

Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 16, Isa. 32-33

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 16, Isaiah chapters 32 and 33.

I think it's time to begin. I have told you before that I had two sisters who were older than I, so I did not have one mother, I had three, and I'm glad to say that one of my sisters is here tonight. Marvel, hold up your hand. Let's pray together.

We thank you Lord that you have chosen to put us together in families. We thank you that you have made us male and female so that we find ourselves in another who is different from us. Thank you that it is in that context that you decreed that children should come into the world. Thank you Lord. Thank you for parents and children, grandparents, and grandchildren. Thank you for the realities that we discover who we are in relationships.

Thank you. Thank you that you have revealed yourself to us as our Father. For some of us the father we never knew, for some of us the father who is the model of the father we did not have, but thank you Lord.

Thank you that you do not come to us as the tyrant or the boss or the supervisor, but that you come to us as our father. And so, this evening Lord we come to you as your children. We come to your feet and ask you to teach us.

Teach us the truth that you have caused to be enshrined in your word. Help us to understand some of the wonder of what is there by the power of your spirit oh Lord. Transform us.

You promised that when we come to your word in faith your spirit will inspire it to our hearts. And that's our prayer. In your name, we pray. Amen.

We are looking at the book of Isaiah in case this happens to be your first night with us. And we are working our way through it slowly.

Tonight we are looking at chapters 32 and 33. They are part of a unit that I have labeled Woe to those who will not wait. And that is chapters 28 to 33.

Woe to those who will not wait. And we talked last time, especially about God's call to his people to wait for him to solve their problems. Wait for him to defeat their enemies.

Wait for him to accomplish what they needed to have accomplished. And the people's refusal to do that. This is in the larger section you remember which we have labeled Lessons in Trust.

Lessons in Trust. This entire part of the book from chapter 7 to chapter 39 is about trusting God. We have talked about that as the basis for servanthood.

We suggested that in chapter 6 we have the model that if the nation of unclean lips could meet God in the same way that the man of unclean lips met God then the nation would be able to serve him. But the foundational need is for the kind of vision of God that would convince them that God is so great, he is so powerful, he is so loving that he can be trusted with your life. And so we have been looking at the ways in which that lesson is taught to us here.

In chapters 28 to 33, presumably, this material is to be dated somewhere in the neighborhood of 710 to 705 BC. Isaiah had promised, he had predicted that the Assyria that they had trusted in place of God would one day turn on them and that has happened. The northern kingdom of Israel is gone.

All that remains is the little circumscribed country of Judah. The Assyrian army is campaigning down from your perspective down on the Philistine coast. Southeast of Judah already on their way toward Egypt.

And the question is what are we going to do? And as we have seen, as we have looked at these chapters, the leadership has been reaching the decision that we have to trust whom? Egypt, that's right. Our only hope is to make an alliance with Egypt and they can give us horses, they can give us chariots, they can give us the instruments of war and we'll survive. And Isaiah's word is these leaders, like the leaders of Samaria 30 years ago, are drunk and blind and deaf and they are leading you into disaster.

You should wait for the Lord. We've seen what I think is a kind of a focusing in these woes. You start out with a fairly general description of the leaders of Samaria and of Jerusalem, but then you become more and more specific until we saw last time in chapter 31, verse 1. There it is, bottom line.

Okay, as this evening then, we've seen how each chapter has begun with woe. What does chapter 32 not begin with? Woe. Here it is, the one chapter that doesn't have that.

But I ask you to take a look back into chapter 30, verse 27, and see the word that begins that verse. Behold, look, just as chapter 32 begins with the same thing. When you count verses, chapter 30 has 33 verses, chapter 31 has 9, and chapter 32 has 20.

So, in fact, in those two chapters, 31 and 32, it's the same length as chapter 31. So I suspect that in fact, the chapter division is inappropriate, that we ought to simply continue the message that begins with woe and behold in chapter 30. And then the same way, woe and behold in chapters 31 and 32.

So that in a real sense, this message here in chapter 32 is a continuation of the larger thought that goes there beginning in chapter 31. Okay, so here in chapter 32, what is the promise? Is it positive or is it negative? It's positive, isn't it? Yes, it's positive. We've seen, I've asked you to look for this changing proportion.

In chapter 28, the majority is negative, small proportion is positive. That proportion steadily changes as we go through and we come here in 32 and 33 to a dominance of positive kinds of things that are said. I ask you to sum up in one sentence, verses 1 to 8. Does anybody do that? The Lord is all-powerful, creator, redeemer, trust in the Lord.

Okay, good. What kind of a kingdom is talked about here? A kingdom where what happens? The king will rule in righteousness. Not like these drunken, blind leaders who are leading you to Egypt.

And what will be the result in verses 3 and 4? Their eyes will be open, their ears will be open, the heart of the hasty will understand and know, the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak distinctly. So, instead of the blindness and the deafness that these human leaders have promoted now in this kingdom to come, there will be insight, there will be wisdom, there will be understanding. Now, there's a contrast between in verses 5 and 6 and 7 and 8. Who is talked about, especially in 5, 6 and 7? The fool and the scoundrel.

But what's going to be the characteristic of this kingdom, verse 8? Trustworthiness, nobility. The Hebrew word there has the idea of openness. A noble person is one who is open.

So, here's the difference. These human leaders that you've been trusting and the product of their rule versus the king. The king who reigns in righteousness, whose princes rule in justice.

So, it's the promise of another kind of kingdom, isn't it? I've said to you before that fool is one of the strong negative words in the Old Testament. Now, fool is used to translate two or three different Hebrew words. This is not the worst one, but this is sort of the medium one.

This is the second level. This is the person who simply is the stumbler. He falls over everything.

And stumblers will not be called noble anymore. Scoundrels, and crooks won't be said to be honorable anymore. Say that in Washington.

Anyway, this will be a kingdom of light, of peace, of insight, of nobility. The person will not stumble because indeed the transparency of the Lord's rule will make everything light and bright. Yes? They will be transformed.

Yes, yes, yes. Transformation is a part of this kingdom. You've all heard the line, but I remind you of it.

The good thing about telling the truth is you don't have to remember what you said the last time. Here again is this transparency that comes from His righteousness being written on our hearts and we then can be who we are and not live in fear. So this is the kingdom that is coming.

Now, what's the literary relationship between verses 1-8 and verses 9-14? Okay, past and future, that's a time relationship. What about a literary relationship? Contrast. Yes, contrast.

And what is being contrasted? Now, I'm giving you a little bit of inductive Bible study method here. When you make an observation like that, you ask questions, three questions. So, we've observed there's a contrast here, so we want to ask, what is contrasted? Then we want to ask, why are those contrasted? And finally, what are the implications of this contrast? So first of all, what is it that's actually being contrasted in the two stanzas? What's the subject of the first stanza? The new kingdom is characterized by transparency, by nobility, by righteousness.

What is the subject of that second stanza, verses 9-14? It's judgment, yes? Complacency. Complacency. So, the nobility of the new kingdom is contrasted with complacency.

Now, here comes the next question. Why is that contrast being put forward here? Okay, if you don't live up to the standards, you're going to fall back into the old ways. Alright, complacency means I can do it, I don't have to worry about it.

What is there in verses 1-8 that might inspire complacency? The promises. Remember, we've talked about this before, we'll talk about it again. It is typical of Isaiah.

Whenever he gives good promises for the future, what's he going to do? He's going to remind us not to take that for granted. Oh good, everything's going to be fine. I can just live my sloppy, empty life and everything will be fine.

There's a whole lot of North American evangelicalism in that. I mean, we've read the end of the book. We know how the book ends.

We win! Yes, but on the other side of what? So, the contrast between the promise of the coming kingdom and the present tendency to be complacent over God's good promises. I don't have to allow God to deal with my sloppy, messy life. I don't have to allow God to bring me under conviction for what's happening in my life.

Because everything's going to be fine in the end. Now, I assume that not many of us here would believe the doctrine of eternal security. But, it's pretty easy for us who have been Christians a long time to assume that everything's going to run just like it always has and everything's going to work out fine in the end.

I remember one of my friends, we were having a discussion about the millennium. Are you a pre-millennialist or a post-millennialist or an amillennialist? He said, well, I think I'm sort of a pan-millennialist. Everything's going to pan out all right in the end.

Why does he say they shouldn't be complacent? What's the imagery that he uses there in verse 10 especially? What's going to happen? Things are going to fall apart. A lack of fruitfulness. The grape harvest is going to fail.

Here you are in the spring of the year. You're looking at the vines. Oh my, look at all those big grapes.

Look at the wonderful clusters. Everything's going to be fine, isn't it? Yeah, except for that drought that's coming. Now, the question is, should we take verse 10 as literal or not? And the answer is found in verses 12 and 13.

What kind of a grape harvest are we talking about? Literal or figurative? What does verse 13 say? The soil of what? Of my people. Yes, yes. We're not talking about the soil of the land.

We're talking about the soil of the people. And that soil is growing up in thorns and briars. The pleasant fields are the fields of the people.

And again, we can look at ourselves, our own lives. We can look at the church and we can say, what about the grape harvest? Yes, I think it's metaphorical. It's both figurative and literal.

And so, what's going to be the result in verse 14? Desolation. The palace is forsaken. The populous city is deserted.

The hill and the watchtower will become dens forever. A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of law. Isaiah likes that coupling in verse 13 of thorns and briars.

When he talks about the land being desolate, he talks about the thorns and the briars growing up and taking over the country. That's certainly literally true in that part of the world. It grows thorns very, very well.

But you have to work to grow other stuff. Well, I don't know about you, but that's a pretty good metaphor for life. All you have to do is just let things go and thorns and briars, there they are.

I've always liked the story that is told of Coleridge. He was being visited by a friend who was at least an agnostic. And the agnostic was saying, oh, you know, it's just awful that we try to make our children believers.

We just ought to let them grow naturally and whatever comes into their lives, that'll be fine. Coleridge said, oh, really? Okay, that's very interesting. The fellow said, oh, before I go, Coleridge said, well, you know, this year I decided just to let come up whatever would come up.

The fellow said, oh, you have to cultivate the flowers, don't you? You have to fight to get the good stuff to come up. If you don't, the bad stuff is going to come up by itself. Thorns and briars are painful.

Yes, yes, yes. Yes, they exact their own price. Okay, so we've had that contrast.

I'd suggest to you that the implications are just what I've been talking about. Shall we cultivate nobility, faithfulness, righteousness, and justice, or shall we just be complacent? Hey, it's all going to work out and everything will be fine. If we do, we've chosen to grow thorns and briars.

So what's the contrast between the promised kingdom and present complacency? Why that contrast? Because it's so easy to take promises for granted and assume that we don't have any responsibility in it. What are the implications? That's very simple, but it's a very standard procedure. You see something, you ask what, why, what.

All right, let's push on. How long is this condition of barrenness and thorns and briars going to persist? Verse 15. Until the Holy Spirit is poured out.

Yes, yes. And when he is poured out, what's going to happen? Verse 15. The desert becomes a fertile field and the fertile field becomes a forest.

So again, we're working with this figurative, literal language. We're talking about, yes, when the land is re-inhabited by faithful people, then indeed its produce will be

given. But we're also talking about the people who have grown up in thorns and briars and now they have become a fruitful field, indeed a forest.

I find this chapter very interesting because I think that it is something of a parable of the Christian life. I think that in some ways, chapters of verses one through eight refer to conversion. There's a new ruler in our lives.

Some good results have happened. But how easy it is to slip back into a life of complacency. Well, I've been born again.

There's going to be a good harvest in the end. Everything's going to be fine. And the passion that we once knew is gone.

Until the Holy Spirit comes. And then, in sanctification, He comes to do for us what we have been unable to do. And I particularly want you to notice what the results of the Holy Spirit's work in life are going to be.

Verses 16 and 17, well, really 16, 17, 18. What's going to happen when the Holy Spirit is poured out? Righteousness, justice, peace, and quiet trust. Well, wait a minute.

There's nothing about speaking in tongues here. There's nothing about raising the dead. There's nothing about healing people.

There's nothing about deliverance from demons. That's what the Holy Spirit does, isn't it? Well, the answer to that question is yes. The Holy Spirit does do those things.

The New Testament is clear enough. But I'm asking you on the basis of this, what is the Holy Spirit's primary work? Fruit. Fruit.

All of us have heard this, but I want to remind you of it. The difference between fruit and gifts. Fruit refers to character.

Gifts refer to utility, and usefulness. The work of the Holy Spirit above everything else is to reproduce in us the character of God. Now, I do not want to suggest to you that people who emphasize the gifts are not believers, that they're not biblical.

I'm not saying that. I thank God for some of my charismatic Pentecostal friends in whom God does some rather remarkable things. But I simply want to say that if we think that is the primary work of the Holy Spirit, we've missed the point.

I want to, on that note, I want to call your attention to Ezekiel chapter 36. We've looked at this chapter before and we'll probably look at it again because it's so significant. God says that the exiles, by making him appear helpless, have profaned his name.

So, God says, I'm going to have to sanctify my name in you so that the nations will know that I'm the Holy God. How am I going to do that? He says, well, number one, I'm going to take you home, deliver you from the consequences of your sin. Number two, I'm going to cleanse you from your idolatry.

Number three, I'm going to break that heart of stone in you and give you a heart of flesh. Number four, I'm going to pour out my spirit. Verse 27.

I will put my spirit within you and cause you to jump 30 feet straight up and yell glory. That's what your Bible says. It's not what mine says.

I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my commandments. That's what they couldn't do. They knew that God's commandments were good.

They just couldn't do it. God says, I understand. And now that you understand, I've got something for you.

No. In my experience, I see a marked difference in that gifts can be counterfeited and can be used, in fact, for evil purposes because of their utilitarian aspect. Whereas fruit cannot be because of the attributes of the Lord.

Fruit cannot be counterfeited. Yes. Yes.

Good point. Yes. I wanted to ask, why do you think he uses women here? Is it figurative, literal, or both? Do you think it'll rain? You don't have to.

No. I have to say I do not know the answer. I think, though, that one of the reasons, and I'll say this very cautiously, but I think women are more spiritually sensitive for good and for ill.

We men, we just sort of go lumping along. What's the next thing to do? But women, I believe, and you women can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that women are more spiritually sensitive and therefore more in danger of going off the rails spiritually. I want you to know, too, that was Ellen's question.

We have a very comfortable doghouse. I just got out of it. You're in it.

Was that both of your questions? I think I better quit. But it's a good question. Remember that back in Chapter 3, it's the daughters of Jerusalem who are dressed up in all the finery, and he says the day is coming when you're going to be stripped of all that.

So, yes. Okay. Yes. Yeah. Yes. Oh.

Or life isn't quite as good as it should be. The palace is forsaken, and the populous city deserted. Yeah, that's what, yeah.

So, it sounds like there's a kind of a passive nature instead of an aggressive seeking for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. It's just kind of, well, we need to clean up, but that's... I think you're right. You know, we can't build an entire doctrine on one chapter, but I think your point is correct.

Well, God has done his work in me, so I can just sort of sit back and wait till the bus comes and I go to heaven. And I think this is saying, you do that, you're going to have some thorns and briars growing up, and again, this is old news, but someone has said it, and I think it's right. In the Christian life, you are moving.

You're either going forward or backward. There isn't any stable Christian life where nothing's happening. Forward or back.

And I think that's what he's dealing with here. They're complacent because, hey, good news is promised, and in fact, they're sliding backwards. Good, yeah, yeah.

Good point. Either maturing or remaining immature, I would say you're getting more immature. Yeah, yeah.

Yes, yes, yes. It's like being in the break between ninth grade and tenth grade. You know, summer, is not everything you can do.

Yep. Yep, you have to spend the first month picking up from last year. Isn't the pouring out of the Holy Spirit here to mean a new relationship? Oh, certainly, certainly.

Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes. This is, and some of you have read My Call to Be Holy, and you know I make a considerable point of this, that the Old Testament, the covenant was given for three reasons.

One, to show us what God's character is. Two, to show us the character he wants for us human beings. And three, to show us we can't do it.

So the Old Testament is this people sort of scratching their heads and saying, I don't get it. The covenant is good. There's nothing bizarre or strange or destructive here.

But we can't seem to keep it. There's something in us that's hostile to us. God, what are we going to do? And God says, I'm glad you asked.

I'm planning to send my spirit upon all flesh to enable you to live that life. I really like what F.B. Meyer says in one of his daily homilies. He says the spirit was meant to be fulfilled.

Excuse me, the covenant was meant to be fulfilled. First, in Christ, for us, and then by the Holy Spirit, through us. I like that.

I like that. Until Christ has come and cleansed the temple, forget it. The Holy Spirit can't come into a filthy temple.

On the other hand, the cleansing of the temple is preparatory to God, in his spirit, moving in. So, a great chapter. Yes? How do you juxtapose that with just culpability? You know, the fact that it can't be done there forward.

From the guilt. Okay, you mean the guilt of this level here. Right.

I mean, are we still culpable for the commandments that you know we can't do? Sure, sure. As far as God is concerned, they are going to be fulfilled. And if I say, well, I can't do it.

God says that's too bad. It's very much like laws in the society. It doesn't matter whether I can do it or not.

It doesn't matter whether I know I'm supposed to do it or not. If I don't do it, I'm liable. Yeah, yeah.

Okay, let's move on to 33. Now, here comes our last woe. As I comment in the background, there's some question about who the destroyer or the betrayer is here.

Some people think it is Assyria. You know, God is saying, people are rushing around trying to take care of your problems because Assyria is threatening you. And I want to tell you, Assyria is under judgment.

That's certainly possible. I'm a little more inclined to think that it's a reference to Egypt. Because Egypt did indeed betray Judah.

They made a little sally out with the army. And as soon as the Assyrians looked cross-eyed at them, they ran away. So it is, I think, saying, woe to the one whom your advisors and leaders have taught you to trust in.

God will meet them and will deal with them. So then, verses two, three, and four. What is that different from what we saw last week in chapter 30? God will deliver.

What did the people say last week in chapter 30? You remember? We don't need you. We don't need you. God says, in returning and rest shall be your salvation.

And they said what? A one-syllable, two-letter word beginning with N. No! Look back at it. Chapter 30, verse 15. Thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest you will be saved.

In quietness and trust shall be your strength. But you were unwilling and you said, no, we will flee on horses. Therefore, you will flee.

We'll ride on Swiss steeds. We'll flee at the threat of one. At the threat of five you shall flee till you're left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.

Therefore, the Lord waits to be gracious. What did the people say here in verse two? We will wait because we know you are gracious. The Lord waits to be gracious.

At least in the mouth of Isaiah, they've learned the lesson. Oh Lord, how gracious is your grace. That's the lesson Jacob had learned at Peniel.

All these other blessings are worthless unless I have the grace of your blessing. Oh Lord, be gracious to us. We wait for you.

Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of stress. Oh, how we Americans need that verse every morning to the challenge of the to-do list. And as far as I'm concerned this is one of the great values of morning devotions.

You are waiting on the Lord. You are allowing him to prioritize your day. Allowing him to organize your time.

Oh, I don't have enough time to do that. I've got a class with Oswald at eight o'clock. He's giving a test.

So then verse three when do the people flee? When he raises himself up. Or this one says when you lift yourself up. Now look at verse five.

What's the opening phrase there? The Lord is exalted. Yes, yes. Look down at verse ten.

Now I will arise says the Lord. Now I'll lift myself up. Now I'll be exalted.

Kind of a summary statement of what's gone before. Now let me ask you how is exalting the Lord the answer to the problems of life that we all face? All right, he has the answers. By exalting him we remind ourselves of that.

It shows our trust in him. We're admitting we can't do it. Okay, yes, yes.

What is the most important thing? Me accomplishing my goals. If we seek his will we might just find it. What else? We remember that he's still in charge.

Yes, yes. It pleases God, yes. Yes.

It reminds us that he is sovereign. Humility. It puts things in their proper perspective.

He created us to need him. And if you exalt the Lord what aren't you exalting? Yourself. Yes.

This is the theme that we, one of the themes we've seen running through the book. What's the choice? Will we exalt human ability, human wisdom, and human beauty? If we do we have condemned ourselves to humiliation because the grave laughs at all of those. But if we exalt the Lord he then says Child, what are you doing down there in the dust? Come up here and sit on the throne with me.

So this last chapter is about the Lord's exaltation. And if we look over at verse 22 there are three nouns used there of God. What are they? The judge, the lawgiver, and the king.

Now we've talked about judging a good deal. Let me see if I've taught you anything. Is this primarily a legal officer? Good.

Good. Good. Write those people's names down in the Lamb's Book of Life.

All right. What is it? The teacher. The restorer of order.

The restorer of order. All right. Go to the head of the class.

This is the one who brings the world, the cosmos into the order that he designed for it. That involves legal equity. No question about that.

He designed that for his cosmos. But it's more than that. The judge is coming.

Thank God. Lawgiver. What are the implications of that title? Instruction.

Instruction. Very good. Why does he have a right to do that? The creator.

The creator. He has the right to say, here's the way you were made to operate. Operate in this way and it'll work.

Operate in any other way and it won't work. It's amazing. To keep the order.

Yes. Yes. The Torah, the instruction manual, tells us what the order was supposed to be and if we'll follow it, we'll experience that.

And then he is the king. He is the one who puts it all together and holds it in its proper relationship. As opposed to those guys who were filling the tables with vomit.

Back there in chapter 28, we have this one. Okay. Let's go back now.

Look at verses 7, 8, and 9. Major theme here in this chapter is positive. What about those verses? They're negative. Strong contrast to verses 5 and 6 and again to verses 10, 11, and following.

Why is the contrast here? Repetition is the best teacher, yes? The verses on either side point to the exaltation of the Lord. What do these verses point to? They didn't obey. They didn't obey.

They didn't obey. What happens when the Lord is not exalted? Their heroes weep in the street. The peace envoys weep bitterly.

Highways lie waste. The traveler ceases. Covenants are broken.

Cities are despised. There's no regard for man. Isn't that interesting? Exalt man and there's no regard for man.

Exalt the Lord and there is. Yes? I think it is Egypt. I think that's what we're talking about.

The betrayer. The land mourns and languishes. Lebanon, great forested area, is confounded and withers away.

Sharon, rich, rich coastal plain there right under Mount Carmel where it gets a good deal of rain like a desert. Bashan, which is the heights of Golan over on the other side of the Jericho of the Jordan Valley in the north. Again, very lush.

Carmel. So, there it is. Take your choice.

And we're going to see a lot more of that next week. Okay. So.

Is the Lord arising necessarily universal good news? That's right. That's right. Verse 11, you conceive chaff.

You give birth to stubble. Your ruach. Remember, there is one word that means wind, breath, spirit, and spirit.

The same Hebrew word for every one of those. The word is ruach. It's that one again where you have to clear your throat on the last consonant.

Ruach. So, your spirit is a fire that will consume you. I don't think we have to look very far in our society to see that happening.

The unaided human spirit. So, famous verse, verse 14. Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burning? It's always been one of my favorite pictures.

God, the blast furnace. Throwing open his doors and inviting the bale of hay to come on in. That's what it is.

That's what it is. And so, on the last day, when unconverted people are in heaven, and God says, you can come right into my life if you'd like. And they say, are you crazy? What? We can't live in fire like that.

Let us out of this awful place called heaven. You have this picture of a mean God. And somebody says, oh, now I see it.

Now I see it. Heaven is really lovely. And I'm sorry for all that stuff I did back there.

And I'd like to live in heaven. And God says, no. You had a chance, you go to hell.

We have a picture of God like that. That's a slander. God doesn't send people to hell.

He lets them have their choices. Who among us can dwell in the everlasting burning? Only, only if you're covered in the blood. But now look.

Look at verses 15. Look at verse 15. What's the answer? Who can dwell in the eternal burnings? What's the answer that's given there? He who walks righteously, speaks uprightly, despises the gain of oppression, shakes his hand lest they hold a bride, stops his ears from hearing bloodshed, shuts his eyes from looking on evil.

That's salvation by works, isn't it? Isn't that what it says? You can live with the eternal burning if you live a righteous life. Lots of good Methodists believe that. But it's the spirit who brings righteousness.

But it's the spirit who brings righteousness. Yes, yes. That's exactly it.

The truth is my righteousness is like a bloody rag because it's mine. So that if I, in my own strength, say I'm one of the most righteous people I know, I've never oppressed anybody, I've never ever taken a bribe, especially from students who won an A, I will

have nothing to do with bloodshed and all the stuff that's involved there. I don't watch TV.

God says, that's nice. I'm glad for you. Hope you enjoy it.

So, there's a vast difference between righteousness and righteousness. Paul gets it in Philippians, and I'm just about done with the sermon here. Paul gets it in Philippians.

He says I don't want the righteousness that I have produced. I want the righteousness that faith produces. Now, the untutored observer might look at the two of them and say, there's no difference between them.

But in fact, there's all the difference of heaven and hell. Why am I living this righteous life? Because I love the Lord Jesus who died for me and has come to take up residence in me by his spirit. I'm going to prove to you people that I'm one of the best people that ever lived on this earth.

The difference between heaven and hell. That's the rich young ruler's problem. That was the Pharisees' problem.

The Pharisees were righteous people. They really were. In anybody's book.

Again, you listen to Paul's own listing of his achievements there in Philippians. He was a good man. For himself.

For himself. And he says, the day that I came to realize all of that was so much dung in a dunghill was the best day of my life. Oh, so Paul, now since Jesus has come, you can live like hell.

Paul says, where did you get a dumb idea like that? No, no, no. Now I can live a righteous life for him. Okay.

Next week, we wrap this section up. The lessons in trust. We wrap up with chapters 34 and 35.

Let's pray. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you've come. Thank you that you've come to lay down your life for us. Thank you that you have risen again, that we might live again. Thank you that because you have cleansed your temple, the Holy Spirit can come home. Oh, Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit of God, live your life through us.

Make us a righteous people. As righteous as any that have ever lived. But let us do it for love's sake. Let us do it out of gratitude. Let us do it as a song of your spirit resonating through our lives. Thank you. In your name. Amen.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 16, Isaiah chapters 32 and 33.