

1. We are going to continue this morning with our series, "A New Thing."
2. The series is based on Isaiah chapter 43. Turn there with me if you would.
3. 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."
4. I sincerely believe this is a prophetic word from the Lord for each of us. Meaning, it is an uncovering of what the Lord is doing now, and will do in the future.
5. I also believe it is an indication of some of the things God is trying to accomplish in our lives as we transition from 2020 to 2021.
6. How does the craziness of 2020 affect what the Lord desires to do in 2021?
7. To find the answer to those questions, we have to consider this entire chapter as one complete message. So last week we went back to the beginning of the chapter.
8. Isaiah 43:1-3 But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. 3 For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead."
9. From these verses we considered 3 points.
 - **The lost will find their way.** The events of 2020 and the fear they can cause can leave us feeling lost. As if we are wandering. But we are not wandering. The Lord says in verse 1, do not fear. Why should we not fear? Because the Lord who created us, has redeemed us, or has ransomed us from fear, and he calls us by name and declares that we are his.
 - **You will be ok.** We said however that finding our way is not an indication of an easy path. Verse 2 says when you pass through the waters (are in over your head), when you pass through the rivers (the currents of difficulty are pulling against you), and when you walk through the fire (feel like you are being hurt and consumed by difficulty and doubt), God says I will be with you.

- Here is the key. God's promise is not that everything will be ok, or that it will be ok. God's promise is that you will be ok.
- **The Lord will make a way.** Verse 3 is a reminder of times when the Lord was working on their behalf, even when they didn't know what he was up to. Even when you feel surrounded and pressed on every side, the Lord is working for you and he is planning a way of escape.

10. Now, let's continue our study by picking back up on verse 4.

TEXT: **Isaiah 43:4-7** Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. **5** Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. **6** I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- **7** everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

TITLE: **The Main Thing about the New Thing.**

INTRO:

1. I stopped last week with verse number 3, and I am picking up this week with verse number 4.
2. I could have talked about both of those verses together, but I didn't want us to miss the significance of verse 4.
3. Verse 3 says, for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.
4. Remember, we said that both of those were references to events in the Old Testament where it appeared that the nation of Israel was going down in defeat, but instead, God caused the destruction of the nation that was oppressing them. The Lord delivered them.
5. Then in verse 4, the Lord basically says the same thing over again. The Lord repeats what he has just said in the verse before.
6. The reason why I felt it necessary to consider these two verses separately is because of the significance of the message being repeated.

7. Any time in the bible where God repeats something, for example in one verse after another. Or in one chapter or book after another, it is an indication that we need to stop and pay attention.
8. The Lord repeats it because he doesn't want us to miss the significance.
9. Isaiah 43:4 Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.
10. What we have here is another reason why the waters won't drown you. Why the rivers won't carry you away. And why the fire won't destroy you.
11. Part of the reason we can take God at his word is because he says, since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.
12. What we see here is the basis for the new thing God is doing.
13. God is not doing a new thing in us or for us, because there is some outstanding quality about us that compels him to act.
14. God isn't doing a new thing because we are good or worthy or deserving.
15. He is doing this new thing because in His sight, we are precious and honored, and because he loves us.
16. If only we could get behind God's eyes. In other words. See things from God's perspective, it would change how we relate to him, and how we relate to the struggles going on around us.
17. What the Lord offers us is the place of safety. This physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional place where we are safe.
18. And that place is His love. When we are in a love relationship with him, we begin to discover that to God we are precious and honored.
19. And because in His eyes we are precious and honored; the reality sets in that it is not the external circumstances that determines the outcome.
20. It is not the overwhelming waters, or the raging rivers, or the consuming fires that dictate whether we will be ok or not. It is God's love for us and our standing with him, a place of being precious and honored, that dictates the outcome.

21. If we apply that to our lives today, we will discover that it is not the craziness of 2020, or the uncertainty of 2021 that determines our future.
22. Who determines our future is a loving savior who has everything under control and us securely in his hand of protection?
23. Isaiah captured a picture of what this looks like in chapter 59.
24. **Isaiah 59:19** When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. (KJV)
25. The best interpretation I can come up with for this verse is that when our enemy, Satan, comes at us or attacks us like a destructive raging flood, the Spirit of the Lord builds a flood wall between us and the destruction.
26. A flood wall that surrounds us and keeps us safe from all harm.
27. The flood wall of protection that surrounds us is God's answer to the attacks of the enemy that surround us.
28. The enemy may surround us on every side like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord also surrounds us on every side as a barrier and protector.
29. And because of that truth, we don't have to be afraid of all the things going on around us.
30. **Isaiah 43:5** Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
31. Covid-19. Don't be afraid. I am with you.
32. Economic struggle. Don't be afraid. I am with you.
33. Political unrest. Don't be afraid. I am with you.
34. Uncertainty about the future. Don't be afraid. I am with you.
35. The stresses associated with navigating this new thing. Don't be afraid. I am with you.
36. Now, let's move into the meat of the message. The main thing if you will.
37. God's purpose in protecting us and providing for us and promising us security has never been so that we as individual believers, or as the church, could just sit around and feel good about ourselves.
38. The purpose for our protection is so that we can be engaged in the thing that matters most to the Lord. What is that thing?

What is the main thing?

1. The word that I want to use here is the word ingathering. It's a word we don't use very often because we have gotten away from farming words just a little.
2. In farm language an ingathering is a harvest.
3. In spiritual language it means a gathering together of persons. An assembly.
4. Isaiah 43:5-6 I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. 6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--
5. There are two applications I want us to consider.
6. The first one has to do with unity.
7. And the second has to do with the salvation of the lost.
8. From a practical perspective, when God promised the nation of Israel that he would bring your children from the east, and bring the sons from afar and the daughters from the ends of the earth, it was referring to a physical scattering of the nation.
9. Because of their sin, the people of Israel were physically carried off as captives to other nations. They were made slaves, and they were scattered all over the known world at that time.
10. But God says to them, I am going to bring back together, and I am going to unify this disjointed nation back into one.
11. So, another part of the new thing God is doing is that he is unifying believers. He is bringing them back together as one.
12. Do not mistake what I am saying here. We are not talking about unifying planet earth as a whole. This world and the people in it will never be unified until Jesus returns and takes control of the chaos.
13. But until Jesus returns, as believers, as the church, we are called to unity. We are called to be one.
14. Now what do we mean by unity? Does that mean we all think the say way and act the same way? Not at all.
15. What it means is that in spite of our differences, we commit, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to be as one.

16. Meaning, we can't make it without each other. You matter as much as I matter, and I matter as much as you matter.
17. **In unity we refuse to let anything divide us.** How many are still with me?
18. And then the second part of this ingathering has to do with the salvation of the lost.
19. Meaning, people who are cut off from relationship with Jesus will be gathered from their places of sin and separation, and will be joined to the family of God.
20. Both of those aspects are important because in the old way of doing things, neither occurs.
21. In fact, in the old ways it seems almost impossible for unity and salvation to occur.
22. But in the new thing God is up to, it's not only possible, it is probable. It's what God is doing.
23. But notice with me how this ingathering takes place.
24. This ingathering occurs not when we all sit still and expect the other person to come to us.
25. This ingathering occurs when each of us is moved from where we are to the place God is calling us to.
26. **Isaiah 43:5 I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.**
27. Notice with me, in the ingathering God promises, who moves? The answer is everyone moves.
28. The children come from the east, and the parents are gathered from the west.
29. Not, the parents are sitting still, and everyone is brought to them. (illustrate)
30. In order to not miss the new thing God is doing each and every one of us must be willing to be moved by God from where we are to where he wants us to be.
31. In the new thing, nobody gets to say, hey. I'm good right here where I am.
32. This new thing will be characterized by movement. I encourage you go surrender to where and how the Lord wants to move you.

33. And then finally this morning.

Who is the main thing?

1. Why must all of us be moved and be willing to be moved? Because none of us are the main thing.
2. Isaiah 43:7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."
3. In this new thing, you and I are not the center of the universe. The Lord God is the center of the universe.
4. Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.
5. This ingathering only happens when each of us operates in our proper place.
6. Unity only occurs when we believe and live as if I'm not more important than you, and you aren't more important than me. Together we are both important to the Lord.
7. The gathering of the lost only occurs when we don't see ourselves as being better because we have received, and the lost person is worse because they haven't received.
8. In this new thing we all have value because we are called by His name. We have been created for His glory.
9. What allows this ingather to occur is when we are reminded that it is not our political views that bind us.
10. It is not our preferences that bind us.
11. It is not our likes and dislikes that bind us.
12. What binds us is that all of us have been made in the image of God and all of us have value.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord doesn't provide for us and protect us so we can be comfortable in ourselves.
2. He provides and protects so we can be joined to other believers, and so the lost can be joined to the family of God.
3. Stand with me this morning if you will.

4. Can we begin by thanking the Lord for his protection and provision?
5. Next, can we acknowledge the fact that the Lord wants us to be joined to other believers, and he wants unbelievers to be saved and joined to the family of God.
6. Finally, can we acknowledge that the only way that happens is when we are willing to be moved by the lord?
7. Salvation call.
8. Have everyone sit.
9. Pass out communion elements.
10. Normally when I lead in communion, I use a passage of scripture from the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 11.
11. It's a very beautiful description of how Paul lead the Corinthian church.
12. But the purpose of this teaching was because there was disunity in the body of believers.
13. 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!
14. Each member of the church was looking out for themselves. And the result was that there were divisions.
15. If ever there was a time when the world needs to see a unified church it is right now.
16. With everything seemingly being pulled apart, our world needs to see a church and a people who are bound together in love.
17. I want to be that church. I want to be that kind of believer. I want to be that kind of pastor.
18. Do you want that as well?
19. Confess with me. We are more important than I.

20. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
21. Prayer of unity.