

1. Would you please turn with me to the book of Isaiah chapter 43?
2. We are continuing our series this morning titled "A New Thing".
3. I consider this to be a prophetic word from the Lord concerning what he is in the process of doing, and what he is going to do.
4. Specifically, as it relates to the events going on in our world right now and in the future.
5. The things going on around us are not random. They are not happenstance. They are happening with purpose. The Lord is doing something, and he is accomplishing something. He is doing something new.
6. Isaiah 43:18-19 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 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.
7. While our current events and circumstances may seem like a wilderness or a wasteland, the Lord says to us that he is actually making a way. He is opening a path.
8. In other words, he is not leaving us here in the discomfort, he is purposefully moving us toward something new.
9. So, to help us understand what this new thing is, we went back to the beginning of Isaiah chapter 43 and we started going verse by verse beginning with verse one.
10. Last Sunday we studied verses 4-7, and our subject had to do with the main thing about this new thing.
11. One of the things the Lord is accomplishing through the events going on around us is he is unifying his church. He is unifying believers. He is drawing us together and closer to one another.
12. Not because we all agree on everything or see eye to eye in everything, but because each of us is made in the image of God. All of us have been formed by Him.
13. And the purpose for our formation is to bring glory to the Lord. Specifically, through the drawing of the lost to Christ.
14. One of the ways we bring Glory to the Lord is when we refuse to become sidetracked from the mission for which we have been formed and drawn together.

15. We bring glory to the Lord when we refuse to be sidetracked by the circus show that is our world right now, and instead focus on the purpose for which we were made.
16. Being instruments in the hand of the Lord to save a lost a dying world.
17. So, as we move on this week, we are going to get a glimpse of how that happens. Specifically, how the Lord uses us, his unified church, and unified believers to witness to a lost world.

**TEXT:** **Isaiah 43:8-11** Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf. **9** All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of their gods foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." **10** "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. **11** I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

**TITLE:** **Can I get a witness?**

**INTRO:**

1. I was watching a crime show the other night, and a crime had been committed in a certain neighborhood, but because the people were afraid of the criminal, no one was willing to come forward as a witness to the crime.
2. The witnesses remained hidden. But finally, one brave soul decided they could not longer sit by and see the destruction of their community. So, they stepped up and they stepped out and told the truth about what had happened.
3. Last week I pointed out that in this drawing of people from the north, south, east, and west, that no one gets to sit still. Everyone is moved from where they are to where they need to be.
4. And what all of us as believers have been called to is **we have been called to be witnesses.**
5. Now. I don't know exactly what image or mental picture comes to your mind when I say witness.

6. I don't know for sure what kind of emotional response the idea of being a witness evokes in your heart and mind. Maybe fear. Maybe excitement. Maybe uneasiness.
7. Whatever the case, the Lord is doing something new, and part of that something new is he is calling out witnesses to who he is.
8. And the basis for this something new. The source of this witnessed activity is not something drawn up inside us.
9. Meaning, the strength needed to witness doesn't come from within.
10. And the message we are to witness about doesn't come from within.
11. We are called to be witnesses to what is truly happening in our world around us.
12. So, let's break down a couple of things that were going on in Israel at the time Isaiah spoke this prophecy, and that I believe is occurring in our world today.

### **False God's are being revealed.**

1. Isaiah 43:8 Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf.
2. Every commentary I consulted about this verse was in agreement that what is being referred to here are idols. False gods. Not really God. But something set up in the place of God.
3. And this false god or idol has become the focus of attention and worship. Meaning trust is placed in this false god, rather than trust being placed in the one true God. The Lord Jesus Christ.
4. But in verse number eight, Isaiah reveals something powerful about these false gods.
5. They have eyes but are blind.
6. They have ears but are deaf.
7. In other words, these false God's can't see us as humans, so therefore cannot interact with us.
8. These false God's can't see our problems. They can't see the waters up to the neck, or the river currents pulling at us or the fire that threatens to consume us.
9. These false God's can't see any of that and as a result are useless.

10. Nor can these false God hear our cries for help. These false God's have ears, but they are deaf.
11. And from a practical standpoint it might seem foolish. Who would trust in a god or a thing that couldn't see and couldn't hear, and as a result couldn't help? You would think no one.
12. But the reality is everyone is susceptible to trusting in a god that can't see, or hear, or act on our behalf.
13. There is an element of our sin nature that makes us inclined to do just that.
14. If not kept in check, our sin nature will lead us to trust in things or people that can't satisfy, that don't last, and that can easily be taken.
15. That's why we were warned by Jesus in **Matthew 6:19-20 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. (NLT)**
16. But part of the new thing the Lord is doing is he is revealing or exposing the falsehood of these things.
17. He is allowing circumstances to exist that expose how untrustworthy all of these things really are.
18. Things that we used to trust would exist or be available, often times don't exist or aren't available.
19. I could list hundreds of things but let me point out just one. Toilet paper.
20. Who would have ever imagined that over night there would be a buying frenzy of toilet paper, and that the shelves would be bare?
21. None of us saw that coming. We just trusted that there would be toilet paper available when we needed it.
22. But we are now finding that there are multitudes of things that we can't trust to be there anymore.
23. There are numerous things that we used to consider normal, that are now abnormal.
24. And in response to the absence or taking away of these things we have a choice.

## The choice to trust them anyway.

1. The first choice we have is to continue to believe that those things, whatever they are, are what we really need to be at peace and to be ok, and to fight and claw and clamor after them.
2. Isaiah 43:9 All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of their gods foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true."
3. In spite of the fact that these idols have been exposed in verse number 8 as being blind and deaf, look at how many, will respond.
4. Nations and peoples will gather together, and they will continue to believe and trust in these idols, these things that don't satisfy, or last, or can be easily taken away.
5. They continue to trust in these things, in spite of the fact that if they were trustworthy, they wouldn't be blind and deaf to the truth.
6. So, witnesses come together. And they rally everyone to strive to go back to these former things. These things they used to trust and put hope in.
7. But remember, there is a prerequisite for seeing this new thing happen. Isaiah 43:18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past."
8. If it looks, acts, and feels like it did before it probably isn't new.
9. One of the things the Lord is doing is that he is trying to strip us of all the worthless junk we have been dragging along behind us.
10. Or even worse, worthless junk we have allowed to guide us.
11. With love and compassion, he is trying to draw us to what is real. And what is real is his love for us.
12. What is real is his longing for us.
13. What is real is his desire for intimacy with us.
14. Not blind and deaf but seeing and hearing.
15. So, the choice God gives us, that He is hoping we will make in this new thing is to...

## Be witnesses to the truth.

1. Isaiah 43:10-11 "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. 11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.
2. In order for a witness to be a witness, they have to have seen, heard, or experienced an event.
3. If you haven't seen, heard, or experienced the event, you can't be a witness.
4. The event that the Lord wants us to witness is exposing the falsehood of trusting in idols, or things that cannot help, and instead becoming aware that the only trustworthy being is the Lord God himself.
5. Rather than try and go back to the very things that couldn't rescue us in the first place, it is His desire that we turn to him and know, believe, and understand that there is no other God beside the Lord. (verse 10)
6. That the savior the world is looking for (according to verse 11) is none other than God himself. Apart from Him there is no savior.
7. So, what is it that we are witness to? How might our witness statement sound? It might sound like this.
8. Look around you at all the things that are falling by the wayside.
9. Look around at all the things that no longer can be trusted.
10. I am evidence that the best course of action is not to go searching for them again, but instead turn to the only true source of hope, Jesus Christ.
11. Our message. The thing we have witnessed is found in verse 11.
12. Isaiah 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.
13. The reality is it has taken the loss of things and stuff to remind us that none of those things can be trusted in the first place.
14. During times of peace, and prosperity, and calm, we can become complacent in our passion for the Lord.
15. We can become sidetracked by and begin to trust in stuff that cannot save in the first place.
16. But when those things are removed, when they are no longer able to be trusted, it is then that the Lord God comes shining through.

17. Another of the new things God is doing is he is preparing us and the people around us to see truth.
18. The events of our time are revealing the truth that the things of this earth are blind and deaf. But the God we serve is seeing and hearing, and as a result involved in our lives.
19. I believe the Lord is creating a hunger in humanity for that which satisfies. That which lasts. That which can't be easily taken away.
20. And we must be prepared to step up and be witnesses to the fact that there is only one source of salvation.
21. Isaiah 43:12 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.
22. The table is prepared. The stage is set. The time is ripe for God's people to stand in the gap and offer what every single human being longs for. True relationship with the only true savior. Jesus Christ.
23. But we can't point the way to Jesus if our arms are full of other things. (illustrate) chairs.

#### Conclusion:

1. In using the illustration of running a race, the apostle Paul gives some clear direction for what we are talking about today.
2. Philippians 3:13-14 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
3. There it is again. Forgetting what is behind. Letting go of those blind, deaf gods that cannot save.
4. Being freed of the weights that slow us down.
5. Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.
6. The phrase that keeps consuming me is the phrase strip away.

7. One of the things the Lord has been up to in 2020, and into 2021 is he is trying to strip away everything that leads to death, so that the world can see that he is the life.
8. My question for each of us is this. Are we willing to allow the Lord to strip away everything that is false in our lives?
9. Are we willing to lay down? To cast off. To throw out those things that get tangled around our feet and continually cause us to stumble?
10. It will be pretty difficult for us to be witnesses to the truth, when we are no less bound than the people we witness to.
11. Have people stand. Prayer.
12. Salvation call.
13. Move to a different physical location. Spread out, but move to a different place if you will surrender to what the Lord wants to do.
14. Ask him to strip away the sins that keep entangling you.
15. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to cast off that which weighs you down.
16. Lord God, remove every false god in my life. Remove every blind, deaf thing that cannot save.
17. And instead fill me with your power and your presence.
18. Let me experience once again the greatness of who you are.
19. Help me to know, believe, and understand that you are the only savior.