

# Fear Not, Thou Art Mine

*Confession of Faith*

By Rev. Ronald Van Overloop

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Isaiah 43:1,2  
**Preached on:** Sunday, March 4, 2018

## Grace Protestant Reformed Church

O-11225 8th Ave NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

**Website:** [www.graceprc.org](http://www.graceprc.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/graceprc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/graceprc)

We read from the word of God as we find it in Isaiah's prophecy, chapter 43. We're going to begin to read at verse 18 of 42, Isaiah 42, beginning at verse 18.

18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant? 20 Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. 21 The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable. 22 But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. 23 Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come? 24 Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. 25 Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5 Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

And we stop in our reading at that point. May God bless this reading of his own word.

The first two verses, Isaiah 43:1-2.

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Quite a contrast between the way in which the words used at the end of 42 and then these at the beginning of 43. The reason for the contrast is something that you have to remember often when you go through the book of Isaiah, specifically he is speaking the last part of chapter 42 to Israel as a nation, as the whole, and then his words to them in anticipation of these words being read to them when they're in captivity, is this is the description of you in your sin and this is what you deserve, to be robbed and spoiled, not obedient because you're not obedient to my law, therefore, I will pour upon you the fury of my anger in the strength of battle. So those are the words that he directs to them as a nation, as a whole, and then he's going to see them in Babylon. But then he turns around and he is able to say what he does in the first verses of 43, that which is our text, because now it's almost like the scope goes down closer and he looks at the elect seed, the kernel inside the nation. So there's still the nation but inside that nation are those who have the name Jacob and Israel. The outside nation has that name because that's the way they're identified among the nations of the world, but now he looks at those who carry that name with purpose because he's called them by that name.

So that's the explanation. The out, external church, the church world, and then he looks at the elect seed inside that church. The former did not repent, the latter did, and it's to them that now he comes with these words of comfort and what words of comfort they are.

"Fear not. Thou art mine." Every one of us, I think even the very young among us, can quote that part of the first Lord's Day of the Heidelberg Catechism, my only comfort in life and death. I'm not my own. I belong unto my faithful Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not my own, I belong to him. "Fear not. Thou art mine," he says. What we're going to learn is while it's fantastic to hear him say that, for our consciousness to grab ahold of that fantastic truth, it is necessary for us first to say, "I don't want to be my own. I don't want to be in control. I hate being in control. It's not about me. I can let go. I don't have to fix it. I don't have to make things right. He is able. He promises." "Fear not. Thou art mine."

The nation as a whole was Israel or Judah, 10 tribes, the two tribes earlier before that, before the division, Israel, but here God addresses that elect seed first as Jacob. Now, very interesting that he who his parents named Jacob later God gave the name Israel, so it's the same person. The same nation, the same person. Jacob. Heel holder. Has a twin. When Esau was delivered, the Scriptures tell us that Jacob's hand came out gripping the

heel of Esau hence the name, Jacob, heel holder. Jacob fits spiritually because Jacob was the one who was desperate in his desire to have what Esau had by birth. By birth Esau had the birthright blessing, the position of leadership, spiritual leadership in the line of Abraham and Isaac. Jacob unconsciously as an infant, he wasn't aware of it, but his whole life was characterized by that activity of desperate to obtain what Esau possessed. Esau had it, spiritually didn't care for it, wasn't conscious of it, but Jacob in not being willing to give his starving brother food unless he sold his right to the birthright to him for a mess of pottage, he who was willing to dress himself up and lie like a rug to his own father in order to be able to receive his father's hand of blessing, all because he wanted something right and good. Now his seeking to get it was always in the wrong way. He was going to do it in his own strength. He was going to do it by bargaining. He was going to do it by lying. Always in the wrong way. Wanted the right thing but he was always wrong in the way in which he sought to get it, but wanted the right thing for the right reason. He wasn't just after the money, the double portion. He wanted the spiritual right and privileges that was implied in that birthright blessing.

When he came back from working with his uncle Laban for 20 years and he came to the river that became known as the face of God, Peniel, there is where God met him as he nervously walked alone at night and this stranger came to him and they wrestled, and as he wrestled with God, he found out it was God because all of a sudden with just a touch on his hip, he became lame and incapable of fighting anymore, and all he could do was cling and hang on. He endured in squeezing as much as he could to the clothing and body of that one with whom he was wrestling, "Bless me! Bless me! I'm not going to let go until you bless me!" And God gave him the name Israel, prince of God. Put the two together. Not Jacob's gone now and now it's Israel, prince of God. No, the two together, the one who is desperate to obtain the right thing is given the name of a victor, a conqueror. He's gained it. It's gifted to him. He has it.

So God comes to the nation of Judah. They have known what it is to go through fire and water, drowning water and destroying fire. It is almost unimaginable for us who have never been at war to know not only what it is to fight in a war but to lose, and to have the nation of Babylon come in and kill your relatives and your friends right in front of your eyes. First you're starved because they put a siege around the city of Jerusalem, and then they utterly destroy it. They burn the kings houses. They burn the rich men's houses. They burned all that they could inside of the city. They burned the temple. They burned everything. The gates were left charred as a despicable evidence of the judgment that God had placed on them because of their national sin.

They went through water and fire and after seeing so many deaths and the destruction of their walls in their city, and then the godly ones seeing the place of worship but it wasn't like this, this is truly an auditorium, this is a building, that temple was a sanctuary, that temple was a place that was holy, truly set apart and God was present in it and that's what made it the Holy Place. God was there and God said, "I am here with you in the middle of the nation and this is the way that you can see that I have forgiven you. Bring your sacrifices. Have the priests come out and bless you and assure you one is going to die in

your place and you are forgiven." And now that temple and that place of worship and that assurance of forgiveness is gone.

They drag themselves, or were dragged the thousands of miles to Babylon and there they are by the riverside. There is nothing to make them happy so their harps, their musical instruments they hang up on the willows and the wind is the only thing that uses them to make a noise. Their hearts are heavy. They're depressed. They're discouraged. They're beaten. They've heard all the words of mockery they could ever hear, all the ridicule, and they have nothing and now Isaiah comes to them in the middle of that captivity and he says to them what he says to the church of every age.

The fire and the water that we might experience might not be the destruction of a building or of a city or of a home, but last June when a young girl died from our midst, there was fire. It was a painful experience. There is not an individual here and the longer that I'm here and the better I get to know you, there is a cross, there is a chain and ball that God in his wisdom has been pleased to give to each of you. Different shape. Different way. Different experience. But it's there. The devil uses them to jab at us. The devil uses them to burn us. The devil uses them with the intent of separating us from Christ in every possible way that he can. He wants us afraid. He wants us thinking we're doomed. He wants us scared to death. Whether it's persecution or whether it's cancer, he wants to separate us from Christ and he wants to separate us from each other. He doesn't want us to love each other. Oh, some but not all. No, he doesn't want us, he wants to divide and destroy.

The realization is that we cannot avoid the fire and the water. We cannot avoid the cross. We cannot avoid the ball and chain. We cannot. They're always there. They're always going to be there. It's not a question of whether we will have it, it's really just opening our eyes to the realization that sometimes it may not be anything physical, sometimes it's the addiction of a sin. Sometimes it's not fighting and resisting that old man. Sometimes it's giving into him completely. Then we're afraid.

It's not much for some of us knowing what the Scripture promises about antichrist to be terribly scared for our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. We can think about it for a while and be very very afraid but that's when God says, the message that every angel said first, "Fear not. Fear not. Don't be afraid."

How can we turn the switch? How is it that we could get rid of that fear when it's real? You know, beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, may this not only be true when you're sitting in church because now we're supposed to say that and think that, but may it be every day of the week and in every situation of your life, may this be true, that you know his relationship to you, that you are able to see what he has done for you. Has done. Has done. It's an accomplished fact. Look, "Thus saith Jehovah. I created thee. I formed thee." No, go back and realize if there are some people that have come to you and say, "Well, Genesis 1 through 11, that's not salvic so you don't have to pay any attention to that. That's not a matter of real great importance." God shows us right here that the nature of his work of saving is rooted in his work of creating. "I created thee and I formed thee."

Now to understand that, let's go and look at what God did in creating, what he did when there was nothing. Nothing. And he spoke and he called everything into existence. Everything. And the wonder isn't that he took dust and he made a globe, and dust and he made plants, and dust and he made beasts and creeping things and man, and then he made a rib and he made a woman, but that he created in such an amazing and marvelous way all things and the Bible uses "formed and created" equally. Called it into existence.

Then he didn't just do that because you and I must never forget that the existence of everything is only because the God who created is still working just as powerfully as when he did when he called it out of nothing, that we continue to exist, that something is here and doesn't disappear. It's because God is at work.

Did you hear the little prelude that Matt played? He knows I like it, that's why he played it. Revelation 4:11. Why is God worthy of glory and honor and power? Because he created. Because all things he called into existence according to his good pleasure and then there's that little part of the verse that's not in the song, "thou hast created so that they are and were created." They are, so that they continue to exist is the same majesty of God that makes him worthy.

So what God is doing with these first words of Isaiah 43, what he's always doing in every trial. You see, it's not whether we have a trial, it's not whether we're burdened, it's not whether we've got a cross or a ball and chain, it's how do you respond to the God who gave it. Do you look up and hear him say, "I formed you. I created you. I redeemed you. Do you know what it cost me to buy you? To take you out of the bondage of sin? My own Son, and I had to hate him. I had to pour out all of my wrath against your sin, the times you forget me, the times you didn't care about me, I poured it all on him and he bore your hell. I redeemed you and every single word created, formed, redeemed, is all in the past. It's past tense. It's an accomplished reality. It's done. It's real."

Now just look back when you look around you, look back when you've got to look ahead. Created. Formed. Redeemed. One other word, "I have called you." Think of those verses in Psalm 33. He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. By the word of the Lord were the heavens, the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He didn't have to work. He didn't have to sweat. Do you know what it took to do this? Months of work, sweat, planning, redoing. He spoke, done.

In those words, he is speaking not about a building, he's speaking about a relationship. "I created you. Maybe there are parts of you you don't like but I created you perfectly. I formed you. I bought you. And I called you by your name. I gave you the name heel holder who desires the right thing. I gave you the name Israel, prince, my prince, prince of God." And then he adds the sweetest words, "Thou art mine."

At a wedding quite a few years ago, somebody had as a wedding text, "My beloved is mine and I am his. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." That's nothing like what

he says to you. Not who am I but whose am I? Whose am I? I am his. I belong to him because he bought me with the blood of his own Son. He redeemed me.

You have a baby in the womb or in your arms and you pray, "May he or she be yours, Lord. Not mine but thine. Touch them. Bless them. Save them. Convert them. Turn them." So when going through the waters and through the fires, then that was your parents' prayer and your pastor's. "May he know whose he is. When everybody else is shouting and it is so loud and they seem to get all of our attention, may he who formed you and created you really get your attention and enable you to look up and to say, 'If he says thou art mine, then I can understand when he says I will be with you. I will. Do you think I will and I don't mean it? Do you think I say I will and I'm lying? I will be with you and have never forsaken the work of my hands. You may be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'" He eternally preserves and he's not just watching from a distance, he showed us in the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ just how much he is with us.

Don't go by physical appearances. Judah was in captivity. That was the church of Jesus Christ, it was in captivity, looked lost, done, gone, but God said and remember not if, but you're going to go through the fire and you're going to go through the water and that will be the way in which I will sanctify you, shape you, refine you, make you look at what's really important, what's really involved, will look at me. Look up, I have created you. I have formed you. I will be with you.

So how can we go through life and not be afraid? It is impossible given our old man, given the presence of that nature, but again the key is not whether the fire or the water is going to come but how do we respond when the fears rise, when we really get scared. That's the God-given opportunity to hear him say, "I have created a relationship with you. I'm your Father. I'm your God. I love you in Christ. Thou art mine."

Now what that requires is that we say to the old man, "Away with you. I'm going to put you off. I'm going to keep putting you off and I'm going to keep putting on the new." By the renewing of our mind, we're going to have to perform that activity. That's the activity of faith and that's exercise of that faith that looks outside of ourselves and away from the circumstances that surround us and makes us look up, makes us look at the cross. If you want proof of redemption, look at the cross. If you want proof, look at the resurrection, the empty tomb. There is God declaring to you, "All the reason for me to punish you is gone. I took it all away."

Now, there is no peace but only fear if we keep looking horizontally. There is no peace if we listen to other humans or look at other people, that we make people big and God small. But when we by faith, faith says whatever this says is true, when we look by faith in the exercise of faith that says, "You are mine," that says, "I will be with you. I will not let you go. I've got you. My arms are around you. Nothing can separate you from my love." Then thinking that way, we may be assured. We're not just conquerors, we're more than conquerors. Faith trusts Jehovah in the fire and in the water. Faith looks to him who

redeemed us and called us, who created us and formed us and says, "All is well with my soul." Amen.

*Father, we thank thee, thou hast given to us a good word, good reminder. For many of us, this passage has been one that we've looked to in the past. May it be for more of us now as we grab ahold of this precious promise and know the relationship that thou hast established will be ours, now bless, forgive, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

**Isaiah 43:1,2**  
**FEAR NOT, THOU ART MINE**

- I. When?
  - A. God is speaking to the elect, addressing them as “Jacob” and “Israel.”
  - B. These are the names for God’s people as they face greatest dangers: fire and water.
    - 1. The figures of a destroying fire and a drowning water are the powers of the world striving to destroy and defeat God’s own.
    - 2. Isaiah sees Judah in captivity in Babylon, without hope of soon deliverance – the fire and water conquered them!!
    - 3. The church in every age and every believer must endure much suffering.
  - C. This causes fear.
- II. Why not fear? Because God created and formed the church and every child of His.
  - A. Consider that God has Isaiah use the past tense at this time in the Old Dispensation, before Jesus came.
    - 1. He “created” and “formed.”
    - 2. God’s re-creation of His church and people is because He “redeemed” them.
    - 3. And God “called” us, i.e., His divine call brought it about, effected it (He spake and it was done).
  - B. Because of the relationship God created and maintains, He adds, “I will be with thee.”
- III. How is it possible to be without fear in the face of fire and water?
  - A. We experience this when our faith takes hold of the truths of God’s gracious relationship with us.
  - B. Because our faith sees the cross and resurrection of Jesus, then we have peace even in the fire and water.
  - C. Faith trusts Jehovah our God when in the fire and water. Faith looks to Him Who redeemed and called us.