

Our Identity in the Lord: Isaiah 43

•How does God view His children, that is, all who are redeemed with the blood of His Son?

“But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; you *are* Mine.” *Isaiah 43:1*

•Not only are we part of God’s creation, but also we are each known personally by the Lord, and we are His. Thus our value is not centered in what we do or how we perform, or what the world thinks of us, but rather *who* we belong to. We are of tremendous value because we belong to God, since He has redeemed us (through Christ) and brought us into His family.

“When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” *Isaiah 43:2*

•A promise that no matter what situation or circumstance we encounter in life, the Lord will be with us and protect us from lasting harm. The trials that He allows in our lives are meant to build our faith in Him and show our true character. After all, He is in control of the situation, and He will not let us fall:

“Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” *Matthew 14:22-23*.

•Even though Peter failed the test, the Lord still saved him from harm.

“Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*.’ Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. **27** And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the

smell of fire was not on them.” *Daniel 3, 21-26.*

“For I *am* the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.” *Isaiah 43:3.*

•Sometimes the Lord causes calamity to fall on His enemies for the benefit of his children. The entire Egyptian army ended up at the bottom of the Red Sea, while the children of Israel made off with gifts from the Egyptians. This pattern of substitution is important in God’s plan of salvation for His people. By extension:

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” *2 Corinthians 5:21.*

•Encouragement: God’s view of us should do away with anxiety, self-esteem and self-image problems and focus us instead on the Lord’s grace and mercy:

“Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not, for I am with you.” *Isaiah 43:4*

“The Lord has appeared of old to me, *saying*: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.” *Jeremiah 31:3.*

“I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth—Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” *Isaiah 43:5-7*

•It is clear that the Lord is the One who draws people to Himself. Even the wayward and the prodigals are drawn back to Him and it is the Lord who is the Author of that change in their lives.

“But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*. “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’” And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and

sandals on *his* feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” *Luke 15: 14-24.*

- Now idolaters are called to appear in defence of their idols. Those who make them, and trust in them, are like unto them. They have the shape and faculties of men; but they have no common sense. So too are people today who are insensitive to spiritual things.

“Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified; Or let them hear and say, “*It is truth.*”” *Isaiah 43:8-9.*

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” *I Cor. 2:14*

But God's people, those who worship the true and the living God, know the power of his grace, his comforts, and the truth of his promise. All servants of God can give an account of what he has wrought in them, and done for them. Big God, small me:

“You *are* My witnesses,” says the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I *am* He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, *even* I, *am* the Lord, and besides Me *there is* no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and *there was* no foreign *god* among you; therefore you *are* My witnesses,” says the Lord, “that I *am* God. Indeed before the day *was*, I *am* He; and *there is* no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?” *Isaiah 43:10-13*

- My problems pale in comparison to the awesomeness of God. There is no problem I have that cannot be dealt with by the Lord.

- At this point in history, Assyria was the great world power; however, God speaks of Babylon, which was still a secondary power. He is speaking already of the fall of Babylon before it even arose as a world power

“This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride. I am the Lord, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King.”

This is what the Lord says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my

chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.” *Isaiah 43:14-21*

- We should not dwell nostalgically on what God has done in our lives in the past but rather look forward to what He will do for us today and in the future; our faith in Him as ever present and able to help is the key.

- God speaks of us being chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world, that we might be to the praise of His grace, and bring Him glory. In other words, we didn’t choose God, He chose us:

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved” *Eph 1:4-6*

Nevertheless, Israel (the people of God) turned to false gods, and we replace God with other idols in our life, and labor in vain for them: career, position, wealth, possessions, etc.

“But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob; and you have been weary of Me, O Israel. You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings, nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings, nor wearied you with incense. You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices; but you have burdened Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities.” *Isaiah 43: 22-24.*

- What is it that the Lord requires of us? The call to be authentic and not hypocrites:

“To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. “When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing *them*. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword”; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” *Isaiah 1, 11-20.*

Thank God He has dealt with our sin through Christ Jesus. Our sin has been blotted out, and as far as God is concerned, it never happened. While we may have a problem forgiving ourselves, God doesn't have a problem forgiving us. He forgets only one thing-our sins.

“I, *even I, am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your *case*, that you may be acquitted.” *Isaiah 43:25*