

# Pastoral REFLECTIONS

April 30, 2023

## The Free Gift

"A certain atheistic barber was conversing with a minister as they rode through the slums of a large city. The Unbeliever said, "If there is a loving God, how can He permit all this poverty, suffering, and violence amongst these people? Why doesn't He save them from all of this?"

Just then, a disheveled homeless man crossed the street. He was unshaven and filthy, with long scraggly hair hanging down past his neck. The minister pointed to him and said, "You are a barber and claim to be a good one, so why do you allow that man to go unkempt and unshaven?" "Why, why..." The barber stuttered, "he never gave me a chance to fix him up." "Exactly," said the minister. "Men are what they are because they reject God's help."

God has done more. He allows us to hear the gospel on radio and television and has established churches throughout the city. Even though many people listen to Him, they do not accept His free gift.

"In the year 1829, a Philadelphia man named George Wilson robbed the U.S. Mail, killing someone in the process. Wilson was arrested, brought to trial, found guilty, and sentenced to death. Some friends intervened on his behalf and finally obtained a pardon for him from President Andrew Jackson. But, when he was informed of this, George Wilson refused to accept the pardon!

The sheriff was unwilling to enact the sentence – for how could he hang a pardoned man? An appeal was sent to President Jackson. The perplexed President turned to the United States Supreme Court to decide the case. Chief Justice Marshall ruled that a pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends on its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly supposed that a person under the death sentence would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is not a pardon. George Wilson must be hung. So, George Wilson was executed, although his pardon lay on the sheriff's desk. So, too, do some of us reject the gift of salvation by refusing the pardon thereby offered (Quoted from Illustrations for Biblical Preaching by Richard Green).

Christ's death paid the price for all our sins, and His resurrection gives us victory over sin's power. The gift is available for all because all have been pardoned. It is a free gift available to all who accept Christ and what He has provided. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).



## UPCOMING Events



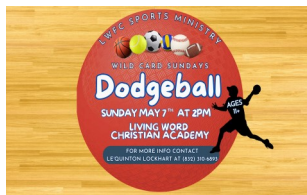
**DEACON FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 30TH 9:30 AM—2:00 PM**  
It's 5th Sunday and we have some extra special surprises for you during our ONE SERVICE at 9:30 a.m. and the Deacon Family Fellowship afterwards in the Legacy Sanctuary. We will have Exalt the King, a saxophonist, brunch, a poet, a comedian and more! Come celebrate with us as a church family. See you there! For more information contact **Keron Brown** [keron.brown@lwffellowshipchurch.org](mailto:keron.brown@lwffellowshipchurch.org)



**WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST**  
Join the Women of Grace Ministry for their BE INTENTIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST Saturday, May 6, 2023 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Register today at <https://bit.ly/WOGPrayerMay2023> or for more information contact **Eleanor Wilson** at [wog77088@gmail.com](mailto:wog77088@gmail.com)



**LWCA SUMMER CAMP—6:00 AM—6:30 PM**  
Skip into summer with the Living Word Christian Academy Summer Camp. We can't wait to grow your child in Christian values, Robotics, Chess, Tennis, Culinary Arts, Arts & Crafts, Academic Enrichment & much more! Pre-Registration Specials Available. Lock-in price is \$85 per week per child ages 5-12. Plus, registration fee is waived if you register by 5/12/2023 online at [www.lwcacademy.org](http://www.lwcacademy.org) or by calling (713) 686-5538.



**WILD CARD SUNDAYS—DODGEBALL**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 7TH AT 2 PM**  
Living Word Family, join the Sports Ministry for Wild Card Sundays to play Dodgeball May 7th at 2:00 p.m. after second service at Living Word Christian Academy. This event is for ages 11+ For More Information contact **La'Quinton Mims** or **Alyson Pryor** at [demondlockhart@gmail.com](mailto:demondlockhart@gmail.com)



**FAITH & FITNESS WALK IN THE PARK**  
**SAT. MAY 13TH AT 9 AM**  
Join the Faith & Fitness Ministry for a Walk at Hermann Park on Saturday, May 13th at 9:00 a.m. All are welcomed, so join us for fellowship, fitness and fun! Register on the events page of our website and for more information contact **Keron Brown** at [keron.brown@lwffellowshipchurch.org](mailto:keron.brown@lwffellowshipchurch.org)



## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

*Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses*

Special Music

"The Unknown"

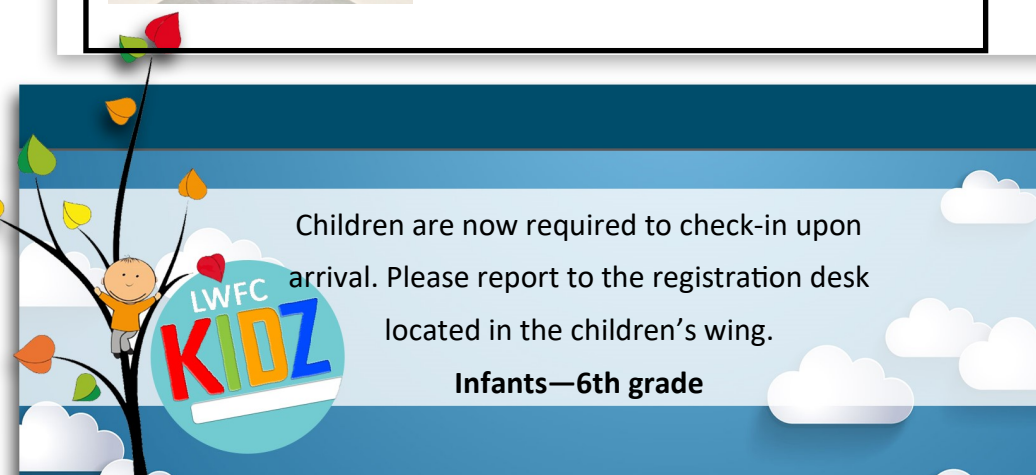
Isaiah 45:8-9

Dr. Pierre Cannings

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship  
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction





The Unknown  
Isaiah 45:8-9

I. From the Unknown v. 1

- a. Cyrus
  - i. Anointed
    - 1. Cyrus would easily conquer other nations (Isa. 45:1b), with God’s help (v. 2), and would receive wealth from the nations he overcame (v. 3). This he did in conquering Lydia and Babylon. All this would be for **the sake of Jacob**, God’s **Chosen** People (see comments on 41:8–9). And even though Cyrus would enjoy a special relationship with God (God called him **by name**; cf. 43:1) and was honored by God, he still was not a believer for he did **not acknowledge** the Lord as the true God.
    - 2. the work of Cyrus is a manifestation of the power of Yahweh, which the whole world can see
    - 3. But for the prophet, Yahweh is the power behind the conquests of Cyrus; he grants Cyrus world supremacy in order that he may restore Israel. We have no record that Cyrus ever recognized Yahweh (vs. 3);
  - ii. Taken Right Hand
    - 1. Subdue Nations
      - a. Besides issuing a decree permitting the captives to return home, **Cyrus** also avenged God’s wrath on the **nations**. Amazingly the Lord called Cyrus **His anointed**. The word “anointed” referred to the relationship Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David, had with God (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:6). Since Israel in exile had no king, Cyrus functioned in a sense as her king (the anointed one) to bring about blessing. Like the Messiah (lit., “the Anointed One”) who would come after him, Cyrus would have a twofold mission: to free the people, and to bring God’s judgment on unbelievers.
    - 2. Loose Loins of Kings
    - 3. In Cyrus’ day the Lord was not universally acknowledged, but eventually He will be (cf. Phil. 2:10–11). People will realize that all that happens-**light** (life), **darkness** (death), **prosperity**, and **disaster** (not “evil” as in the KJV; cf. Amos 3:6)—comes from God. As the sovereign **LORD** of the universe He can **do** everything

II. From the Top v. 8

- a. Drip Down - BDB suggests that rā’ap and nāzal both mean ‘trickle’ or ‘drip’, but more likely both suggest a much more abundant flow of water
  - i. From Above
    - 1. Rather their miraculous and abundant production of rain and crops provides a simile for the imminent miraculous and abundant accomplishment of Yhwh’s purpose by the power of Yhwh’s word (cf 54:9–10, where šālôm also recurs
    - 2. version of the commission to heavenly aides and earthly agents such as Cyrus, who have responsibility to see that Yhwh’s right purpose is put into effect.
- b. Pour Down
  - i. Righteousness
- c. Open Up
  - i. Salvation to Bear Fruit
    - 1. Salvation- saving traditionally right, upright Salvation that comes from God
    - 2. Righteousness to Spring Up
      - a. Only here are the verbs used theologically in connection with right and deliverance.
- d. I have Created It
  - i. God’s desire and will is that the heaven and the clouds should shower down righteousness on the earth like rain, that the earth should “open wide” and produce salvation and righteousness (55:10). This metaphorical expression of God’s desire was intended to encourage the prophet’s audience to trust him. The audience not only knows some details about what God will do to establish his plans (44:24–45:7); they also know God’s deep desires for this plan to be implemented. This fertility lan guage reminds one of God’s plans to bless the land (Deut 28:11–12), which happens when God removes his curse (Deut 28:23–24). But here God is not talking just about material blessing or even the deliverance from some enemy. The full extent of this promise will be seen when God one day establishes a period of salvation and justice on the earth for all humanity to enjoy (2:1–4; 42:1–4). As sure as “I am the Lord,” that is how sure the audience can be that God’s righteousness will invade the world of humanity and creatively transform it into a place of righteousness.

III. Not From You v. 9

- a. Quarrels - to attack someone (with reproaches), dispute with someone
  - i. Maker
    - 1. They proclaim the legitimacy of YHWH’s choice in terms of his sovereign right as Lord to choose how he will fulfill his promises to Israel. Some in Israel thought YHWH should use Israelite armies and an Israelite king
- b. Earthenware
  - i. Vessels of earth
- c. Clay – create , form
  - i. Clay - Is 29:16; 64:8; Jer 18:6; Rom 9:20, 21 material for making vessels
  - ii. Potter
    - 1. What are You Doing
      - a. The unthinkable is happening: clay protests the potter’s intentions; someone protests the parents’ conception of a child. Just as astonishing are the complaints of the exiles, who cannot see YHWH’s redemption in the coming of the Persians (v 13)
- d. Thing
  - i. You have no Hands

Join Us  
Sunday, April 30, 2023  
After ONE SERVICE at 9:30 a.m. Service



*Deacon Family Fellowship*

For More Information Contact Keron Brown at  
keron.brown@lwfellowshipchurch.org

PRAYER REQUESTS

**Grieving:** Cylde Ramsey & family and Cynthia Wattell & family

**Health and Healing:** Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Barbara Gordon, Eric White, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Lakesia Davis, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Kevin Carey, Lori Lee, Nikisha Doyle, Jessie Austin, Patricia Jackson, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clark, Clara Williams, Betty Cunningham, Dorothy Price, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Hattie Boutte, Arleatha Housely, Susie Farley, Patsy Gatterson, and Bobbie Carter.

