

Fear Not

Isaiah 43:1-13

By [Dr. Frank M. Barker, Jr](#)

December 30, 2012 – Morning Sermon

Isaiah 43:1–13 says

[1] But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. [2] When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. [3] For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. [4] Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. [5] Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. [6] I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, [7] everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” [8] Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! [9] All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. [10] “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. [11] I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. [12] I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and I am God. [13] Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?”

All of us face many fears. I think of the fiscal cliff that our nation is facing right now. I think of the economy of the moral landslide we're in. Maybe your fear has to do with your family, your children, your marriage or our health. We have many fears but notice that fears can serve a good purpose. They can make us examine our spiritual roots. What do I really believe? What do I base my beliefs on? They

can cause us to dig deeper into the Word of God to find a solid foundation for our faith in what we believe.

Now notice who is addressed in this passage. Isaiah 43:1a says *[1] But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:* Jacob and Israel are addressed. He is addressing not just the nation but the true believers within the nation of Israel. We are 700 plus B.C. at this point in Isaiah's writing of this. He is addressing true believers today. If you are a true Christian then he is addressing you in these same words. We are his Jacob. We read in Galatians that if you're a Christian you're a descendent of Abraham. Abraham is your father in a sense.

Notice what they are not to do and why. They are not to fear as we see in Isaiah 43:1 which says *[1] But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:* "Fear not... Don't fear anything in a sense. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, having a due respect for God. Fear Him or opposing Him or betting against Him. Come to Him. Surrender your will to Him in true repentance where you are purposing to obey Him although you won't always obey Him but you're earnest about it. Put your faith in Him for forgiveness of sins through the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ, the True Lamb. That's the right fear but other than that don't fear all of these different things that threaten us.

Why not? It is because of their present relationship with God. Isaiah 43:1b says "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." He has redeemed you. In the Old Testament He was speaking of when He primarily brought them out of Egypt. He redeemed them from Egypt. Isaiah prophesies that they're going to go because they are rebelling against God. This wouldn't happen for one hundred years but the nation would go into Babylon, the first group in 606 B.C. Then He would bring them back seventy years later and that would be a redemption too, in a sense. Those Old Testament redemptions from Egypt to Babylon were pointing toward the redemption by Jesus Christ. During the Passover they were delivered from Egypt when the Angel of death went throughout the land and killed the oldest son in the different homes. There is a cry that arises in all these homes at midnight as that happens in Egypt and Pharaoh says they can go. The Israelites had put the blood of the lamb over their door and the Angel of death passed them over. That was the fourteenth day of the seventh month and that was the very day Jesus Christ was going to die on fourteen hundred years later. That was pointing toward the redemption, the deliverance that would come through His death, when He would die for our sins, like someone would pay your fine in court.

So we're redeemed, not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ as with the Lamb without spot or blemish as is said in I Peter. You and I are redeemed if we put our trust in Christ. It's not just that we believe about Him. I believed about Him for years but I wasn't a Christian. There's a difference in

believing about Jesus Christ and believing in Jesus Christ where we put our trust in Him alone as our approach to God. It's not in any good thing I've done. I trust that Christ paid for my sins in full and I surrender my will to Him as Master. When we do that we are redeemed. We are forgiven. We are adopted into God's family. We are legally cleared. We are born again. So don't fear because of your relationship with God. He has redeemed you.

Notice He has also called you. It says in the text that He has called you by name and you're Mine. Why did you come to Christ? If you're trusting in Christ and surrendered your will, why? It is because He called you. In Romans 8 He says whom He predestined before the foundations of the earth, them He also called, whom He called He also justified (legally cleared), whom He justified He glorified. Every one of them are going to go to heaven. That call is what we term an effectual call. It is defined like this in our shorter catechism; effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, let there be Light and renewing our will. That's a heart operation where the Spirit of God breaks the back of our sinful nature and gives us a new nature and comes to live within us. In renewing our will He persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ. You embrace Him with repentance and faith. It is freely offered in the Gospel. He has offered it to us and that call enables us to accept Him. Every true Christian has been called in that way. That's how you became a Christian. He says "I have called you by name, you are Mine." We belong to Him if we're Christians. They belonged to Him back then.

The result of this relationship is in Isaiah 43:2 which says *[2] When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.* If you go through a tough thing I will be with you. Then there are the trials they would go through.

Back in the early days of this country there were American Indians that had a practice when a boy was growing up that at some point the father would take him out into the woods. It would be late afternoon and he would put him in a particular place. The father would say "You're going to learn to have courage here. I'm going to leave you here all night. Here is my knife." There would be beasts around and other animals. He was training the boy to be courageous in a sense. The father would hide himself near enough to the boy to protect him if something really came after him, with his bow and arrow in hand but the boy didn't know it. God says "I will be with you when you pass through the waters." They would not be truly harmed. God says "I'm there. I'm invisible but I'm there and you won't be harmed."

I think about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Daniel's day when they were thrown in the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar. Then Nebuchadnezzar goes to see and sees that they are walking around not even singed by the fire. There

was another one in there walking around like the Son of God with them. They weren't hurt at all. You might be thinking about Stephen who was stoned to death or Herod who cut off John the Baptist head or Isaiah who was sawn asunder apparently. Yes but what happened to Stephen, John and Isaiah? They went to be with the Lord. They weren't really hurt in the sense of true hurt. We can expect those kinds of things to happen to us.

Did your last trial really hurt? Yes, it was very painful. Did it hurt your soul? Come to think of it, I think it really helped my soul. It helped me grow spiritually as I learned to trust God in the middle of that awful pain. That's the way He works in our lives. All things work together for good to them that love the Lord, Romans 8:28. Every true Christian loves the Lord. What's the good? It's not that you'll have an easy time but that my character will be molded according to the character of Christ. It's that I would be made more Christ like. That's the purpose of Him putting us through these kinds of things.

The hymn *How Firm a Foundation* says

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said—
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not harm thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus doth lean for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

That's the truth of the matter if you're a true Christian. You're His. You belong to Him. He is with you when you go through these trials. So the first reason then not to fear is because of their present relationship to God.

The second reason is God's past dealings with them and with you. Isaiah 43:3 says [3] *For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.* It's His past dealings. He had redeemed them from Egypt and nothing stopped Him from

bringing them out. Why did He do it? Isaiah 43:4a says *[4] Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you...* God says that you are precious in My eyes. If that Indian boy had known his father was there with him he would have felt a lot different. We can't see God but He is with you, right there and you are precious in His eyes. Would that make any difference if you knew He was there? If that boy had known his father was there would that have made any difference? Sure it would have. It makes a huge difference.

When my son was little he was afraid of the dark. Whenever we would leave his room at night after putting him to bed he would want us to leave the light on. When I was speaking up in North Carolina at a retreat I took the family with me and my son went off with the kids there. All of the kids learned this song that went like this; *I will trust and not be afraid, I will trust and not be afraid, the Lord on high is watching over me, I will trust and not be afraid.* We returned from that trip and I put my son to bed, left his room and left the light on. I heard "Daddy, come back. Cut the light off." "You want me to cut the light off? Why?" My son said *"I will trust and not be afraid, the Lord on high is watching over me, I will trust and not be afraid."* We want to trust and not be afraid no matter how dark it may seem. Notice what it says in Isaiah 43:4b, *I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.* God had sacrificed nations for them and for us He sacrificed His Son for us and for them.

The third reason not to fear is His promise to gather His people. Isaiah 43:5–6 says *[5] Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. [6] I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth...* He would bring them back from Babylon but He would bring His people from all over the world. John 6:37 says *[37] All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.* Here is this group of people out of mankind that God the Father gave to His Son before He created the world, the elect, they are predestined and they will come. All that the Father has given to Him will come to Him. This is the Father's will that everyone who receives the Son and believes in Him would have eternal life. They will never perish. I will keep them. Here we are at the end of the earth, the other side of the world and we've come, we've been brought to Him. He brought us and He will keep us.

There is the perseverance in gathering in Isaiah 43:6 when He says *[6] I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold;* It is His purpose in creating His people. Isaiah 43:7 says *[7] everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.* He created you for His glory. Why are you here? It is for His glory. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. His glory consists of His attribute, His wisdom, His power, His justice, His holiness, His goodness. It says in Scripture that the heavens declare the glory of God. You can look at the universe and say "What an incredible being

God is!" He commanded this and all this came into existence. He is controlling everything. God is glorious but He's glorified

when men come to see Him as He is, serve Him, love Him and worship Him. Our whole job is to glorify God and lead others in the process of glorifying God. Tell them about the true God who created all this, who is controlling all this and sent His Son. His purpose here is that we might do that so don't fear here. Don't fear because of our present relation to God, because of His past dealings with them and us and because of His promise to gather His people. We see that they are not to fear.

Now what they are to do we see in Isaiah 43:9 which is to challenge to the nations to produce witnesses here. Isaiah 43:9 says *[9] All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true.* Think of God telling the future and any challenges, other religions, other nations saying "Let's see your god tell the future and bring it to pass." No other god can do that but God does it all the time in His Word through His prophets. He tells the future and then brings all the details about where His Son would be born and everything amazingly. So here is a challenge to these false gods and there's nothing that can compare to the true God.

Notice His charge to His people to be His witnesses. Isaiah 43:10–11 says *[10] "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. [11] I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.* That is just like John 14:6 where it says *[6] Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* There is only one approach to the One true God and that's through faith in Jesus Christ and surrendering to Him. That's a hard part of Christianity but that's true Christianity and we are witnesses to this. We are witnesses to what He has done in our lives. Has He done anything in your life? Has He changed your life? Has He called you in such a way that He came and your life is dramatically different than it was? That's the evidence that you have truly been called. I think of the rotten life I lived for years. Then God called me and changed me. What a privilege to go and tell others what He has done in my life and what He will do in their life. That is part of our glorifying God here.

What about us? The call here is not to fear. The New Testament counterpart of what He says here would be in Romans 8 where the Apostle Paul calls for us not to fear. Romans 8:31 says *[31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* There is no reason to fear opposition. If God is for us then who can be against us? Then I think of Psalm 27:1 that says *[1] The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* Then there is the fear of privation

where if I really follow Him it could cost. Romans 8:32 says [32] *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?* If He didn't spare His Son and gave Him for you so that you could be forgiven and changed, won't He give you anything that is really good for you and you really need if He loved you so much as to give His Son? We don't need to fear privation. We don't need to fear opposition.

We don't need to fear rejection. Romans 8:33-34 says [33] *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* God has declared me not guilty so who can declare me guilty? Suppose I get separated from God. Romans 8:35-36 says [35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?* [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are *being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.*" We will go through tough things but He'll keep us so that we'll hang in there, trust Him, obey Him and we don't turn back on Him. What can separate us from the love of God? Nothing can separate us. He is going to keep us. That is His promise there in Romans.

There are tremendous promises as He counters our fears here. We don't have to be afraid and we are to witness to Him. Think of the privilege of going out and telling others about this as His witnesses. Think of the difference it makes. No telling what will happen when you share your faith with someone else.

Years ago there was a young man who grew up in a church here. He got rebellious as a teenager and I got disgusted with him and wrote him off but my wife really cared about him. He was working his way through college at a clothing store in Mountain Brook and she would go buy a handkerchief once a month just to maintain the contact. He knew she cared about him so when he was having girlfriend problems he would call her for counsel. The only problem was he would call at 2am and he'd be drunk. The phone would ring, I'd pick it up and he would say "Mr. Barker this is Tommy (hiccup) let me speak to Mrs. Barker." She would talk to him for an hour at 2am in our double bed. I asked her "When are you going to stop wasting time with that no good bum?" She said "He's going to become a Christian." I said "No he's not." She said "I'm praying for him." I said "That one will not be answered." How is that for a spiritual attitude? That went on for years.

One night the phone rang at 2 a.m. and it was him. He said to my wife "Mrs. Barker I've become a Christian. I don't want you to tell anybody. I want them to see it in my life first. What can I do to reach my campus?" We talked about it and worked on it. He was a genius at organization and made a real impact on campus his senior year. Then he graduated and came on staff at our church to lead our college ministry. Another fellow with him worked real hard at that and they asked me "Where do you suppose most people go to college in Alabama?" I

said "That's easy. It's either Auburn or Alabama." They said "Wrong." I said "Where do they go?" They said "They attend these other residential colleges all over the state like Samford, Troy, Livingston and we've got Campus Crusade and the Navigators at the big schools but there isn't anyone at these smaller colleges. We've learned how to impact the smaller college campuses so we'd like to propose to put staff on all the four year residential colleges in the state." I said "How do you propose to fund that?" They said "We'll help them raise their support and help in other ways."

They drew up a plan to open five new ministries in five colleges in the next five years, presented it to the officers who approved it in principle but they would have to come back each year to see where they were and in five years we were on five campuses. Then in another five years we were on five more and then some students transferred to South Georgia and wanted to do it over there. August Presbyterian jumped on board to help with our staff and their associate pastor moved to Greenville South Carolina and he ended up doing it up there. They franchised up there and now they are on 80 campuses with something like 600 staff. They are meeting this weekend all over the country. We just got back from Nashville where 700 students were meeting for the weekend. Campus

Outreach is on 80 campuses with 11 overseas and that happened when my wife witnessed and prayed for this young man. No telling what the fruit of our witness will be and the privilege we have as we step out.

Don't fear. Trust God. Tackle things. No telling what God will do. We have some training and witnessing coming up starting in a couple of weeks. We do this every semester. Let me challenge you to take that training or train someone else if you have that training. We want to challenge you to get involved in sharing your faith with others. We want to equip you to do that. We want to not fear and trust the Lord.

John White, a Christian Psychiatrist on one occasion put his wife and children on a plane to go to Bolivia and he would join them later. He was driving home after dropping them off and he received this premonition that the plane was going to crash and people would be killed. He was overwhelmed by this, stopped the car and prayed "God, please don't let that happen to the plane, please!" He felt like God said to him "Can't you trust Me?" John answered "Yes if You'll protect them and give them back to Me." God said "And if I don't?" His heart just froze. He answered God "Yes, even then I'll trust You." The plane crashed and everyone on the plane was killed but his wife had the same premonition and got off the plane at a stop just before. They got off at a stop and then the plane took off for the later part of their journey. Her family was safe and everyone else was killed. He trusted the Lord even if... can't we trust the Lord no matter what? That's the challenge. Don't fear. Trust the Lord and go out and share the Good News with others. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Trust in the Lord starts with trusting in the Lord as our Savior and surrendering to Him as our Master. If you have never done that, do it right now. Pray in your heart like this; “Lord Jesus thank You so much for giving Yourself for me. Lord I give myself to You. I trust You as my Savior and I take You as my Lord. Come into my life and make any changes You see fit.” Lord, help us all to witness to You and share You and not fear but to trust You, we ask it in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

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