

Day 1

Our Redeemer

START WITH HEART

Lord, as You speak please help me listen with my whole heart and Holy Spirit please meet me today and make me more like Jesus.

Isaiah 41: 8 - 10; 13 - 16

8 "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, 9 I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, `You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. 10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

13 For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. 14 Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. 15 "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. 16 You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

When preparing to do this devotional, I wanted to talk about redemption, but I was hesitant because in the past I've spoken on this quite a lot and I thought maybe I should find something different to talk about.

But then I realised the reason why I always go back to redemption is that because over the years God has been working this truth into my heart, deeper and deeper - growing it in my heart. And I find that He has done this particularly when I've gone through my toughest times, firstly using it as an anchor in my life to help me hold on (if you think about it, it makes sense that God will always bring us back to the fundamental, simple, and yet deeply profound truths of the gospel) and, secondly, using it as a crown on my head to lift me up out of the situation I'm in and remind me of who I am in Him.

So let's take a look at redemption.

The word “redemption” means to gain or regain something in exchange for a price. In the Bible, in Israel, a redeemer was usually a family member who could act as a deliverer or a protector, or an avenger who was able to secure one's future - for example, obtain freedom for someone or secure their inheritance.

For us, redemption refers to our salvation and the price that Jesus paid for us. But it paints a much more personal and intimate picture of our salvation. We see *someone* coming in to save us, to protect us and rescue us, as opposed to some sort of cosmic business transaction. The book of Isaiah, especially from chapter 40 onwards, depicts this in detail and gives us a beautiful narrative and illustration which is rich in hope - speaking of new beginnings and of our rescue.

In the scripture above (Isaiah 41), God is describing how He is going to redeem Jacob (the nation of Israel). This particular passage has encouraged me many times in the past when I've been at my lowest points. I can really relate to how Jacob felt. The scripture says, “Oh worm, Jacob... oh little Israel.” Have you ever felt as low as a worm, or felt this dismayed or afraid or completely helpless?

I like the way this passage refers to emotions and our thoughts. It refers to fear, to weakness, to rejection, to insignificance or low self worth. This is important because our thoughts and emotions play a large role in how we see and feel about ourselves - in other words, our mental health - and also how we interact with the world. That's how God made us! **But it's important to note that while our emotions can determine how we experience life, they do not determine who God is.** He is unchanging! When He deals with us, God includes our emotions and thoughts, and He speaks to them! He doesn't brush them aside as if they're not important. He cares about them and He ministers to us right where we're at - at our lowest.

In this passage we can see that He speaks to our thoughts and emotions. He says: "Do not fear, do not dismay, do not be afraid," and He acknowledges that Jacob was seen to be as low as a worm. He tells us about who He is: that He is our God, and that He is the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. And He also tells us how He is going to help us and rescue us and restore us. He tells us about how we are His servants, His chosen ones, and He is committed to helping us. He says it so many times: I'm with you; I will help you; do not be afraid. He tells us how He is going to strengthen and uphold us and give us a purpose. Jacob was trampled by the other nations of the world but became an overcomer. God will do the same for us.

Isaiah 42 says, "*A bruised reed He will not break and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out.*" When all seems hopeless and lost, it isn't. Christ has paid the price for us. He is our redeemer and we are never beyond His love. Even when things seem difficult, whether in certain circumstances or whether we're bogged down by anxiety and depression, take heart for this is not the end of your story! Have hope for what Christ is yet to do in your life.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS:

1. Do I see God as my redeemer? As my rescuer and saviour? If not, ask him to show Himself to you in this way.

2. How do I see my self-worth? Does it align with how God sees me or are there some areas that need to change? Try making a note of these and taking them to the Lord in prayer.
3. Is there someone that I can reach out to for prayer when I'm going through a tough time?

Dear Lord.

Thank you for your deep, unconditional and redeeming love for me. Thank you for the price that You paid for me by dying on the cross.

I pray that, whatever is going on in my life, that I would be able to look to You and trust in You, and to see myself the way that You see me.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

WORSHIP SONGS:

Nkosi Yezulu, by We Will Worship:

<https://youtu.be/cSurviOO55Y>

Lyrics: <https://kasilyrics.co.za/will-worship-nkosi-yezulu-king-heavens-lyrics/>

O Come to the Altar, by Elevation Worship:

https://youtu.be/rYQ5yXCc_CA

by Shannon Strydom