

## ***Cultivating a Fiery Spirit, Part 1***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Isaiah 49-55 is all one theme; it all goes together. The Lord is preparing the people of God to be red-hot for God even when they confront surprising difficulties. What happens so often is that we sign up to go red-hot for God. There are two things that throw us off. There are a bunch of things, but two things that I will point out. Number one: the timing of when the Lord releases what He promised. Whenever the Lord says, “I will do something,” we’re always thinking in the next month, or in the next year, or maybe five. The Lord is normally thinking a little further down the road than that. The timing is the first thing that trips us up. When the timing trips us up, it makes us think, “God, You’re not being true,” or, “I’m just so messed up, I’m totally disqualified.” Almost always the timing is further down the road than we imagine.

The Lord knows that. He knows that a lot of issues are going to come to the surface over the issue of the timing. That’s one way in which He really gets hold of our hearts.

The second thing that throws us off is that there are normally more obstacles than we expected. The Lord says, “Yes, I’m with you. I will bless you. Great things will happen.” We’re thinking, next month, next year, maybe five years, and there will be a few bumps in between. It ends up being twenty-five years and there are ten times as many bumps. There are obstacles. Number one: obstacles of negative things happening to you. Obstacle number two: you doing negative things that shock you. “I can’t believe that I would do something like this!” Then we go into a tailspin of shame: “Forget it, all the promises are over. Everyone is mean and I’m really wicked and it took too long. I quit! I was really going to do this hard, God, if You were going to do it with less obstacles and a shorter time frame.

The Lord says, “Yes, I know, I know, I’ve been doing this for years, and they all say the same thing.”

The longer time frame and the unusual number of obstacles, more than we’re expecting, is God’s strategy to touch deep issues and bring them to the surface: to heal us to where we grow strong in love. It’s all about forming in us the ability to walk in love in a far greater way. The Lord has the same strategy with all of us.

Isaiah 49 to 55; in particular we’ll look at chapters 51 and 52. We’ll get right in the middle of a conversation with these righteous, godly people, where it’s simply taking too long and there are more obstacles. The obstacles aren’t just people coming against them. The enemies aren’t just without; they’re within. They’re discovering their own sinfulness and their own brokenness. The double obstacle of mean people treating them badly, and they themselves coming up short and disappointing themselves, more than anything, creates a whole lot of burnout, and a whole lot of negative response.

But the Lord tells Isaiah to tell the people, “Even if it takes longer than you think; even if the people get burned out and quit for a moment, sign back up and get with the program. I’m ready to fulfill all the promises for them.”

### **“THE LORD HAS FORSAKEN ME, AND MY GOD HAS FORGOTTEN ME”**

It’s a very, very powerful dialogue in terms of processing a promise delayed and obstacles without. Because when other people mistreat you, and when you discover your own sinfulness and brokenness, here’s a very

common complaint, here in Isaiah 49:14. It happens all the time. We all say this in one form or the other in several seasons of our Christian life. The people of God have said this to the Lord. Here's what we say. Remember, it's the delayed promises, number one. Number two, obstacles from others, from circumstances outside; or obstacles on the inside: we did things that we couldn't imagine. Here's what we say: "The Lord has forsaken me. God has forgotten me" (Isa. 49:14, paraphrased).

"Forsaken me" means, "He knows what I'm doing, but He's not interested." *Forgotten* means, "He just forgot that I was there." Sometimes I feel like that pot on the back burner in the kitchen boiling over. I did that once, the one time that I cooked. I feel like I'm that pot on the back burner saying, "Lord, You forgot! It's boiling! I'm ready! I'm ready! Did you forget me?"

The enemy whispers and says, "Either the Lord has forgotten you completely, or He remembers you and He has forsaken you. You're invalidated, disqualified, and none of the promises are true."

There's nothing more painful, nothing more desperately painful to a born-again believer who loves God than to think that they're now disqualified; God has forsaken them, and the promises are now over. Or worse than that, God has just totally forgotten them.

#### **"CAN A WOMAN FORGET HER NURSING CHILD?"**

The Lord speaks. He says, "Wrong." Because there's a time delay, and there are obstacles, He says, "I have a question. Can a woman forget her nursing child? Can a mother not have compassion on the son of her womb?" He says, "Surely, they may forget. Maybe there's a mother out there that does. But I'll never forget the people of God! Never will I forget you! Even if a mother could do something contrary to nature, here and there, it's impossible that I could ever forget you" (Isa. 49:15, paraphrased)!

The Lord says, "The accusation in your heart against Me is wrong. It's not true. You don't understand My ways, you don't know My time frame, and you don't know why I'm allowing more obstacles. No! It's not an issue that I've forgotten you! No! It's not an issue that the promises are no longer true! No!"

#### **INSCRIBED UPON THE PALM OF HIS HANDS IS HIS PASSION FOR US**

He goes on in verse 16 and says, "Look! I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands" (Isa. 49:16, paraphrased). Undoubtedly, when the Spirit of God was giving these words to Isaiah, the Father looked at the Son and said, "Son, one day Your hands will be pierced for them. Forever those wounds..."

Remember how Thomas put his finger in the wounds. Inscribed upon the palm of His hands is His passion for us. He says, "Your walls are continually before Me" (Isa. 49:16b, NKJV). He goes on and says, "No, I've not forgotten you."

In chapter 51, we will get right in the middle of the conversation of the people of God who feel God has forgotten them. Or worse, God remembers, but He says, "No, the deal is off. You've gone too far. You've actually sinned beyond the ability of My love."

Beloved, let me say this to you. I want to be tender about this, but I want to be direct. There's nothing more steeped in religious pride than imagining that you could produce something that could overwhelm the heart of

God if you had a heart that said yes to Him. It's a lie, all throughout the Body of Christ, all throughout the ages. Man or woman, I hear it all the time: "I've done something so bad..."

You want to be nice. I always try to be nice, but I'm thinking, "Not on your life could you have produced something bigger than the passion of His heart. Don't kid yourself. You don't have the power to overwhelm and exhaust His love if you'll say yes to Him."

All condemnation, though it's energized by demons, is actually rooted in religious pride in the condemned person. Why? Because they're imagining that the whole thing is about their ability to excite God, rather than God's ability to be motivated within Himself for weak people. It's all rooted in pride in the human heart. It doesn't look like pride. It doesn't look like religious pride, because it's so self-loathing. It's so, "I'm so bad, I'm so bad, I'm so bad."

The Lord says, "You have the whole thing mixed up. If you'll say yes to Me, I have something a million times stronger than anything that you've produced."

There are several different forms of the religious spirit. One is all the mean rules—ridiculous rules meant to motivate people to try to get them to motivate God to love them through rules. That's very religious. Let me tell you, there's a far more dangerous, and a far more insidious dimension of a religious spirit. It's not normally called a religious spirit; it's called *condemnation*. Condemnation has kind of been re-packaged, and re-clothed, and renamed, and re-titled to mean, "I'm so sincere, and I'm so tender, and I've produced something more powerful than God Himself."

The Lord says, "No, rethink it all through again. Get rid of it. Call it what it is: it's a religious spirit. Cast yourself into who I am and don't ever imagine that you can produce something greater than Me."

### **JUDAS SINNED IN BELIEVING HIS SIN EXCEEDED GOD'S REACH**

Again, I want to be gentle on this subject, but I want to be straightforward. Many times—not every time, but many times—suicide is one of the greatest statements of spiritual pride. It really is, when it's related to failing in God. What Judas did was an act of spiritual pride. "I've done something that even God can't comprehend and receive."

The Lord says, "No, you haven't, Judas; no, you haven't." He took his life to pay the debt, because he thought that somehow he could produce the answer for his sin. It doesn't feel like pride in the person doing it, but it is at the end of the day. I'm not saying that all suicide is like that, but many times it is when it's related to spiritual failure, because we say, "I have an answer that God doesn't have. He can't pull it off, but I can."

The Lord says, "No, humble yourself. Come to Me and receive who I am."

### **"LISTEN TO ME, YOU WHO FOLLOW AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS"**

Look at Isaiah 51. He says, "Listen to Me. Listen to Me you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord" (Isa. 51:1, paraphrased). He's telling them that they're sincere, because they follow after righteousness and they seek the Lord. In verses 7 and 12 He tells them that they're driven and bound by fear. He says, "You're sincere, but you're very weak. You have a lot of things out of place in your thinking. Your character

and your spiritual life need all kinds of healing and repair.” They’re sincere in verse 1, but they’re dominated by fear in verses 7 and 12. He’s going to bring that up in a moment.

He tells them this, and I will say it to you. “Listen to Me,” says the Lord, “Listen to My Word.” People in spiritual despair will do anything except what the Word of God says to do. It’s the most amazing thing. In the years that I’ve been in ministry, I’ll sit with a person in despair, and they’ll try anything. They’ll try any form of medicine; any form of therapy. Any form of inner or outer healing; any new group, anything! Anything except what the Word of God says! Anything except listening to God. I’m not saying that doing the answer is easy, but I am saying that the answer isn’t difficult. It just takes perseverance and some staying with it.

The Lord says, “Listen to Me, for I’m going to tell you something.” He says, “Let me tell you something.” He says, “Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug” (Isa. 51:1b). He says, “Go back to your origin.” Of course the nation of Israel’s origins were Abraham and Sarah (v. 2). Abraham and Sarah were these two people far away. The Lord says, “Hey, look right here. You haven’t done a thing, but I called you, I blessed you, and I will increase you.”

He says, “Look back to the very beginning. The very beginning of your faith was a man and a woman who didn’t do a thing. God called them, He pursued them, and He made a covenant to bless them. He promised to increase them even in the midst of their weakness.” He says, “Listen to Me. Look at the beginnings. The very foundations of Christianity: it began through the man who did nothing and got everything.”

The Lord is starting the conversation by saying, “Before you even talk about how much you’re disqualified, let’s remember that I took a man that deserved nothing and I gave him everything. Look at him, and that’s what you’re a part of. That’s the reality that you’re a part of. Don’t even begin to come to Me telling Me that you’ve overdone it, you’ve gone too far, God is too mean, none of it’s true!” He says, “Look at Abraham before you even start.”

### **GOD WILL BRING BREAKTHROUGH BEYOND ANYTHING WE CAN IMAGINE**

Then in verses 3 to 6, God promises; we won’t go through this. He promises comfort, and He promises revival. In our language, He says, “I’m coming, and I will cause a breakthrough beyond anything that you can imagine.” In verse 7, He says it again; He’s going to bring it up a notch. He says, “Listen to Me” (Isa. 51:7). It’s the same language, He says the same thing in verses 4 and 7. He says, “Listen, I want you to hear what I’m saying.” This is God speaking. In a few minutes, in verse 21, He’s going to upgrade and plead with them to hear. He says, “Please! Please! Listen to what I’m telling you! You can have deliverance.” It’s the strangest thing to me. The people of God will listen to anything except for the simple four or five things the Bible says to do. They’ll do anything but those. It’s the strangest thing. It goes on and on and on and on. There’s no secret of how to go forward in this thing.

He says, “Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law” (Isa. 51:7)—or, “My Word.”

He says, “I know that you’re people who love the Word.” He says, “You know what? You’re so afraid” (Isa. 51:7b, paraphrased). He starts off, “They’re afraid of the reproach of people. You’re so afraid that people are going to mock you. You’re so afraid that you’re going to be mistreated. You’re so afraid that it’s not going to work right. You’re driven by fear! I know that you love Me, but you’re so conscious of the obstacles that you’re

not even conscious of Me anymore. When you think, you're so aware of your dilemma and you're so not aware of who we are together in covenant."

He tells them in verses 7 and 8, "You're driven by fear." He says that in verse 13 as well, as we'll see in a moment. He says, "You're continually filled with fear." They're driven by it.

**"AWAKE! AWAKE! PUT ON STRENGTH, O ARM OF THE LORD!"**

So the people of God join IHOP-KC. That's what verse 9 says: "They join IHOP-KC." No it doesn't say that, really. Verse 9 describes their intercession. They say, "OK, OK, if it's true that Abraham did nothing and got everything; he deserved nothing and You blessed him and increased him and called him and pursued him; and if it's true that You want us, let's do it. Let's go to the prayer room."

They cry, "Awake! Awake! Put on strength, O arm of the Lord" (Isa. 51:9)! This is intercession. This is good intercession. He's going to validate this intercession a little later on in the conversation, when He says, "What you did in verse 9 was good."

Here they are; this is an intercessory prayer. "OK, God, if You said You were bringing a breakthrough, then bring it! Put on Your strength, O arm of the Lord!" "The arm of the Lord" means His power.

Look at this: they're really going to go back to the good old days of David and Moses and Elijah. "Awake! As in the days of old! Do today what You did in the days of Moses! Do today what you did to Elijah and Moses" (Isa. 51:9-10, paraphrased). In our language, we would say, "Do today what You did in the life of Peter. James, and John." Although, let's go ahead and throw in Moses and Elijah and David. We have them both. Here they are, the people of God. They've stood up and they're going to tell God to put on strength. They're going to tell the arm of the Lord, or the power of God, to break out.

Then they ask Him a question in the middle of verse 9: "Are You not the God who has power, who cut Rahab apart and wounded the serpent" (Isa. 51:9, paraphrased)? "Rahab and the Serpent" was a very common poetic reference to Egypt and Pharaoh. It's found in several places in Scripture, because it's kind of a poetic, symbolic way of saying, "The giant of all giants." Whoever the main oppressor is, that's the monster; that's Rahab. Here they are in intercession: "Aren't You the One who did the mighty miracles in the days of Moses?" That's what that really means.

In verse 10, he asks the same question again: "Aren't You the One who dried up the Red Sea? Aren't You the One who split the Red Sea and they all walked through? Aren't You that God" (Isa. 51:10, paraphrased)?

In verse 9, they're in fiery intercession. "Awake! Awake! You're the God of Moses! Aren't You the God who split the Red Sea? OK, You're the God full of promise, so let's go for it!" Then they really upgrade this prayer in verse 11. Verses 9 to 11 is the prayer. They're quoting word for word Isaiah's promise from Isaiah 35:10. They're quoting a prophetic promise of breakthrough. I don't want to go through the specifics of it; it's a dynamic promise. The point is what they're doing in verses 9 to 11; they're interceding. They're saying, "OK, you told us to remember the rock from which we came. We will go back."

"Awake, O God! God of Moses! Do what you said in Isaiah 35:10!" They're quoting the prophet decrees; they're speaking the Word of God and they're going for it.

### **EVERY PROMISE THAT HE MADE, HE PROMISES HE'LL KEEP**

In verses 9 to 11, everything is going well: they're in the house of prayer, they're using the Scriptures, they're pressing into God, and things are going excellently. The Lord says, "OK, I want to talk to you about what you're doing right now." This is very, very pertinent with our life right now. He says, "You're asking Me a question; am I the God who did the miracles of Moses?"

He says in verse 12, "Yes, I'm the God who comforts you. I promised you comfort back in verse 3. Every promise that I made, I promise You I'll keep. I'll comfort you like I said in verse 3" (Isa. 51:12, paraphrased). He turns the conversation around. He's really going to touch their view of themselves and their spiritual identity. This is very powerful. He says, "I have a question for you. Since you asked Me if I'm still the One that does the Moses stuff, I have a question to ask you: who are you that you should be in covenant with the transcendent God, who has all the power of all the nations and all creation? Who are you that you should live in such fear and be My covenant people?" He says, "Here you are at IHOP-KC," in verses 9, 10, and 11. "You're saying all the right stuff but you're living a life of fear. You're being driven by fear."

He says, "There's a collision." He says, "You're the darling of My heart, yet you still think that I will forget you. You still think that You've sinned so much that even I can't redeem you." He says, "You're continually afraid of all the circumstances. You're controlled by fear; but you're My people." He says, "There's a paradox, there's a tension, there's a collision going on in your life right now. You're even praying the biblical prayers, but you don't even believe I'm the God I say I am. I'm more of a doctrine; I'm more of an idea, not a person who moves your heart. I'm an idea to you. Your fear is more prominent than My presence in your life."

### **"WHERE IS THE FURY OF THE OPPRESSOR?"**

He's talking to the children of Israel in a time of difficulty and struggle. He says, "Who are you that you should be afraid?" He says, "Worse than that, you're afraid of a man who dies! You're afraid of a son of man who's going to be gone in a moment like the grass!" He says, "You're afraid of weak men who are here today and gone tomorrow, and whatever they threaten you, it doesn't even last! You're terrified of everything that men do or don't do. Men promised and they don't keep their promise; or men do something mean to you." He says, "Why are you putting your whole life, your whole heart, your whole being on what men do to you?" He says, "Don't you know who I am and who you are to Me?"

He says, "You want to know if I'm the God who does the miracles of Moses? I want to ask you: who are you that live so dominated by fear, and yet you're in covenant relationship with Me? Do you even know who I am? Am I more than even an idea to you that you use in a prayer room?"

They're looking at the Lord and He's saying, "Well?"

Then He says in verse 13, "Let's bring up another point. You've forgotten the Lord your Maker. I'm the one that stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you're continually driven by fear day in and day out, because of the oppressor, because of all the things that are rising up against you" (Isa. 51:13, paraphrased).

Remember chapter 49:14-15: He says, “You think that I’ve forgotten you?” The Lord says, “The problem is that deep in your being you’ve forgotten Me.” He says, “You don’t even commune with Me. You don’t touch Me deep in your spirit.” He says, “I’m a doctrine to you. I’m not a living reality that you commune with.”

He says, “You have a question for Me?”

In verses 9 and 10, they ask Him, “Are You the God of Moses?”

“I have a question for you,” He says in verses 12 and 13: “Why are you so driven by fear? Why have you really, in essence, forgotten Me? Why does My power and My passion for you not really touch you at the heart level?” He says, “Who do you think that I really am?” They’re staring at Him. He says, “You give so much credit to your oppressors.” Your oppressors are external oppressors, all the bad circumstances. Or your oppressors are the internal oppressors, the discovery of your own weakness. He says, “You give your oppressors too much credit and you give Me so little credit, really at the heart level by the way that you live.”

The Lord answers this question with a question. He’s always doing that, you know. We did this in Zechariah 7, the other day when they said to the Lord, “How come You’re not breaking through in power like You said You would? Do we still have to fast” (Zech. 7:3)?

The Lord says, “I have a question for you, now that you’re asking those questions” (Zech. 7:5-6).

When the Lord says, “I have a question for you,” definitely duck! When the Lord is asking a question, He’s not asking a question because He lacks information. He’s asking the question to get you in touch with information. When He said, “Adam! Where art thou?” He wasn’t saying, “Adam where are you?” As if the Lord said, “That little stinker. Where did he go? Adam! Where are you?” He didn’t lose Adam; Adam lost Adam. He says, “Adam, where are you?”

Adam stopped. When he answered the question, he realized, “Oh, I’m in a mess.”

The Lord said, “Thank you; that’s the point.” When the Lord asks, a question it’s for you to discover something, not for Him to search for an answer.

The Lord says, “Who are you anyway that you’re so driven by fear? In reality, you’ve forgotten Me in so much fear of all your problems that I hardly figure in the equation at the heart level. Yet you’re My covenant people.”

Remember how He says in verse 1, “You’re people of righteousness. You love Me.” Remember in verse 7, He says, “You’re people who harbor My Word in your heart to some degree, even though it’s not really the primary thing.”

### **“I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO DIVIDED THE SEA”**

He goes on in verse 15 and says, “By the way, I’m the God of Moses.” He says, “I’ll answer your question. “I’m the God who did the Moses thing. I did split the Red Sea” (Isa. 51:15, paraphrased). He says, “Let Me tell you something else: I’m the God who puts My very words inside of your mouth, and when you speak My own words back to Me, I’ll release power.” He says, “What you did in verses 9, 10, and 11 was good. I’m the God of Moses.” Verse 15 answers the question of verse 9. “I did put My words in your mouth,” He says in verse 16.

They quoted God's words in verse 11. He says, "What you did in verses 9, 10, and 11, what you did in IHOP-KC was really good. I just wish that it would touch your heart." Beloved, this is powerful! He says, "I've put My words in your mouth. I've covered you with My own hand." That's a quote right from Isaiah 49, the beginning of the conversation, which we won't go into right now.

He goes on in verse 17. He's really going to turn the thing around in verse 17. He says, "In verse 9 you told Me to awake. In the prayer meeting you said, 'Awake, O God! Awake, O God of Moses! Are You really the God of Moses?'"

In verse 17, He says, "I'm going to turn it around, and I'm going to tell you to wake up."

"Lord, we're in the prayer room."

He says, "I want you to wake up! I want you to stand up! I want you to wake up! I want you to shake off the lethargy and stand!"

Beloved, it takes effort to do that. People have this really mixed-up concept of grace. They think that because it's grace it requires no effort. No, that's not the definition of grace. Grace means that our effort doesn't motivate God to like us. The effort puts our cold heart in front of this bonfire. The effort positions us to freely receive the fire. The effort doesn't earn us the fire; it puts us in the place to receive the free gift of the fire. A lot of people think that if you do anything that takes effort, it's legalism. No! Legalism and grace are essentially an issue of heart motivation. If you're doing it to talk God into liking you, it's legalism. If you're doing it because He has a red-hot fire, you have a cold heart, and you're putting your cold heart in front of His red-hot fire, that's called wisdom. It's amazing that in the pursuit of the grace of God so many of God's people won't exempt the effort to put their cold heart in front of the things that create fire. They have to; that's what the Lord said in verses 4 and 7. He says, "Listen to Me. Do it My way. You have to put effort into putting your cold heart in front of My real presence, the things that release fire, that melt you and tenderize you."

Beloved, you can sit in IHOP-KC; you can actually sit in the building and hear anointed music and not actually put your heart in communion before the fire of God. Being in the building isn't the same thing as an engaged heart. We have to actually engage our being with God. The Lord says, "I want you to wake up! I want you to stand up, O Jerusalem!"

### **JERUSALEM HAS DRUNK AT THE HAND OF THE LORD THE CUP OF HIS FURY**

Look at the Jerusalem to which He's speaking. This is really going to shock them. This is a Jerusalem that has been drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of His fury. You can go ahead and read the rest of it. It's a Jerusalem that has been under the discipline of God. It's a Jerusalem that has been sinning, and God took them to the woodshed. He says, "You know what? You sinned. I got your attention by disciplining you. Don't go on some five-year pity party. Stand up! Move into My heart, and let's take off where we left off! Let's go for it!"

"Yes, but, Lord, You don't understand: I've really messed up."

He says, "Jerusalem, don't give Me that re-coated, re-phrased, re-titled, religious pride. Don't tell Me that what you do is stronger than what I do. I don't want to hear it. It's false; it's a lie. Jerusalem that has been under

discipline, I want you to take the time of discipline and push delete. I want you to wake up! Stand up! Move into My heart, have confidence, and take off into the promises of God, like I told you!”

“Yes, but Lord, I’m so messed up.”

“You can’t produce anything that challenges the power and the ability of My love. You can’t. You can produce a penny against My billion dollars; it doesn’t work, there’s no comparison! Stop all that foolishness and move in!”

“I don’t want to do that. I’ll go to counseling. I’ll go to any program.”

It sounds like I’m down on counseling. I’m not actually, because biblical counseling is just taking the Word of God and tailor-making it for a person.

I’m actually quite big on counseling. That’s not my point. My point is that there’s a victim mentality in the Body of Christ. Here’s the victim mentality. The victim mentality isn’t someone who says, “I’m hurt.” That’s not the victim mentality. It’s someone who says, “I’m hurt and therefore I’m not responsible to rise up and touch God, because I’ve been hurt.” That’s the victim mentality.

I think it’s right to say, “I’ve been hurt.” That’s not a victim mentality, to confess that you’ve been hurt. A victim mentality is when you say, “Because I’m hurt, I’m no longer responsible to press in and touch God at the heart level. They were so mean to me. It was so bad. He did it, she did it, way back when. Here, they all did it. I’m so busted, I’m no longer responsible for my spirit communing with God.”

That’s a victim mentality. They go to every group around who will take them in, hear their story, and tell them how bad those people were who were mean to them. Beloved, with a victim mentality, no one can free you until your spirit wakes up and moves toward God as an act of your will! The victim mentality isn’t only the fact that you’ve given up and said, “I’m just going to focus on what they did to me; I refuse to take responsibility to move into God.” In the kingdom mentality, we acknowledge our bruises and our hurts. Beloved, no one, no one and no trauma relieves you of the God-given ability and responsibility to touch God. I see people all the time, and I say, “I know that you’re hurt, but don’t give up on your privilege to touch God just because you’ve been hurt. That’s your only way out of it.” They’ve been in sin and they’re in discipline. God says, “I still want you to rise up.”

### **“HEAR THIS, YOU AFFLICTED, AND DRUNK, BUT NOT WITH WINE”**

Look at verse 21; He says, “Listen, O Israel, you afflicted ones” (Isa. 51:21, paraphrased). Is there anyone in this room who has been afflicted? Is there anyone in this room who has been mistreated, or anyone who has torment of sin in their own life? He says, “Listen you afflicted one,” He says, “You’re drunk, but not with wine.” He says, “You’ve been drunk under the discipline of God.” He says, “You’ve drunk the cup of My wrath” (v. 22). He says, “You’re not drunk with wine. You’ve been in a season of discipline. The Lord your God says this to you, the God who pleads the cause of His people.” God is down on His knees saying, “I plead with you to do this thing the way that I said it and you can get free! I beg you!”

The person says, “I’m so hurt, I can’t respond.”

God says, “I plead with you, don’t go there!”

“No, you don’t know what they did to me. You don’t know how bad it is.”

God says, “I know that it was bad; I plead with you, touch Me. You can still touch Me. We can work through the details. Don’t release your God-given responsibility and your God-given privilege to touch Me at the heart level, because you’re in trauma, or you’re in a season of sin and discipline. Repent, stand up and move into God!”

God says, “I plead with you to do this!”

He says, “I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling” (Isa. 51:22). He says, “I’ve already given the cup to My Son to drink. No longer do you have to drink the cup of trembling. It’s paid for in full by your Redeemer.”

The hardest thing to get a person with a religious spirit to do is to accept the new beginning and to push through it. They say, “I can’t.” It seems so humble. It’s not humble. It’s false humility; it’s a religious spirit; it’s religious pride. “I can’t, because you don’t know how bad I am.” They’re still imagining that they’ve done something more powerful than God.

I say, “You’re not that strong. Don’t flatter yourself; push delete and move on. It’s about Him and His ability to love and embrace you. It’s not about your great ability to sin that you’ve outdone God now.”

### **“I HAVE TAKEN OUT OF YOUR HAND THE CUP OF TREMBLING”**

He’s telling Israel, “I’ve taken the cup out of your hand.”

This has political and military ramifications, but it also has spiritual and emotional ramifications. Because what God is telling them is about the end of the age and His redemption of the nation through political and military deliverance. That’s what He’s talking about right here. It’s the whole spirit in which redemption is carried out. The God from whom we deserve the cup of wrath, and the discipline of God, lays it upon another. Jesus took the cup.

Jesus said, “Lord do I have to take the cup? Is there any way it can pass” (Mt. 26:39, paraphrased)?

The Lord said, “No,” to Jesus, so that He could say yes to you and me.

He says, “I will punish your tormentors” (Isa. 51:23, paraphrased). He says, “They’ve been walking all over you.” Look at this: He says, “They made you lie down to the ground and they’ve trounced all over you” (ibid). Beloved, again, that can have a military application to Israel at the end of the age, and it really does. The accusing spirit tramples you and stomps you into the ground: shame, shame all over you.

The Lord says in verse 22, “I plead with you; let Me take the cup for you and give you a new beginning. I’ll wipe out all the political enemies that are stomping on you”—enemies of Israel at the end of the age, and spiritual enemies all throughout church history.

We'll turn to chapter 52, verses 1 and 2. He says, "Let Me say it again: 'Awake! Awake! Wake up!' (Isa. 52:1, paraphrased). If you notice, in Isaiah 51:9 they've told the Lord, "Awake!"

In verses 12, 13, and 17, the Lord says, "No, let's turn this thing around. You wake up! It's not that I'm inactive; it's not that I'm unwilling. You're in prayer meetings, but your heart is dominated by fear. You're not even touching Me!"

He says in verse 17, "You wake up!"

They said, "We can't, because we've been in a season of discipline and we've blown it so badly for so long. We have to spend at least five years on probation before we can wake up; before we can be spiritually on fire."

He says, "No, you don't! No, you don't! Wake up now!"

"Yeah, but we're in discipline."

"Wake up!" In other words, "Have a fiery spirit. Move in and commune with God today."

I don't care what you did at 2:00pm this afternoon, back in the last twenty years. Today is a new day to begin with a fiery spirit, with confidence in the love of God.

### **EXERT THE EFFORT TO POSITION YOURSELF BEFORE THE FIRE OF GOD**

In chapter 52, the Lord says, "Let Me bring this up a notch. I want you to wake up. I want you to put on strength. I want you to put on beauty. I want you to put on strength and I want you to put on beauty." Then He names Jerusalem. Remember, it's all the same conversation. He just told them in chapter 51 that they were sitting under judgment. Here in chapter 52:1, He says, "O Jerusalem, you're the holy city" (Isa. 52:1, paraphrased). They kind of winced. They said, "Put on the anointing? Put on strength? Put on beauty? We're holy? Lord? We're under the cup of wrath! We've really blown it!"

The Lord says in chapter 51:22, "I'm pleading with you! I'm pleading your cause for you to let go of this thing" (Isa. 51:22, paraphrased)! He says, "I want you to wake up. I want you to put on strength."

I remember I used to read these verses, "Put on strength." I shared on this the other night, a couple of Sundays ago, from 2 Timothy 2, where the Lord says, "Put on strength, O Timothy" (2 Tim. 2:1).

You're thinking, "How are you supposed to put strength on? Duu-du-du-du! How do you do that?"

What the Scripture means, very, very clearly, is to exert the effort to position your heart in front of the fire of God. It means, "Position yourself in the place that the Bible talks about, where the anointing flows." It's a life with a commitment in your spirit to obey. You're going to have plenty of times when you fail, but there's a commitment, there's a yes in your spirit. You're filling your mind; you're feeding your spirit on the heart of God. You're feeding your heart on the Father heart, the bridal paradigm, the Bride of Christ, and the reality of beauty.

Here in chapter 52:1, He says, "Put on beautiful garments, and touch the realm of beauty."

They said, “Yeah, but we’re sinful.” He says, “Feed your spirit on what I call you. I call you beauty.” He says, “I give you beauty for ashes” (Isa. 61:3, paraphrased).

Last week we looked at Isaiah 62:3-5, where He calls them, “Hephzibah, the beautiful ones, the ones God loves” (Isa. 62:4-5, paraphrased). He says, “Feed your spirit on that.”

Beloved, you can’t wake up by just showing up at an IHOP-KC meeting. That’s not how you wake up. You wake up; you put on strength! In other words, you position your cold heart in the simple four or five things. You have a deep, “Yes, Lord, I will be radically Yours!” You’ll blow it a thousand more times, but the yes is there. You’re going to fill your mind with the revelation of God’s Father heart and the Bride of Christ. You’re going to embrace the grace of fasting as a part of your lifestyle. That’s critical to having a fiery spirit. You’re going to embrace God’s ways of economics. You’re going to care for the poor, and the simple things of the Word: prayer, fasting, and giving. Matthew 6, the Sermon on the Mount, has never been simpler. It’s right in the middle of Christianity 101. It’s the very thing that God says to do. Most of the church in the Western world doesn’t bother with it! They seek their healing everywhere besides the place where you wake up! Waking up means getting a fiery spirit and exerting effort to get yourself in the presence of God.

He says, “Jerusalem, O holy city!”

They say, “Holy City? No, we’re not a holy city. Remember 51:17? We’re the city with the fury of God on us!”

The Lord says, “The uncircumcised and the unclean”—in other words, the enemy—“will never touch you again” (Isa. 52:1b, paraphrased). He’s saying, “The enemy will never triumph over you again when I settle you down! Never!” Here’s Israel, fresh out of judgment, fresh out of discipline; they went to IHOP in Isaiah 51:9-11. They said the prayers right, but they’re driven by fear. They’re spiritually lethargic, still in a season of discipline. God is begging them to let Him put the wrath upon His Son, to release them from the wrath. He says, “Wake up! Do it My way. Do it My way!”

Look at verse 2. Here’s where the effort comes in; this is the final verse. He said, “Shake yourself from the dust.” Look at this; there are three violent words—three words that are supposed to be radical in terms of the way we live. “Shake yourself from the dirt,” number one. “Arise! Exert your energy and stand up!”

“I don’t feel like it, I feel bad, everyone is looking at me, all I know is all that I ever did wrong.”

God says, “Rise out of the dirt and believe all that I’ve said! Go for it!” Then He says, “Loose yourself from the bonds! Loose yourself!” He says, “Shake Yourself! Stand up! Arise! Loose yourself” (Isa. 52:2, paraphrased).

There’s this interesting little phrase right in the middle that’s very, very significant. He said, “Sit down” (Isa. 52:2, NKJV). It looks contradictory, but it’s not. In the ancient writings, in Hebrew, it said, “Sit down upon thrones of glory, O Jerusalem.” In other words, “Shake yourself from the dust, Arise, Sit upon a throne of glory.” Remember Revelations 3:21. “Enter into your possession! Enter into your privilege as a co-heir with God!” That’s what sitting down means: it means sitting down in a place of royalty.

Beloved, it's not enough to just try to wake up. You don't get on fire by saying, "I will get on fire! I will get on fire! Man, I have to get on fire! I'm really doing it this time!" That doesn't do it; that doesn't do it. We have to position ourselves in the place where we get strength (Isa. 52:1). We have to fill our minds with the Word. We have to say yes to the grace of fasting. We have to say yes to the grace of prayer. I don't care how boring it is; I don't care how tough it is. I don't care about all that stuff. We say yes to the realm of beauty to which God is beckoning us. A whole realm of beauty—there's the bridal paradigm. We shake ourselves from our shame and our condemnation.

Someone says, "Yes, but I want to stand up, and then I feel bad and I sit back down."

I say, "There's a place in God where you have to take a stand even if you don't feel like it."

"I would just rather someone else make that stand for me." It doesn't work that way. "I would rather sit in the dust, tell everyone how mean they were to me, and how bad I was. I would rather just sit in the dust until someone picks me up."

The Lord says, "I've provided everything. I took the wrath and gave it to My Son. I provided the Holy Spirit. I've provided all the means of grace for you to enter in. You do have to engage your heart. You must exert the energy to stand up, wake up, and move your heart into My heart."

Amen. Let's stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

O Lord, we say, "Awake, O arm of the Lord!"

The Lord says, "*You* awake!"

"Awake, O arm of the Lord, we want to see You break through and release streams in the desert! We want to see the power of God!"

The Lord says, "Who are you so driven by fear to tell Me to wake up? I tell you to awake! I'm not the One holding out; you're the one holding out! Draw near to Me. I'm ready to meet you!"

I'm going to ask people even now. You're saying, "This is a season. I'm sitting in the prayer meetings; I come to the Sunday night meetings, I do this and that and whatever. I have to move in at the heart level in a much deeper way. I really do need to move in a much deeper way. It's not enough to hang around the staff, the team, to lead sessions, to preach, to pray; I have to touch God at the heart level. I have to take my cold heart and commune with Him."

Maybe this is a time when you know that the Lord is speaking this to you, "It's time for you to awake!" You've been in the prayer room telling God to awake.

He says, "No, I want you to awake. I want you to let go of the past. The past is the past! Start new today. Run with Me, starting today. Free! Full! Bold! You're anointed, you're beautiful, and you're a holy city starting today."

“Lord, I don’t feel like it.”

The Lord says, “Stand up and enter into what I say is true!”

If that word speaks to your heart, this is a season for you to make some changes in this regard. I want you to come forward tonight.

“Lord, this is my desire. Lord, I don’t want to hang out at IHOP-KC. I want to hang out with You. I want to touch You. I want to feel my beauty in Your sight. I want to enter into my strength that You’ve provided for me. I will shake off the dust of my errors, my shame, and my sin from yesterday. I want to push delete and start over today with boldness.”

Beloved, if you want to be on fire now, if you want a fiery spirit, you can have it soon. It doesn’t mean that you’ll be mature soon, but you can have a fiery spirit. Just push delete and move on.

“Father, I want to feel; I want to feel Your beauty. I want to put on beautiful garments. I want to feel Your strength. I don’t care what I did yesterday. I want to be fiery. I don’t care about all that stuff. I want to move into this thing.”

The Lord says, “I will, if you will. I’m far more willing than you are. It has to be real. It has to be from the heart. You can fool everyone, but if it’s not from the heart, it never connects. It never, ever releases the fire if it’s not from the heart.”