

Isaiah 41:14-29

"What God Will Do"

We left off last week on a wonderful litany of promises from God. We were isolating the horrible atrocity, the sinful nature of fear & anxiety. Though, I would say that if we were to be transparent w/one another, those are things that we all struggle w/from time to time & in various/sundry situations. –

‡ But the plain command of the word of God is, "Fear not"! "Don't be afraid!" However, God doesn't simply chide us & as though we're just being big babies. He doesn't say, "Suck it up butter cup! Quit being such scaredy cats, I've never seen the like of such wimpy, whiny cowards!" As if we have some intrinsic value that should enable us to walk in consistent boldness in the face of every uncertainty that life throws at us. He doesn't ask you to "dig deep" & "stand tall". There's a reason *why* God commands us not to fear, not to freak out in the day of adversity & it's this... (Look back @ Vs 10)

He says, "I am with you!" "I am your God!" "I will strengthen you!" "Yes, I will help you!" "I will uphold you w/My righteous right hand!" God says, "Look, I understand that you don't have it in you. But *I* have it in *Me* & I am w/*you*!" – ‡

* Fear is such an immobilizing attack of the enemy. Recall in your mind's eye, 1st Samuel 17. The Philistines having gathered their armies together for battle... Saul & the men of Israel drawing up in battle array against the Philistines. **The men of Israel on one hillside, the Philistine army on another hillside & a valley in between them... Things were ready to ignite, the men of Israel were ready to set it off... Until out of the thick mob of Philistine soldiers a literal giant of a man emerged... Goliath was his name. 9 ½ feet tall. Coated w/armor of bronze on his legs & his head, chainmail on his torso, massive sword on his side, a huge javelin in his hand & a shield bearer going before him... & Every morning & every evening he would present himself, mock the men of Israel, throw down the gauntlet saying, "Pick your best fighter & we'll go one on one, winner take all. He wins, we serve you, I win, you serve us..."** But he would taunt them, "I defy the armies of Israel, Give me a man to fight" (& they knew it meant to the death)... This went on every day for over a month! It absolutely shook them to the core.

What was happening? Fear was absolutely paralyzing them. It was destabilizing, immobilizing. Stopping the advance of God's people, God's plan... "So, what happened!?" You'll have to write it down so you can read it later! ☺ (1 Sam 17). Ultimately it turned out much as Vs 11-12 of Isaiah 41 says it would once one person emerged who would trust the Lord! ‡

Vs 11-13

God knows how to handle our enemies. He knows how to make our adversaries (be they physical or spiritual) ashamed & disgraced. He promises to be w/us, to give strength to us... "I will help you, I, the Lord your God will hold your right hand." What a precious promise...

Think about the order here. There's a reason that when you cross the road w/a small child, you take *them* by the hand & don't trust them to take *you* behind the hand. If it's up to them, they might slip, they might grow weary & let go, they may be startled into letting go. But if you're holding *their* hand, they're secure. You aren't *ever* letting go in a potentially hazardous environment. If necessary, you'll pick that child up & carry them through! In like manner, God doesn't trust *us* (rightfully so) to hold *His* hand. He says, "I'll hold *your right hand*!" He'll *never* let go. He'll pick us up & carry us if He needs to. ☺

Vs 14-16

What do we see here if not the declaration & the transformation of God? "*This*" is who you apart from Me. "*This*" is what you become when I do a work of transformation in your life. But notice again, "Fear not" this is the 3rd time in 4 Vs that God has uttered these words! & Can I just tell you that God's not in to repeating Himself for the sake of hearing His proverbial "head rattle"! If He says it, it's because we need to hear it! I'm just wondering who this word is for this morning? "Fear not!" You're in the valley of despair, you can't find hope on the horizon. The Lord says to you, "Fear not!"

Now, He's sober to who *you are*, to who *I am* apart from Him. * God pulls no punches so I'm just gonna stand boldly on the truth of the word of God. In & of yourself, you're a worm! ☺ And I am too! – I love the candid nature of the word of God... It's so easy for us to have an elevated opinion of who we are. But God likes to keep it real. In the NT vernacular, Paul put it this way. He said, "*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly,*"¹ & God just doesn't have a problem helping us to think soberly ☺. We could bounce back to the words of David, "*As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*"² If someone ever calls you a "dirtball" they speak the words of truth & reason! ☺ Gen 3:19, "*For dust you are & to the dust you shall return.*"³

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 12:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 103:13-14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ge 3:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God knows who you are (who I am). But He loves you. He wants to take you & transform you in an awesome & radical way. You & me, we're clay pots (earthen vessels) & most of us are cracked pots at that! ☺ Not much intrinsic value. (& This is why people are w/out hope being w/out God in the world). Because it's Christ who adds value, brings meaning, healing & hope to our lives. We have this treasure (the Person of J.C., the good news of the gospel) in *earthen* vessels (2 Cor 4:7). *

Vs 14 reminds me of the words of Jesus when He said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*⁴ In & of ourselves, we really have nothing to offer. In the eternal scheme of things, we bring *nothing* to the table. But that's ok, "Fear not. I will help you," says the Lord (your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel). Isn't that beautiful?

He says, "I'm going to do a brand-new work of transformation in your life. I will empower you. I will equip & embolden you. I will make you into a new threshing sledge w/sharp teeth. You shall thresh the mountains & beat them small." (No obstacle too big, nothing insurmountable). "& Make the hills like chaff. You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, & the whirlwind shall scatter them; you shall rejoice in the Lord, & glory in the Holy One of Israel." *God takes you & transforms you from a worm to an immovable, unstoppable warrior that you might rejoice & glory in the Holy One of Israel...*

Through the strength of the Lord in their lives, nothing (no matter how overwhelming it might seem) would be able to stand against them. Who but the Living God can do such a work in His people's lives? Again, apart from Christ we can do nothing... But how might we phrase Vs 15-16 in the NT vernacular? *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*⁵ I have no reason to rejoice in *my* great work. I'm incapable of a great work (spiritually/eternally speaking) apart from *God's work* in my life. If there's something great that comes from *me*, it's only because of His work *in/through* me. & So to for you! So let's rejoice *in the Lord*, & glory in the Holy One of Israel. –

Vs 17-20

Can I just tell you that God has riches, resources & options of which we know nothing about... If Vs 10-16 reflect God's *Protection*, then certainly Vs 17-20 reflect God's *Provision*. & I just want you to note that in Vs 17 God tethers His provision to His people's *prayers*. Did you notice that?

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 15:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 4:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The poor & needy *made known* their plight before God! It's clearly implied because God says, "I, the Lord, will *hear* them." If He's hearing *them*, they're crying out *to Him!* –

* I love Jeremiah 33:3. It's there the Lord says, "*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*"⁶ But we need to understand the order of events. If we don't *call to Him*, He won't *answer us!* God wants to provide for you, He has hidden resources that He's just waiting to reveal to you, through which He might bless your life. Rivers in desolate heights, fountains in the midst of the valleys, Pools of water in the wilderness... God likes to do things in our lives in such a way so that in the end, the only explanation is, "To God be the glory, great things He has done." Or as we read in Vs 20

But there's a bit of a prerequisite involved here; did you pick up on it? If we're to see God do great/mighty things. Provide in wonderful/miraculous ways, we need to be thirsty! If we don't recognize our *poverty* (this is where you begin to read Matt 5), then we may never see God's miraculous *provision*. If we don't think we have a real need for God to work in our lives, then He probably won't! If you're satisfied w/the way your life is now, then you probably won't see God work much more in it!

On the other side of the scale. If you're thirsty to see God move, you're unsatisfied w/where you're at. You long to be more *like Jesus*, are thirsting to be used in greater ways *by Jesus*, aren't satisfied until your life is a beacon for the glory of Jesus... God's going to open some rivers in the desolate heights of your life... Jesus said that like this. "*If anyone thirsts*, (there's your prerequisite, your conditional clause) *let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*"⁷ & When people pick up the change in your life, they'll consider & understand that the hand of the Lord has done this, & the Holy One of Israel has created it... Translation? Your fruitfulness gives glory & points people to J.C.* (Write it down, look it up later Jn 15:8) Vs 21

Family, let's remind ourselves once more that when the curtain was drawn back on Ch 41 we found ourselves in a courtroom & God Himself is commanding the court! He spoke to the pagan/idolatrous nations of the earth & then compared/contrasted them to His chosen nation, Israel. Now, He turns His attention *back* to the idolaters & the idols of the world. – God says to the one who hasn't *sought* Him, doesn't *serve* Him...

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Je 33:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 7:37-38). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Present your case, Bring forth your strong reasons...” That is, “Explain yourself, bring forth your justifiable clause for not following Me & giving your allegiance to these idols (some other thing).”

For us today, though it may not be an idol in the sense of a little pewter or ceramic trinket, some image of gold or silver. The same question would be presented w/regard to anything else that we’ve allowed to take priority in our lives over the Living God. “Justify yourself, defend your position, what’s your valid rationale for not seeking or serving the Lord?” Can your idol (that which you pursue, serve & seek after) explain the origin of the universe? Can it declare former things or declare things yet to come? Do tell, bring it out, present your case! Let’s hear it!

Vs 22-24

I trust that you see that we could really spend some time here, but we’ll keep it concise.

God is essentially saying, “Let your idols (or whatever it is that you’ve put your hope in, that which you look to or seek after, the thing that you pursue) share w/us some things of old.” & As for what He means exactly, it’s open for a bit of speculation. He could be saying, “Tell us how it all began! How was the world brought into being?” He could be saying, “Bring forth some evidence of things you’ve spoken in the past that have been plainly fulfilled.” – Or even, “Give us a history lesson. Share insight on times past, where we’ve been & from where we’ve come.”

Man really has no idea (in & of himself) of *any* of these things. We have some history books that help us understand some isolated events or perhaps a few cultural details. But really, in the scope of human history, our knowledge of the past is extremely limited! As for our beginnings, man is limited to ludicrous “theories”. & Our knowledge of the future is absolutely zero! Yet the Bible declares, “*Known to God from eternity are all His works.*”⁸

* & This is one of the ways that God reveals the truth of who He is to mankind. By what the Bible (the KJV anyway) refers to as the “More sure word” of prophecy (NKJV calls it the prophetic word confirmed) 2 Pet 1:19. God not only explains the origin of all created things *historically*. He shares what’s yet to come *prophetically*! (I’m going to use approximates here, but there are approximately 2,000 prophecies in your Bible. Nearly 30% of scripture is composed of prophecy.)

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ac 15:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& The Bible is the only book on the planet that dares to stake its veracity, its reliability/legitimacy (the fact that it's trustworthy) on the fact that it can tell you things yet to come & should it ever *miss* you can *dismiss* the whole thing!

That being said, of the 2,000ish prophecies that the Bible declares, how many so far do you think have failed? Zero, not one. (Over/around 75% already fulfilled). Therefore we have no reason to believe that the remaining 25% will fail either. (Including the rapture, the 7 yr tribulation, the things that will take place in that time period, the revealing of the A.C. the reviving of the nation of Israel, the evangelizing of the world, the mark of the beast, the return & 1,000 yr reign of Christ [you get the idea]).

You can trust the word of God! This why Peter said, "Look, we didn't follow cunningly devised fables (carefully crafted stories) when we made known to you the coming & the power of our Lord J.C., we were *eyewitnesses* of His majesty! We saw Him transfigured before us, shining in glory on the holy mount! **We heard the voice of the Father from heaven! "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" But even beyond my *eyewitness* account we have the prophetic word fulfilled, confirmed (which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place). - ***

But here's God castigating, criticizing these idols. "C'mon, tell us something! Anything! Something from the past, something yet to come, give us *something*! Or how about this, *Do something*!" God says, "I don't care if it's good or evil! Just do *something*, leave us jaw dropped & dismayed!" ...

But they do nothing. He says, "**You *are* nothing, your *work* is nothing (the accusation is based on evidence), & anyone who chooses you is an abomination.**" The idea here is this: to choose to align yourself w/any other *thing* or any other *one* outside of the Lord is an abomination (wicked & detestable).

Vs 25

I told you in the beginning of this Ch (last week) that later on in this Ch (we're here now) that God most definitely prophesies of the coming of Cyrus (the Persian king who would release the Jews from Babylonian captivity & allow them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple). (Remember we spoke of former & latter things, Abraham & Cyrus, the debate that revolved around some of the Vs in this Ch).

But God is saying, "I've asked *you* for some insight, some information, you can't give me *anything*. Let Me tell *you* something that's going to take place." It's not the idols or any "prophet" of an idol who could tell of anything that was to happen. It's God who does these things.

The only thing that an idol can create is a lot of confusion. – That’s the end of every ungodly philosophy. Notice.

Vs 26-29

Interesting. The Bible tells us, *“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace,”*⁹ But in contrast, *“For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”*¹⁰ & Of course, James tells us that those things are rooted in demonic activity.

Ok. Ch 41 of the book of Isaiah is the great “I WILL” Ch of the Bible. Over & over & over again God says, “I will, I will, I will”. I’d encourage you to take note (mark them) later. He says things like, “I will strengthen you.” (Isaiah 41:10) “I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:10, 13, and 14) “I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10) “I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth.” (Isaiah 41:15) “I will open rivers in desolate heights.” (Isaiah 41:18) “I will make the wilderness a pool of water.” (Isaiah 41:18) “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree.” (Isaiah 41:19) “I will set in the desert the cypress tree.” (Isaiah 41:19) “I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings.” (Isaiah 41:27) These are the things that God says *He will do*... This is the “I will” Ch of God.

In contrast, Isaiah 14 – is the “I will” chapter of Satan. Do you remember *his* “I will(s)”? “I will ascend into heaven.” (Isaiah 14:13) “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” (Isaiah 14:13) “I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.” (Isaiah 14:13) “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.” (Isaiah 14:14) “I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14:14) **Close**

Do you notice any difference in intent or tone? The “I will” statements of Satan are all rooted in self-centeredness & pride. The “I will” statements of God are all for the benefit and blessing of His people. How many of Satan’s “I will” statements have/will come to pass? None. But you can count on the fact that each and every one of God’s “I will” statements will be fulfilled. He calls the end from the beginning. Speaks of things that have yet to take place as though they’re already done.

This is the God you serve. & He loves you & has given Himself for you in the Person of J.C. So let’s call upon Him now, give Him praise & thanksgiving for so great a salvation.

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Co 14:33]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jas 3:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

Lord God we humble our hearts before You now. We thank You, we praise You for Your goodness & Your mercy which endures forever. We thank You for loving us, for *saving* us, for giving Your only begotten Son to pay the penalty of our sin. May we serve You, honor You, & glorify You forever...

& If you don't know the Lord, you've never come to truly believe *upon* the Lord. Turn from your sin, trust in Him today. Don't leave here w/a question mark over the top of your eternal destiny. Christ died for your sin, was buried & 3 days later rose from the dead that you might have life, eternal, everlasting life through faith in Him.