

“Here Comes the King”

All You Need is Love: Pt.5

Today we wrap up a series on the nature of love. The world says “All you need is love.” And Christians agree with that. But we’re a little tricky, because we know that it all depends on what you *mean* by love. And the Bible tells us that God *is* love. And so I guess by the rule of commutative property, that means that *love is* God – I don’t know, I was pretty bad at algebra. But I can tell you that *theologically*, that is correct. God gives love its meaning. And we’ve had a thesis during this series that God’s love – like God Himself – is complex.

That God *reveals* Himself in the Bible under many images, under many metaphors. God’s love has multiple facets. Among them, God is Father *and* Friend *and* Lover *and* King. And if we take any one of those images and lift it up to the exclusion of the others, or even lift it up *in favor* of the others, you come up with a one-dimensional god - you come up with a cartoon god – and there’s no personal engagement with a god like that.

So we have been looking at passages of scripture from the Hebrew Bible – the Old Testament – that show us these different facets of God’s love. We’ve looked at God’s fatherly love, friendship love and...*lover* love!

Today we’re going to finish out with Isaiah 40, and Isaiah 40 would be a very, very famous passage even if Handel *hadn’t* written the greatest music in the history of the world based on it.

I want to start off by reading a large section of it to you. I’ll read the opening and the closing and let you read the middle on your own this week. But I want us to have the rhythm, the vocabulary of this prophecy in our hearts and minds as we talk about God as a King.

Isaiah 40... “*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”*

6 A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. 7 The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

9 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" 10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. 11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."

And then skipping down to the end, **v.27-31**: "*Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."*

"29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. 30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Ok, this is a prophecy of expectation. Notice there's a voice crying out – very dramatically - "Make way! Make way!" You can't see who it is. But it's a big deal. Remember in Jurassic Park, when the glass of water on the dashboard starts to tremble, something *big* is coming.

But forget glasses of water, Isaiah shows us here something greater than the world has ever seen is coming because it's *bringing down mountains*. Mountains are coming down. Who is coming? Let's ask the question of Isaiah. *Who* is coming? Secondly...*How* is he coming? Then thirdly; What must *we do* to respond? What must we do to receive him?

Number one, let's ask the text, Who is coming?

And you see the answer in **verses 3–4**. "*A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain."*

Now, any listener of these words in ancient times would have known that what is coming is a *king*, what is coming is *royal*, because when a king or an emperor went to another part of the kingdom that he hadn't been to, or hadn't been to in a long time, he didn't use just the regular roads and just the regular byways, rather new roads were *built*; highways were built.

If you visit the British Museum in London, one of the key finds is the Cyrus Cylinder discovered in the ruins of an ancient Babylonian city dating from the 6th century BC – just a little before Isaiah. The inscription includes an announcement of the Persian king’s visit to this providence of the Empire and includes the words, “Make his way good. Renew his road. Make straight his path. Hew him out a track.” In other words, you *built* a new highway. Why? The answer is this building of highways – these construction projects - when the king came was *symbolic* of what kingship is all about. It was symbolic in two ways.

First of all, it symbolized the **authority** of the king.

The idea of knocking down every barrier, the idea of bridging every gap, it symbolized just as we get rid of all resistances to the king’s *physical* presence, so we’re supposed to get rid of all resistance to the *authority* of the king. That we’re not supposed to hold anything back. We’re supposed to in no way resist his lordship. So first of all this represented the authority of the king.

But secondly, it represented the healing **influence** of true kingship. See, we know - this is just common sense – that under a *good* coach the team flourishes; under a bad coach the team falls apart. Under a *good* manager the business flourishes; under a bad manager the business does not. Under a *good* leader the community flourishes; under a bad leader the community does not. Leadership matters.

Whether you’re a parent, whether you’re a small group leader, whether you’re a mayor, whether you’re a king, when authority is *rightfully* exercised it’s like rain on a thirsty field for anyone under that authority. That’s the idea. The idea is the king comes to an impassable wilderness where there are chasms and mountains and now it’s passable. The king comes to a *desolate*, uninhabitable wilderness and now it’s habitable.

And therefore, the reason you built this new road in these desolate and dangerous places and you made them safe...It was not only a symbolism of the absolute *authority* of the king but of the *healing influence* of a true king, a real king. So you know when you hear this voice, *a* king is coming.

But not only that, when you read verses 3–5, Isaiah is also trying to say it’s not just *a* king coming. The language of Isaiah overflows the banks here. Don’t you see? When human kings come, you build a *bridge* over the chasm, but when this king comes, the chasm *vanishes*; the deep crevice, the canyon, is filled in. What? When human kings come, you might *identify* the pass over the mountain range so the people can pass over safely – you widen a pass, you build a bridge or a tunnel. But when this king comes, the mountains come *down*. What manner of king is this? And of course, here’s what the answer is.

Isaiah is drawing on one of the deepest hopes of the human race. Isaiah is saying the whole world is like an uninhabitable wilderness; the whole world is like a desert. There's death, there's disease, there's war, there's poverty, there's strife, and there's brokenness of all sorts. The *whole world* is like this. Why? Because of bad leadership. It's under incompetent managers. Us. Because our lives are under incompetent leaders. Us.

And when the cosmic and *ultimate* King comes, there will be *ultimate* healing, because you see verse 5 actually says what? *Where* is this king coming to? You see, when a king would show up, the people he was coming to would flock to see him. But what does verse 5 say? **V.5**, "*And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it...*" which means this is the King of the *whole world*, not just king of part of it, and if the whole world will see it, where is he coming *from*?

He's coming from *outside* the world, and therefore, what Isaiah is trying to say is there is a *true* king. There is a king who has *absolute* authority, and there's a king who brings *absolute* and complete healing, and he's coming. Now, this is not surprising. So many great legends reflect this particular hope - that there's a king coming back; he's going to put everything right. Robin Hood - just wait until good King Richard returns. The King Arthur legends - the true king will be able to pull the sword from the stone and rescue the realm. Tolkien titled the final volume of his trilogy, *The Return of the King*.

So I can imagine somebody saying, "Thank you for reminding me of these wonderful fairy tales, but that's all it is. This is just a fairy tale." No, it's not *just* a fairy tale. No, it isn't. Let me give you some evidence in your own heart for it. You know when we started this series, I mentioned a book called *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard. It was a Pulitzer Prize-winning book.

And Annie Dillard moved into a little cabin in the mountains of Virginia and began to observe nature and wrote about it. But what she observed was frightening to her. What she observed was rather horrible. Looking at nature in the 1970's, she found the same thing that Darwin found in 1832. And that is there's one principle on which nature operates, and that is *power*...the power of the strong over the weak, the power of the strong *eating* the weak, survival of the fittest.

She saw violence *everywhere* in nature. Do you remember I mentioned she was particularly affected by watching a large water bug jump on top of a frog, inject it with a poison that liquefied it from the inside, and just suck it out like a Jamba Juice. She literally watched the frog deflate, and she realized that's what nature is about. We talked about that. She realized that's the principle on which nature works.

I'd like to go back to her book and read you something else because she said once she realized this is how nature was, once she realized *she* and all human beings are committed to the idea that if *people* act the way nature acts, it's wrong, that if strong people or strong nations or strong races pick on the weak, that's *wrong*, and yet nature, that's the only principle it knows.

And suddenly she realized she had come to a fork in the road – she had to make a choice. She writes: “Either this world, my mother, is a monster, or I myself am a freak. Consider the former: the world is a monster...This view requires that a monstrous world running on chance and death and power, careening blindly from nowhere to nowhere, somehow produced wonderful us. I came from the world, I crawled out of a sea of amino acids, and now I must whirl around and shake my fist at that sea and I cry, ‘Shame!’...We little blobs of soft tissue crawling around on this one planet’s skin are right, and the whole universe is wrong.” So that’s the first possibility. The world is a monster.”

She continues, “Or consider the alternative...I must consider the second fork in the road that creation itself is blameless...and it is only human feeling that is freakishly amiss. The frog that the giant water bug sucked had, presumably, a rush of feeling for about a second, before its brain turned to broth. I, however, have been sapped by various strong feelings about the incident almost daily for years.”

She concludes:

All right then. It is our emotions that are amiss. We are freaks, the world is fine, and let us all go have lobotomies to restore us to a natural state. We can leave the library then, go back to the creek lobotomized, and live on its bank as untroubled as any muskrat or reed. You first.” (Dillard, *Tender Creek*, 179-180)

What’s she saying? She is saying that either our ethical belief that the strong should not eat the weak, either that idea of justice is absolutely wrong...or else nature is *unnatural*, nature is disordered. But how could nature be disordered if nature is all we have? How could death and violence be unnatural unless there’s a *super* nature? See? How, in other words, could the idea that the weak need to be protected be true unless there’s something *outside* of nature?

See, with all due respect, most Austinites are not as thoughtful as Annie Dillard. They say, “As far as we know, this world is all there is. There is no eternal. There is no supernatural, *and* there is such a thing as justice for the weak.” Annie Dillard says either nature is *broken* – and the only way you can know it’s broken is if there’s a standard outside by which we know it is broken.

Either there is a justice *outside* of nature that says the weak need to be protected, or else we're insane and our ideas of justice are wrong. And therefore, the Bible actually makes *perfect* sense of how your heart feels. The Bible says there *is* a king outside. This world is a wilderness. This world is desolate. This world is blighted, but there's a king *outside*. There *is* a supernatural realm.

And in a sense, our hearts have been picking up *his* justice like radios pick up invisible waves. And our only hope is that King will come back and put everything right. And Isaiah says he will. Isaiah says he *is*. Do you think you're crazy? Or do you believe there's a king from outside, and our only hope is he's coming back? Isaiah says he *is*. That's the first thing we learn; there's a king and he's coming back.

But How is it possible? And that's the second question we have to ask. How is it *possible* this King would actually come back? And in order to answer that question - to see Isaiah's answer for it - what we have to do is we have to look at the historical context. Now, this is Isaiah chapter 40, and one of the most interesting things is this starts a pretty distinct break in the book. In fact most commentaries on Isaiah have two volumes and the first volume is always chapters 1 to 39.

If you were to read Isaiah 1 to 39 you'd see there's almost nothing in there but judgment. All of the first half of Isaiah, there's nothing in there but judgment. I'll tell you why. Because it was Isaiah's job to articulate the standards of the justice of this great king. If you don't live up to the statutes and standards of the king, you're going to face judgement. Now, to talk about kings is – by definition – to talk about politics.

Uh-oh, everybody gets on edge when I mention politics. “Oh, don't mention politics, the Bible is not political.” Of course it is. It's just not partisan. See, every culture – every Christian culture at least – believes that God is on *their* side. “Our party is the godly party.” But what's so interesting when you read the Bible, and especially the prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or any of the prophets - the prophets are equal opportunity offenders. You see, in America, we've made our politics such a religion, that sociologists tell us most congregations are divided into red churches or blue churches. You understand what I mean by that.

And so blue churches are preaching against sins that red churches almost never do...oppression of the poor, greed, racial prejudice. And then the red churches are preaching against the sins that the blue churches hardly ever talk about...sexual impurity and not honoring your marriage covenant and not lifting up the family. But you read Isaiah chapters 1-39 and he's a *purple prophet!* He's preaching against *all* these sins. He's stepping on *everyone's* toes.

You see, human beings are tribal creatures by nature. And I think political parties are just another form of tribe. And so tribes allow us to think – “As long as I’m not one of *those* people...I’m alright. Because my side has the truth.” Both sides are doing this by the way. If you get into a debate about whether Jesus would be a Democrat or a Republican, you’ve already lost the battle.

Because you see, a lion can take down a donkey *and* an elephant. The lion is the king of the jungle. And so the prophet comes along and says, “Oh, you think you’re pretty good because you’re upholding *half* of the king’s standard. But you’ve missed the point. Nobody escapes the condemnation of the justice of the great King. *Nobody* measures up.”

And so by the end of chapter 39, there’s nothing but condemnation. In fact, at the very end of chapter 39, look at how it concludes, **Isaiah 39:6**, “*The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord.*” The whole nation is going to be hauled off into exile. That’s bad news.

Then suddenly, in chapter 40, there’s this incredible note of hope. It’s *so* sudden, by the way, that a lot of scholars are still perplexed about it – some liberal commentators say it’s two separate books, I don’t think so. Suddenly, Isaiah starts to say, **(40:1)** “*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God*” First of all look, “*my people.*” No matter what happens to you, God still considers you “*my people.*”

Secondly, it says, **(v.2a)** “*Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her **hard service** has been completed...*” This is a difficult word to translate. In the old King James it says her “warfare”. It’s a word that means “struggle”. Her struggle, her conflict, *will* be completed. By the way, because he’s a prophet, Isaiah’s actually talking about it in the past tense – it’s like he’s jumping ahead to the future and looking back. In other words, “What I’m going to put you through is not permanent. I’m not abandoning you. I’m not just sending you away.”

Why? And the answer is here, **(v.2b)** “*...that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand **double for all her sins.***” Now, when you first read that – on the surface - what does it sound like it’s saying? It’s saying, “Well, her hard service is completed because God has paid her double - *punished* her double - for her sins.” But that’s not what it says.

First of all, can you imagine, is there any place in the Bible that says God will give you *two* punishments, double the punishment you deserve? No. And if you look carefully, what does the word “double” modify? Double punishment? No, the word “punishment” is not in there at all. What does it modify? It’s “*payment*.” Her sin has been *paid for* – by the Lord’s hand - more than that, it’s been paid for double what she deserves. This is saying the reason why the exile will be limited, will only be temporary – a limited time for discipline - is that God *Himself* has provided the payment for the sins, and that payment is double.

What in the world does that mean? Well, if you really want to understand, you have to see that this King is both a warrior and a shepherd – strong *and* gentle. Because let me show you what happens. Look at **v.10**, “*See, the Sovereign LORD comes **with power**, and **his arm rules for him**. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.*” We’ll come back to that “reward” and “recompense” in a minute, but first, notice that word “arm” is very important. It’s a Hebrew metaphor for your power, but what is that arm doing?

V.11, “*He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*” You see this is why, when we watch those nature documentaries – when you see the little animal getting ripped apart from it’s mother by some predator – we *know* that’s wrong. Perfectly natural, but deep down we *know* that nature is wrong.

This is the tension Annie Dillard felt. Because we know that a good king should take care of the weakest among us. We know a true king should exercise justice for the littlest. And here he is.

The Warrior is a shepherd. And why are we not afraid? The answer is back in **verse 10**, “*See, **his reward is with him...***” What reward? For years, I’ve been reading this wrong. I thought - maybe you did too - that “his reward is with him” means that He’s coming to the lambs and if we’ll be good, He has a treat for us. The King rewards his loyal subjects. Until this week; I was breaking down the passage and realized, He’s not talking about *our* reward. He’s not talking about *my* reward. Whose reward is he talking about? He’s coming with *his* reward. He’s coming with *his* recompense.

Now, what in the world could be God’s reward? What do you get the man who has everything? I mean, if you go later on in the chapter, you’ll see it says God owns the stars. He owns the mountains. He owns the nations. They are like dust before him. So what in the world could make God feel wealthy? What would God *ever* look at and feel so wealthy and so rich to see it that *He* would say, “This is my treasure. These are my jewels. This is my wealth”? What is he looking at? It tells you. He comes with his reward. He comes with his recompense. What is it? It’s *us*. It’s his flock. It’s the little ones. It’s the weak ones. This is not survival of the fittest. This is not the strong devour the weak. This is astounding.

You say, “How in the world could this be? How could the Warrior be a shepherd? How could the King who is *absolutely* just, who must put down *all* injustice and evil...How can He look at *us* with all of our weaknesses and with all of our flaws...? How can the Warrior be a shepherd and love us and actually call us his jewels and say, ‘*You’re* the wealth. The stars are nothing compared to you; they’re like dust on the scales’?”

If you read all of Isaiah 40, that’s what is obvious. “The mountains are nothing, the oceans are nothing, the galaxies are nothing compared to how I see you.” How could that be? I’ll tell you. Double payment. Where do you see the power and the tenderness of God coming together?

On a very dark night, Jesus Christ said to Peter, “Put that sword away, that *pitiful* idea of power. Don’t you know I could call my Father and He would send legions of angels? Don’t you realize I have the strength...? Put that sword away. Do you realize I could snap my fingers and everybody here would be dead? But I have the strength enough to be weak. I have the majesty enough to be meek. I am laying down my life for my sheep.” Only Jesus Christ can answer the question, “How in the world could God have given *double*?”

When he says, “I have given you double payment,” what he means is, “I haven’t just given you bare minimum. I haven’t just let you off. I haven’t just given you enough salvation so your sins are pardoned. I’ve given you *double*. I’m not just giving you barely enough. There is *so* much love, there is *so* much honor that it doesn’t just wipe out your sins, but it also welcomes you into my arms. I don’t just see you as pardoned sinners. I see you as my jewels. My salvation is super abundant.” How could that be? And the answer is it’s only in Jesus Christ.

I know I read this last week, but honestly, I should probably read it *every* week, **2 Corinthians 5:21** says, “*God made him sin who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*” Two things: sin and righteousness. Righteousness means right-standing before the king. Sin means you’ve broken the king’s rules and therefore deserve to be punished. Paul summarizes the gospel as; We had sin and no righteousness. Jesus had righteousness and no sin. And then he switched. He *switched*!

Jesus Christ did not just die the death you should have died, but he lived the life you should have lived. Your bad record is not just imputed to him so that he is treated as you deserve.

The Bible says *his* great, perfect record is imputed to *you* when you believe so that now God treats you as Jesus deserved. And if you don't get the fullness of this truth, you will be a miserable Christian. Oh, you can believe it in your *head* and be in heaven when you die. But if you don't get it into your *heart*, you'll be living in hell in the meantime.

The great London preacher, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote a book called *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Its Cure*. It's a collection of sermons and the second one is called "The True Foundation". It's one of the best, most clear-cut, gospel presentations I've ever heard – and it's aimed at *Christians!* He said nobody is more miserable than Christians who don't fully understand the gospel. Unbelieving believers. Pagans are free to have a good time...but not Christians who don't understand the *doubleness* of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

He says he has a test that he often uses. He'll explain the gospel – as I am doing to you – and then he'll say, "Do you understand this?" "Yes, I understand." "Do you *believe* this?" "Yes, I believe this." "Ok, then are you ready to say that you are a Christian?" And quite often they will hesitate.

Let me pick up his quote: "Then I say: 'What is the matter, why are you hesitating?' And they say: 'I do not feel that I am

good enough.' At once I know that in a sense I have been wasting my breath. They are still thinking in terms of themselves; their idea still is that they have to make themselves good enough to be a Christian, good enough to be accepted with Christ. They have to do it! 'I am not good enough.' It sounds very modest but it is the lie of the devil, it is a denial of the faith. You think that you're being humble. But you will never be good enough; nobody has ever been good enough. The essence of the Christian salvation is to say that He is good enough and that I am in Him!" (34)

I will occasionally have people say to me – and it's always people who have grown up in church - "Anthony, I often hear you say we're accepted completely by grace, but don't we have to obey God too?" There is no *too* about it. If you don't understand that you are totally accepted, you *can't* really obey. People say, "I know I'm accepted, but don't I have to obey?" If you don't believe you're totally accepted, you *can't* obey.

Why? If you don't believe you're totally accepted, if you think, "The reason I need to obey the rules is so that God will bless me and take me to heaven and answer my prayers," if that's the motivation for your obedience, do you realize you're not really obeying Him at all; you're *using* Him? You're not really serving *Him* as King and you're the servant. What you're doing is you're trying to get leverage over Him. You're *using* the King.

You're not obeying Him just out of a joyful gratitude of what He has done, just out of the delight of who He is, but you're saying, "I'd better do this. I'd better do that, *or else...*" In other words, if you obey out of fear, you're not really obeying; you're using Him. You're doing what you *have* to do, and therefore, unless you see you're God's jewels, God's kingship will crush you.

And of course, that's just the Christians that feel depressed, I have't even mentioned the Christians who feel *smug* because they actually believe they *are* keeping the law good enough. That's a whole other kettle of fish. A much *worse* one in many ways. Until you see the doubleness of what Jesus has done for you – the great exchange of his righteousness for your sinfulness - until you see what he has done for you, you're not going to be able to serve him as King; you're *not* serving him as King.

How is it possible this King can come? If there is no judge and king, what hope is there for the world with all of this evil? Right? But if there *is* a judge and king, what hope is there for us because of our flaws? The answer is...the Warrior is a shepherd. The answer is...through Jesus Christ He can be both. He's the King who is justice for the weak.

Now lastly, How should we respond? And the answer is in this very, very famous passage, but let me unpack it just briefly for you. At the very end it says, **(V.31 ESV)** "*But they who wait for 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.*" The answer to the question, "How do we treat him as King? How do we *practice* the kingship of God?" is, "Wait." See, the reason the word "wait" is so significant is that if you think about it, it means these things.

First, wait means obey. Have you ever heard of ladies-in-waiting? You are not treating God as King unless you say, "Not my will, but yours be done." In *every* area! See? *Every* mountain down. *Every* valley. Nothing held back. You're not treating God as King unless you're willing to say, "Not my will, but thine be done," in every area.

As Elisabeth Elliot used to say, the hardest thing to give...is *in*. Everything else is easy – give my money, give my time - but the hardest thing to give is *in*. It's easy to give this and this and this, but to give up the *right* to determine how your life should be lived...that's the first thing. Wait means to obey.

Secondly, wait means *relax*. Wait means, “Your schedule; not mine.” Wait means not just, “I accept your laws for my life,” but wait means, “I accept your ordering of my history. I accept the fact that I don’t know what’s best. I humble myself underneath you.” Martin Luther used to say to his friend Philipp Melanchthon, who was a big worrier, “Let Philipp cease to rule the world,” because worry is almost *always* a resistance of the kingship of Christ.

Worry, anxiety, and fear often mean, “If I was in charge of history, I would do a better job. I would know just what had to happen,” but you see, as soon as you humble yourself under the lordship of not just the Lord of the law, but the Lord of history, what you’re saying is, “I can relax.” So wait means obey, wait means relax. One more...

Thirdly, wait means *expect*. Wait means hope. Wait means if it’s really true that the lordship of God is a healing influence, then I am not treating God as King unless I have high expectations in what He can do through me. There are an awful lot of you who – boy, how do I put this? - because you’re pessimists, you’re not treating Him as the King. Are you a pessimist? In my natural state, I am. I like to say, “The glass is half full...but it’s half full of poison.” But that’s only my *natural* state. In my *supernatural* state...I’m very hopeful indeed.

Do you look at the problems in your family, do you look at the problems in the world, do you look at the problems of poverty, do you look at the problems of immorality, do you look at the problems of unbelief, do you look at the problems in your own life, do you look at the problems in your own psyche, and do you say, “That’s just the way it’s going to be”? Do you realize you’re not treating him as the King?

That’s the reason John Newton says in that beautiful little hymn ...

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.

If you’re disobedient, if you’re not completely relaxed, and if you’re not filled with vision and a hope of what God can do in your life...Because to the degree you give Him a relationship, to the degree you give Him a heart, to the degree you give Him a neighborhood, to the degree you put anything under His lordship – the great Warrior Shepherd - to that degree, there’s healing. That’s how you treat God as a king. *Wait* on the Lord. And if you do, what does it say? He’ll renew your strength.

You know it's interesting, all the commentaries point out a quirky thing about how this chapter ends. It says those that wait on the Lord...what?...they will *soar* on wings of eagles, they will *run* and not grow weary, they will *walk* and not faint – soar, run, walk. But that's not how most of us would have written it. That's backwards. That's anticlimactic. Shouldn't it build...you'll walk, then you'll run, then your *soar*!

But no, Isaiah knew what he was doing. Because after all, walking is the point. The point is endurance. The point is sometimes you'll soar, but you won't always soar, but you will *always* be able to walk. You'll always be able to get through everything. As another beautiful hymn says, not by Newton, but Bono...

And I know it aches

And your heart it breaks

You can only take so much

Walk on

If you can't take another step, if you're not able to endure, if you're not able to get through things...you're not practicing the kingship of Jesus Christ. Either you're not seeing the *doubleness* of his salvation so you really sense how much you're loved, or else your conscience isn't clear, or else your discernment isn't humble, or else your expectations are too small.

Treat Him as a king, and you'll be able to - not always soar - but you'll always be able to walk on because that's the climax.

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.

Let's pray...