



Table Talk

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023

ISAIAH 42:14-21

"They are turned back and utterly put to shame..." Vs. 17



Scripture contains many admonitions that God's people, "Return to the Lord your God" (Dt. 4:30; 2 Chr. 30:9; Joel 2:13; Hos. 14:1; Mal. 3:7; among others). In this soliloquy by the Lord, delivered through the prophet Isaiah, the people learn that they have been turned back (vs. 17). This "turning" is to their shame. It exposes their idolatry and their trust in other gods (vs. 17). The people's true God has done this work of turning in their midst, but the people have been too deaf... too blind... to hear and see this work that their Lord had done (vs. 18-20). Their Lord did all these things in turning them back to himself, not for their sake, but for his righteousness' sake (vs. 21). The Lord accomplished these mighty deeds through his Word (law) for its own glory (vs. 21).

This is no subtle and restrained Word issued by the Lord. He himself compares it to the unrestrained cries of a woman in labor (vs. 14). This Word is as obvious as mountains laid waste and rivers dried up (vs. 15). These mighty acts of his Word make plain that the Lord does not forsake his people (vs. 16) even though they have trusted in idols and claimed other gods. The Lord is a true husband to his people... a jealous husband who will not let them go. He will not forsake them but will assert his claim upon them for his own righteousness' sake. He will be true

to himself, even as his people cannot be true to him.

Such is the Lord who has claimed you in Jesus Christ. He will be true to you even as you are untrue to him. All your idolatry... all your sin... all your pursuit of other gods... all of that will not drive your Lord away from you. He remains your true husband... faithful and true to his bride though she be unfaithful and untrue to him. The Apostle Paul preaches this so eloquently in his letter to the Romans, "...nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (cf. Ro. 8:31-39). Your Lord, your loving, faithful, trustworthy, and jealous husband will not forsake you but in Jesus Christ, his Word Incarnate, turns you back to himself time and again... not because you are righteous but because your Lord is righteous to himself.

Table Talk: Discuss how this "turning" must be the Lord's work.

Pray: Heavenly Father, so use your Word upon me that I would be turned from my idolatry and held fully in your faithfulness. Amen



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For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. 16 And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. 17 They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, "You are our gods."

18 Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! 19 Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the Lord? 20 He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. 21 The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious.



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