high God, rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

That happened to Nebuchadnezzar. At one stage, he stands on the balcony of his palace and he looks over his kingdom and he says to himself, ah, my great kingdom that I have made by the greatness of my hand.

[26 : 57] And God says, Nebuchadnezzar, I'm going to humble you. And he drives him from the throne. Nebuchadnezzar is taken off the throne and he goes and he wanders for seven years until he acknowledges that God is God and that he is not.

And God restores him to the throne of Babylon. And Daniel's saying here to Belshazzar, he's saying even the most powerful, most important monarch on the planet, even his life is still subject to the sovereign God.

I am God, there is no other. I am God, there is none like me. And friends, this passage, Isaiah 40, we've just skimmed over it.

I mean, we really should have done this in four or five weeks. But the Bible is full of these passages exclaiming that the God that we worship, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Yahweh, is the sovereign God over all the world.

There is no one and nothing like him. He is in control of everything and everyone. And the Bible is full of this. Isaiah 46 says this, I am God, there is no other.

[28 : 00] I am God, there is none like me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times things that have not yet been done. In other words, God is saying, I know what's going to happen next year.

I know what's going to happen in Hong Kong in three years time, in 30 years time, in 300 million years time. I know it all. And friends, sometimes we can think, yes, God knows everything.

He foreknows things. But that doesn't mean he's in control of everything. Well, look at what he says here. I declare the end from the beginning, from ancient times things not yet done, because my counsel will stand, I will accomplish what I have purposed.

Friends, God foreknows everything because he is sovereign over everything. And again and again and again, the scriptures proclaim, this is the God that we come to.

Behold your God, the sovereign, majestic one. Friends, this is the God we read about in the scriptures and we've sung about this morning. This is the God we pray to and we worship and that we put our hope in.

[29 : 08] And whose glory we live for. God is not slightly better or stronger than the other gods around us. He's not a slightly better or stronger version of the other things we tempt to hope and trust in.

He is the uncreated one. He is the incomparable one. He is the rock of ages. There's never been a time when he did not exist or he was not sovereign. He is the sovereign God of all.

And therefore, friends, we can bank our lives on him. We can put the full weight of our hope and our trust and our lives on him. He is a steady rock upon which we can stand because he will not topple over or fall when our weight is placed upon him.

He is the rock of ages. Joel Spurgeon said this quote. He said, I've learned to kiss, to love, the waves that drive me back onto the rock of ages.

I'm so grateful for these times, these storms of life, says Spurgeon, because they remind me once again what is the one true rock upon which I can build and bank my life. Now, as we come towards

the end, I want to just tackle one or two things.

[30 : 16] This truth about God's supreme sovereignty is an anchor for the soul. But if we're honest, it also raises some difficult questions because if God is sovereign over everything, why does he allow hardship to happen?

Why is there so much wickedness and brokenness in our world? What about disease and cancer and death and famine and war? Why does God allow these things to happen?

Those are big questions. The Bible doesn't give us a simple, neatly packaged answer with a ribbon and a bow tied on it.

There's no Bible verse that in one sentence says, here you go, here's the answer. In fact, if we're honest, it's one of the difficult things in the Bible that the Bible leaves it, it's a bit of a mystery.

And God says, I'm asking you to trust me. And so friends, it's a big question and we don't have simplistic, neatly packaged answers for it. The Bible does say a lot about it.

[31 : 19] It does, God gives us the resources to lament. He does give us a vision for the future of an eternity where there'll be no more pain, no more wickedness, no more sickness, no more anxiety, no more anxiousness, no more angst in our heart, no more saying goodbye to loved ones, no more tears.

C.S. Lewis said that this life and this world is like the contents page of a great novel and the story hasn't even yet started. It's about to start one day in eternity. But why eternity takes so long?

Why are we not there yet? Why God doesn't click his fingers? God doesn't tell us the exact answer for why he's doing exactly what he's doing. But he calls us and he says, in the midst of the storms of life, you can trust me.

But here's another thing that God says. While we don't know why exactly he allows these things to happen, we do know or we can be certain of one of the reasons why it's not the case.

We know that it's not because he doesn't care. Throughout the scripture, if there's one thing God tells us again and again, it's that he is sovereign and Lord, but it is a father who cares for his people.

[32 : 36] And so, look at how Isaiah 40 ends. Look at verse 27 with me. He says here in verse 27, Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord.

My right is disregarded by God. We spoke about that earlier. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint. He does not get weary. Dan read that scripture to us earlier, Psalm 121, about the Lord never sleeps. He never slumbers. He never gets tired.

He never needs to take a rest. He's never put his phone on silent. He never says, I just need some time to myself. I can't help you. He never grows faint or weary.

He's never exhausted about what's going on in the world. His understanding is unsearchable. But, oh, don't you know, he gives power to the faint. To those that have no might, he increases their strength.

[33 : 34] Friends, do you feel like that today? You feel faint. You feel tired. You feel worn out about what's going on in our world. He promises to come alongside us and to strengthen us, to give might to those that feel weak.

Even youths shall faint and be weary. Even young men fall down exhausted. Those who look like they've got it all together, those who look strong on the outside and they'll persevere, even they get to the end of themselves.

Even they eventually don't have what it takes. But God, the sovereign God, never tires. He never gets worn out. Those who wait for the Lord will renew their strength.

They'll mount up on wings like eagles. They'll run and not be weary. They'll walk and they'll not grow faint. It's a picture of someone who is on a long journey and they start off confident and strong.

They're going to get to the other side. They've got this thing. But by the end, they're exhausted and they're weary and they can't take one more step. They're absolutely finished.

[34 : 40] Friends, how many of us feel like that? After nine months of difficulty in our city and who knows when it's going to end, feel exhausted. And God comes and He swoops up underneath and He says, I'll carry you.

I'll get you to the end. You don't have to rely on yourself. You don't have to look to yourself. Look to me. I'm the sovereign God. I'll carry you to the end. Charles Spurgeon said, He who counts the stars and calls them each by name is in no danger of forgetting his own children.

Friends, this majestic sovereign God is in no danger of forgetting your needs and where you're at, of being unaware of your challenges and your fears and your anxieties.

He's the sovereign God who cares for His children. Friends, this rock of ages, this is Christ, the solid rock upon which we stand. Yes, He is rock solid and He's trustworthy.

But don't you see He's also tender. Yes, He's a warrior king. He's vanquishing His enemies. But He's also a shepherd that gently cares for His people. And so let's finally look back at verse 9.

[35 : 50] We read this earlier. It says, O Zion, herald of good news, lift up your voice with strength. Say to the cities of Judah, behold your God. Your God comes with might.

His arm rules for Him. But then look at verse 11, the next verse. He says, He will tend His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs, the young ones, in His arms.

He will carry them in His bosom. He will gently lead those that are with young. Friends, the sovereign God who is sovereignly in control of the whole world is the same God who in His sovereignty will take care of your soul in the midst of challenges and the midst of difficulties.

Verse 10 speaks about this warrior king who defeats his enemies, who has the spoils of war trailing behind him. There's no one and nothing that's too powerful for him, that's too strong for him, that causes him anxiety or uncertainty.

There's nothing over which he does not have control, but this majestic warrior king is also a shepherd. And He lifts up those that are weak. And He comes alongside those that are weary.

[36 : 59] And those that are exhausted have come to the end of themselves. He swoops them up and He picks them up and He carries them home. Friends, this great and glorious God, this anchor for our soul is also gracious and tender.

He's compassionate and kind and caring. He knows the fears of our hearts. He knows what bothers us. And He comes alongside and He says, I'm with you.

In the Gospels, Jesus picks up on Isaiah chapter 40 when He describes Himself. And He describes Himself as the sovereign God. He says, I've come and there's nobody that can control my life.

I have utter control of my life, even over life and death. He says to His disciples, I'm going to die.

But it's not because Pontius Pilate is taking my life. It's not because the Jewish people, the scribes and the Pharisees are jealous of me.

It's not because the Romans are tired of me. I have authority to lay it down. No one takes it from me. I lay it down of my own accord, He says. I have authority to lay down my life and I have authority to take it up again.

[38 : 03] I will die, says Jesus, on the day that has been determined by me and my Father and I will raise on the day that my Father and I have determined. We are utterly sovereign over life, over death, over everything.

Nobody takes it from us. It's in my hands. But then He also says, I'm a gentle shepherd. And so in verse 11 of John chapter 10, He says, why is He going to die on the cross?

Why is His life going to be, why is He going to lay His life down? Because I'm a good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. I am the good shepherd, says Jesus. I know my own and my own know me.

Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for my sheep. Friends, Jesus, the sovereign God, sovereignly went to the cross and chose to give us grace.

Jesus went and died on the cross because He knew this was the way for Him and His Father to rescue and redeem a broken world. A world full of anxiety and anxiousness. A world full of fear and brokenness.

[39 : 07] A world full of sinners like you and I because He loved us and He's calling us to Himself. Friends, why does God allow these things to happen? We don't know exactly but one thing we do know it's not because He doesn't care.

It's not because He doesn't care. The cross of Christ proves it. Jesus loves us enough to go and lay down His life on the cross to be nailed there and to die for us. And this majestic tender God promises to carry us home.

Friends, this morning God is calling us, each one of us, to build and bank our lives on Christ the solid rock. Christ the solid rock. And why should we trust Him? Why should we do it?

Well, because He's the sovereign God of all. He's Lord of all creation but also because He's a tender shepherd, a Father that loves His children. We can trust Him.

Let's come to Him in prayer. Let's pray. Oh, great and glorious God. Father, we confess that so often we read Your Word, we read scriptures like this and we just gloss over them.

[40 : 17] God, we don't often give thought or time, consideration to Your majesty and Your sovereignty. Father, forgive us.

Father, forgive us for the times when we want to control our lives. We've trusted ourselves more than You. God, forgive us for the times we've trusted our idols, our man-made gods rather than You.

God, forgive us for the times when we've trusted our own wisdom more than You. God, this morning, forgive us but don't just forgive us. God, pour faith into our hearts.

Oh, Jesus, I pray, God, pour faith into our hearts that we will be those that see the bigness and the majesty and the sovereignty of our God. God, show us what that means, I pray.

Lord, I pray that these won't just be words that are in a theology textbook or words that are in our Bible but these are words that are written deep in our hearts that God, our hearts will sink their anchors deep into the rock of ages.

[41 : 24] God, open our eyes to behold our God. Open our eyes, God, to see You for who You are. God, help us to see that You're not just a puppy dog, God.

You're not just a genie that wants to give us three wishes to make our lives slightly more comfortable and convenient. You are the sovereign God. There is no other like You. Oh, God, we pray, give us faith.

Open our eyes to see that, God. God, help us to pray. O Lord, we need You. God, we need You. God, this morning we confess that we are full of fears and anxieties, full of worries. God, we bring those fears to Your feet.

We bring them to the foot of the cross. God, Watermark Church does not need me or the other elders or the other pastors.

[42 : 45] God, no pastor is going to get us through the challenges we face. We need You, God. God, God, God, God, God, Christ, I pray once You do something profound in us as a church, God, take our hearts and drive our anchor deep into You.

God, change us, shape us, mold us, call us to You, we pray. God, come and have Your way. Christ, thank You that You are a cornerstone. You're not just a stone in a building. You are the cornerstone, the rock of ages. You're the sure foundation.

You're a sure and steady anchor for us all. God, we look to You. We look to You, God. Holy Spirit, as we sing these next two songs, we ask You to come and minister to our hearts and souls, God. God, won't You still the voices in our head, still the anxiety in our minds and our hearts, God? Won't You quieten the fears, God?

[44 : 12] Holy Spirit, come and minister profoundly, we pray. Come and have Your way.