BREAKING FREE
UPDATED EDITION

The Journey, The Stories

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Introductory Session

Isaiah 61:1-3 shapes the heart of our study and states the gracious intent of our God. Before we take this process forward, we’ll trace it backward and capture a fascinating parallel for freedom drawn in Isaiah 9:4.

Turn to Judges 6:1-6. A few things we need to know about yokes and how they can be shattered based on the example of “________ ________:”

1. The blessed ________ ____ _____ can live under _______  ____________.
   The goal of the oppressor is to make us …

   • Unproductive (vv. 3-4)—Hebrew shahat: _______ _______ _______ _______. In the KJV terminology, the oppressors destroyed the increase.
     (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance.)

   • Impoverished (v. 6)—Hebrew dalal: “bring _______ _______ _______ _______. be _______ _______ _______. not be _______ _______ _______, be impoverished.”
     (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)

2. If we don’t seek _______ ________, we will seek _______ _______ (v. 2 and glance ahead to v. 11).

   Consider a little history on the relationship between the Israelites and the Midianites …

Read Judges 6:7-17.
3. God stands to get much glory from making mighty warriors out of the least likely.

Read Judges 6:17-23.

4. Whatever we may end up setting on the altar will be wholly received by God.

5. The purpose of this journey is not to kill us, but to bring us to the full measure of abundant life He promised us (v. 23).

* You have permission to make copies of the viewer guides.
Few books of the Bible are more fascinating or more prophetically baffling than the Book of Isaiah. Not coincidentally, the name of the prophet—and subsequently the book—means “The __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __.__

Segment One
Isaiah 9:1-7 prophesies __Christ’s__ birth.

Segment Two
Isaiah 61:1-3 prophesies __Christ’s__ ministry.


• Compare Luke 8:40-48. In verse 44 the word translated “edge” (Kraspedon) is “used for the ___tassels___ the Israelites wore on the ___four corners___ of their ___garments__.” (Word Bible Commentary) According to the New International Commentary of the New Testament, “This is the story of her resolution to ___cross the border___ of legitimate behavior to gain ___access to divine power___.”

Segment Three
Isaiah 52:13–53:12 prophesies __Christ’s__ suffering.

We will read the entire portion, and then discuss several key elements, particularly those with the greatest bearing on our present journey:
52:13—The Hebrew words translated “raised and lifted up” are used as a pair four times in Isaiah and nowhere else (see 6:1; 57:15). They are highly significant here because they refer to God alone.

Three kinds of suffering this prophetic poem predicts:

1. **physical**

2. **mental**

3. **spiritual**

The highly intentional repetition of terms in Isaiah 53:3-4:

Verse 3: “A man of **pain**, one who knows **sickness**.”

(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

Verse 4: “But surely it was **our sickness** he carried, **our pains** he bore.” (New International Commentary on the New Testament)

The great paradox: that **healing** can flow from a **wounding**.

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Isaiah 44:20-22. With two weeks of Bible study behind us, we’re prepared, if we’re willing, to take one of our first leaps on the path to freedom: _______ freedom _______ from _______ self-delusion _______.

A succinct definition of idolatry: An idol is any trade-off for God.

A New Testament Contrast of Truth and Lies

**TRUTH**: John 8:31-36—Christ sets the captive free through truth.

**LIES**: John 8:44—Satan sets the free captive through lies.

Equations That Add Up to Liberty

My **Environment** + My **Experiences** = My “**truth**”

Read 2 Chronicles 18:28-34.
“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (Ps. 145:18).

My “__truth__” + 0 = __Incomplete__

My “__truth__” + Satan’s lies = __Captivity__

__God’s Truth__ > My “__truth__”

Compare Hebrews 4:12.


Verse 24. The Greek word translated looking at himself “indicates perception. Tragically, this kind of person __ignores__ what he has perceived, resulting in a __detachment__ from what is observed, in this case the truth __about__ himself.” (New American Commentary)

My “__truth__” + God’s Truth = __Freedom__
New Testament parallels from the confrontation between Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and Hezekiah, the king of Judah: We’ll view Sennacherib symbolically as the enemy captor and Hezekiah symbolically as the covenant child of God.

Isaiah 36:13-16. Our captor tries to coax us into making peace with our bondage.

Isaiah 37:10-11. Our captor likes to remind us of all who have fallen and poses the question, “And you think you will be delivered?”

Isaiah 37:14-22,23,28,35-37. Over and over Scripture portrays prayer as the first act of war when under attack.

God has reserved momentous victories and great rewards for us. But we’ll never make it to our milestones if we can’t make it through our moments.
See 1 Corinthians 10:13. “Way of escape.” The Greek word *ekbasis* (escape) comes from the same origin as the English word __end__. In the Greek language the term also implies an __end__. 

Making It Through the Moment: The Role of Prayer

1. Prayer changes __passions__.

   Two reasons we often don’t take the exit:
   
   - We don’t __want__ __to__ (Ps. 40:8).
   
   - We don’t feel like we __deserve__ __to__ (Rom. 8:1).

2. Prayer activates __partnership__. Compare Jude 24-25.
In the journey to freedom, nothing has greater potential to weigh us down than the __________ ___________.

If we dare to break free while some of our family members remain in bondage, we are going to have to exercise some ___________!

“The spirit which they then received, the new nature and life that God gave them, was not ‘a ___________-__________,’ the two words being a practical compound.” Instead, “we received ‘a spirit of ____________,’ the opposite of ‘a spirit of ___________.’”

1. Courage to believe we can be ____________
   - We often feel the family chains will never fall __off of us__ because they’re __in us__.
   - In the context of the Potter reshaping the clay, God said to His people, “‘turn … each one of you, and reform your ways and actions.’ But they will reply, ‘__It’s no use__’” (Jer. 18:11).

2. Courage to be __misunderstood__
   We may be mistaken as ...
   
   a. __traitors__
   
   b. __saviors__ (See Isa. 3:5-7.)

   c. __fanatics__
3. Courage to “extract the __________ from the ___________”
   (Jer. 15:19, NASB).

   Let’s camp on a common generational stronghold that is poisonous: **prejudice**.

   a. ___________ is grievous sin fueled by ___________ and ___________.

   b. ___________ propagates from the false notion that, if people are ___________, someone ___________, ___________, ___________.

4. Courage to deal a ________ ________ with ________ _____________

   “Memory ... is vigorously ___________ ________, selecting out of the ________ ________ of the ________ ________, retrieving and arranging images and insights, and then hammering them together for use in the ________ ________ ________.”

   In Isaiah 33:6, God offers a second storehouse. Every time you draw something painful from your storehouse, draw something priceless from God's:
   - ___________ ________, also translated ___________ — yeshu ‘a
   - ___________
   - ___________

Today we will talk about the brokenness of heart that can result from the frantic search for something earthly to fill the void.


1. All excess is rooted in emptiness.

2. Salvation does not equal satisfaction.


“‘Welling up’ is inadequate. The verb … does not appear to be used elsewhere of the action of water. The word indicates springing up or leaping.”

(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

“The life that Jesus gives is no tame and stagnant thing. It is much more than merely the entrance into a new state, that of being saved instead of lost. It is the abundant life, and the living Spirit within people is evidence of this.” (New International Commentary on the New Testament)
3. __misplaced________worship____ is at the heart of all bondage.

In his book *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, author Edward T. Welch refers to all addiction as “__earthly disorder__."

4. The continued search for something __earthly____ to fill our empty places is __costly__.

   Romans 6:19-21

   John 4:25-30

5. Christ knows __everything__.

   Jeremiah 2:13

6. A new response is one __sincere confession__ away.

   Conclude with a glance at John 4:31-33.
Our entire lesson will build upon this important premise:

God never __allows__ or __appoints__ a fire unless He can bring __beauty__ __from__ __the__ __ashes__.

First Peter 1:3-9
1. We __cannot__ __avoid__ fiery trials.
   a. God is much more interested in our __callings__ than our __comfort__.
   b. Even faithful people have tremendous __difficulties__.

2. The purpose of the refinement is always to make us:
   a. __objects__ __of__ __beauty__.
   b. __recipients__ __of__ __reward__. Compare 1 Peter 1:4 to Isaiah 61:7.
Allotting a double portion was sometimes a recognition of status (Deut. 21:17). Sometimes it was a compensation or damages (Ex. 22:4,7,9)." (Word Biblical Commentary)

3. One primary purpose of fiery trials is to surface the dross.

4. We cannot often refuse the fire, but we can refuse to be refined by it.

5. Sometimes our fiery trials are absolutely necessary to fulfill our callings.
Freedom is not found in casting off a ______, but in trading a ______ of ______ for a ______ of _________.

In Matthew 11:28, the lexical Greek word *anapauo* means “to ______, be exempt; by implication to _______, take ease ... rest.” *(Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)*

1. We are not ______. We are _________.

2. We ______ a ______ with _________.

One commentary’s translation of the wording based on the Greek: “I, 1 _________, will give you pause or rest.” *(Lenski)*
“For my yoke fits perfectly” (Matt. 11:30, NLT).

3. We have the freedom to learn from Christ as we simply walk with Him.

Genesis 5:21-23. The name Enoch (Hebrew transliteration Hanok) comes from the Hebrew word hanak, which means “to narrow, discipline, dedicate, to train up.” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance)

4. We share a yoke with someone who is gentle and humble.
   - Gentle: the Greek word chrestotes means kind.
   - Humble: “His path of humble service is the pattern for us to follow. So much of our fatigue and burdensome toil stems from pride.”
   
   “If we are successful, our egos are inflated and we try for more.”

   “If we falter, the rejection of others and our self-condemnation weigh us down in guilt and self-doubt.”

   “It is much more freeing to take Christ’s attitude of serving others.” (Life Application Bible Commentary)
Why Does God Make Love the Priority Command?

1. Love motivates ___________obedience__________.

2. Love motivates ___________perseverance__________.

3. Love provides ___________protection__________.

4. Love for God empowers ___________love for others__________.

One of the biggest and least addressed obstacles to truly loving God:

_________Thinking_________ / already do_________ when, truth be told,

I ___________really___ don’t_________.

John 21:15-22. Agapao is “used of divine love and usually carries the connotation of ___________will_________ or ___________purpose_________ as well as that of ___________affection_________.

(Expositor’s)
Identifying True Love

1. Does God regularly __circulate___ into ___my_____ __thoughts___ (Ps.63:6)?
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely

2. Am I often __drawn___ to + ___spend___ time with Him (Ps.27:4)?
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely

3. Does my life __demonstrate___ a love for God (Rom. 5:8)?
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely

4. Do I often __enjoy___ ___God___ (Ps. 16:11)?
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely

5. Do I ultimately find ___relief___ or ___satisfaction___ in obedience (John 14:21)?
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely

“To love God in the way defined by the great commandment is to seek God for his ___own___ sake__, to have ___pleasure___ in him and to ___strive___ ___impulsively___ after him.”

(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

Understanding How to Freely Love God

1. Recognize the ___source___ (1 John 4:7-8,19).

2. ___pursue___ it diligently through prayer (1 John 5:14,15).
The Emphasis of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- What will most remarkably define the times as “terrible” will be __social__ phenomena rather than __natural__ or __environmental__.

The Construction of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- Seventeen characteristics fall between two profoundly purposeful bookends.

  “People will be __lovers__ of __themselves__ ... rather than __lovers__ of __God__."

Abusive—a word in Greek that especially emphasizes __speech__. (New American Commentary)

Without love—(Greek astorgoi)—__hard-hearted__ toward __kindred__.
(Strong's Exhaustive Concordance)

Unforgiving—__irreconcilable__ ... without __treaty__.
(Word Biblical Commentary)

Slanderous—diaboloi means __accusatory__ (Titus 2:3).

Brutal—__untamed__. (Word Biblical Commentary)

Treacherous—__traitors__ ready to __betray__ their __friends__.
(New American Commentary)

Conceited—__swollen__ with __self-importance__. (New English Bible)
The Repetition of 2 Timothy 3:1-5

- Interestingly, 11 out of 18 vices begin with something in Greek called an "alpha privation" an “a” at the beginning of a word corresponding with our English “un.”

The Warning of 2 Timothy 3:5-7

- The primary target: _______ willed ______ women—“The term is a Greek diminutive, literally suggesting ’little women’ but more precisely showing them as easily deceived and prone to temptation. Their weakness was primarily moral, not intellectual.” (New American Commentary)

Exercise tremendous caution toward ...

A. __ Incongruity __: People with a ___ form ___ of godliness but ___ denying ___ its power (2 Tim. 3:5). Form is the recognizable Greek word ___ morphosis ___.

B. __ Instant intimacy ___: “the kind who ___ worm ___ their ___ way ___ into homes.”

C. __ Increasing control ___: “the kind who ___ gain ___ control over time.”
Identifying ourselves daily by God’s own descriptions will profoundly impact our sustained success.

1. We are __________ witnesses ________ (Isa. 43:10-12).

2. We are __________ warriors ________ (Isa. 54:12-17).

Never forget …

- The tie between __________ fear ______ and __________ bondage ______.
  “Be far from __________ oppression ______, because you need __________ not ______ fear ______, and from terror, because it will not come near you.” (New International Commentary on the New Testament)

- The tendency to expend energy on the __________ lesser ______ battle ______.
  “Direct my __________ footsteps ______ according to your word; let no sin __________ rule over me ______.” (Ps. 119:133).
3. We are ____________(Isa. 61:10).


Beulah: “___________. The basic sense of the word is ‘to possess.’”
(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

“When circumstances and ____ failure ____ and blighted ____ hopes ____ combine to convince us that our name is ‘________ Forsaken______,’ that is the hour to hear the ________ whisper ________ of the Bridegroom to his Bride, with the name that it is his ____ alone ____ to ____ give ____ and hers ____ alone ____ to ____ hear ________.”
(New International Commentary on the New Testament)

How do we conclude our journey?

Nehemiah 9:36-38

• “making”—karat—to cut ... to make a _____ covenant_____.
(Old Testament Lexical Aids)

• “binding agreement”—amanah—from aman—“to believe, trust.” Amanah means “covenant, _________ commitment ________, _______ settled _____ provision.”