

Son of David, Have Mercy on Us | Advent of the King

Son of David in Isaiah (2)

12.4.22 (Advent Week TWO)

"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. ² "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. ³ "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David.

⁴ *"Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, A leader and commander for the peoples.*

⁵ *"Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, And a nation which knows you not will run to you, Because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you." ⁶ Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹ So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

¹² *"For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³ "Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, And instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, And it will be a memorial to the LORD, For an everlasting sign which will not be cut off."*

Last week, we began to see how God's promises to a king in ancient Israel (1,000 BC) we started to see what became of those promises...what happened to the House of King David?

They're BIG promises (2 Sam 7). There's one, in particular, that God repeats to King David, a promise that David would rule forever. And we're wondering HOW that could be because David is a mortal man (we read of David's death twice – 1 Kings 2; 1 Chron 29; Acts 2.29!) So, what about the promise?

'Turns out these promises pertain to the line of descendants FROM David down TO a singular Son. The Prophets show us that this promised ONE would be both Son of David and Son of God (more than human).

Today, we hear this lovely, sort of mournful promise from God, once made to David then rephrased and held out to all King David's people (the Israelites) AND to everyone else. It's here in the form of an

invitation to EVERYONE who thirsts... to everyone who's tired of being cheated by offers of inner satisfaction that really don't deliver.

When we're dissatisfied with a purchase it's often because we tried to save money; we tried to get MORE than we paid for... So, we're pretty sure God is going to tell us, "Quit being cheap! Spend the money, do the work, make more of an investment and you'll be more satisfied: you GET what you pay for!"

Instead, God offers us something for free. Counter-intuitively, God makes us a clear offer and a clear (though astounding) invitation to grace. So, what IS this thing we talk about so much ...grace? AND what does it have to do with David and the Son of David?

When Christians talk about "free grace" what does that mean? Is it a free entrance into God's favor...but then...you know...when we get on our feet, you have to... you know...shape up and do our part? It's a gift but you have to pay for it. Because anything else is...too good to be true...no such thing as a free lunch...right? Let's look at:

1) No Such Thing As A Free Lunch

2) Someone Always Pays

3) Let's Go To Lunch

This last section of Isaiah has the prophet warning ancient Judah that her spiritual adultery (over many generations) will end in judgment – that Babylon (one of Judah's abusive lovers), Babylon will SACK Jerusalem and destroy the Temple... and Isaiah is looking down (as it were) into the Valley of Death (judgment!) but he also sees another Mountain (Restoration) in the future.

Babylon will take Israel captive (as they once were held in Egypt). BUT God will rescue them – there WILL BE another Exodus in the future (a return to the Land).

This text follows those famous Servant Songs (42-53) where the prophet tells of this mysterious Figure (Messiah) who will complete Israel's mission...and bring about her beautiful destiny.

But there's a lingering question: "once our infidelity and our sins are forgiven...and once we return to the Land – what's to keep us from cheating the next time? We have this history of sort of LEARNING our lesson only to forget it again...We've broken the pact (covenant) with God repeatedly... and WE are broken!" Will we ever be freed/changed from our own flaws.

I heard a story about a man who picked up an old friend from the airport. When the friend jumped into the car he immediately buckled up and the man asked, "Wait! I've known you since college and I've never seen you wear a seatbelt!" The friend said, "Remember, Jerry Smith, from college... he lives in my town and had a bad car accident... I went to see him in the hospital. He wasn't wearing a seat belt when he wrecked... and looking at his face was... shocking... I'll NEVER sit in a car again without a seatbelt."

The point is... he always knew at some level that he should wear a seatbelt... but when it became a belief, he changed. Oftentimes what changes INFORMATION into FORMATION is trauma.

Israel would undergo the trauma of exile... and God is inviting her *to a new belief*, that what they knew about God will be converted into trust – a new belief about GRACE. He even uses foods to make His point about a free lunch – *“Ho! (listen up!) Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

God will do something...and you can't pay for it; it'll be given for FREE...a free-lunch... just take and eat... BUT, all our lives we've been told – “There's NO SUCH THING as a free lunch! Always strings attached ...Someone always pays!”

Everything we get (or so we think!) is cause and effect and this-for-that and quid-pro-quo. We work and we get paid – we pay for something and then we GET that something. Why should a relationship with God be any different? What's the possibility that THIS would be the ONLY relationship where there really IS such a thing as a free lunch? I mean... C'mon you always pay!”

And then God asks a question: like “OK – well, how's that workin' for ya? Your investments are NOT paying off, but you continue to invest? (QUOTE) *“Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?”*

And of course the free-lunch imagery – the bread, the water, wine and milk – they're all metaphors for satisfaction – you're investing effort, time, money, attention for what DOESN'T FILL your soul... Your job takes ALL your time, energy and life and you get paid and you get some affirmation/applause (for your clothes and car and your vacations curated and posted) and that applause is like a breath of oxygen (for a moment) then you're lonely, insecure and you feel incomplete...again.

It could be a literal purchase (new clothes, new car, new technology) – a rush when the package first arrives and then empty again ...until the next purchase... and then again, the dopamine hit... and a return to this nagging hole and a sense that it's all up to YOU! (YOU procure...earn...get) And the cycle continues...Why spend yourself...give attention to what doesn't satisfy? (It's a “why?” question – last week)

God's QUESTION confronts the Israelites (and us!) – “Yes! YOUR ARRANGEMENT is not working – is NOT satisfying you and NOT glorifying ME – what you need is a New Covenant... not like the one made at Sinai... but like the one I made with David – that I would put his descendants on the throne... That I would do for him something FOR FREE, I would establish him by GRACE! *“I will make an everlasting covenant with you, like the faithful mercies shown to David.”*

A New Covenant – an everlasting covenant NOT conditioned on what YOU CAN DO – or on what YOU can buy or earn or achieve. A Covenant made between God the Father and God the Son – where the Son agrees to come for us – His Church, His Bride – and live for us and die for us and rise for us.

God's deal with David is NOT conditioned on the performance of David or his descendants. It's based on the faithfulness of God. It's THAT kind of deal God is making with ALL (true) Israelites. It says in the last chapter (10): *"The mountains may be removed, and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the LORD who has compassion on you."*

The prophet says, "You don't earn it or buy it or do anything to achieve it – you simply receive it."

"I give, says the LORD, "and *you* receive for FREE."

"But how, Lord? There's no such thing as a free lunch ...someone always pays...It's not fair that our sins are swept under the rug, but THEY have to pay for their sins."

"Swept under the rug? – NEVER!" says the Lord.

"Haven't you been listening? HO! Behold...listen up... incline your ear – behold My Servant – He will pay the price: He will go into the wilderness and do battle with the Prince of Darkness and at the end of the 40 days, He, Jesus Christ, the Servant will be hungry... He will be hungry so YOU can be filled!" He pays for lunch.

He will thirst... on the Cross, He will be the thirstiest Man who ever lived. He will express the deepest desires of your thirsty heart, *"I THIRST"*, chokes Jesus Christ from the Cross... and He'll be mocked as the sponge full of vinegar is stuffed into His parched mouth... He'll be given the sour wine so YOU can have the New Wine of infinite joy. He was thirsty that I might drink... *"Come to the waters, come buy wine and milk without money and without cost"* – the price is paid!

He's the Servant of whom Isaiah has been writing who was crushed for our iniquities (CH 53) He's the key to this whole, wonderful passage – everything points to Him... He's the Keeper of the Everlasting Covenant – "this cup is the New Covenant in My blood..." He's David's Son and David's Lord.

THIS passage echoes when He says, *"Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy-burdened and I will give you rest... Come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without cost."* Grace is free to us – but at INFINITE cost to Him.

He, says, *"For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink"* (John 6.55) He, Jesus Christ, IS the Word of God made Man (John 1.1, 14) who goes forth from the Father and does NOT return empty but accomplishes the matter for which He was sent.

He's the very Mind of God whose thoughts are higher than ours; He's the Deeper Magic of Grace fulfilling the Law. Jesus Christ IS the Son of David who fulfills the Covenant. The very FIRST VERSE of the New Testament makes clear – He is David's Greater Son!

He's the King who says from His throne, *"I am making all things new."* (Rev 21.5) Just as this whole amazing chapter ends with this beautiful picture of creation's groaning coming to an end – a reversal

of the Curse when thorns become cypress trees – Jesus wore the thorns on His brow so the curse could be lifted and a New Creation without thorns be born in everlasting joy and peace.

He, Jesus Christ, echoes the words, *“seek the Lord while He may be found”* when He says, *“Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added to you”* (Matt 6.33)

We could go on and on – but suffice it to say, “There’s no such thing as a free-lunch – someone has to PAY! And Jesus Christ paid the bill ...and when He calls us to seek the LORD...the great news is – WE SEEK HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST SEEKS US – He’s the Good Shepherd who comes seeking the lost... He is the Good Older Brother who comes to the far country seeking the Lost Sons, the prodigal wasters that WE ARE! Seek the LORD because HE is seeking YOU.

Now, suppose YOU want to seek the LORD (you’re making your New Year’s Resolutions) what NOW?

Well, why not do it together? Eat the Free Lunch – let’s go to lunch! This is NOT a catch/condition, NOT a bait and switch – this is NOT the part of the sermon where I tell you how YOU have to pay for the lunch. Here are ways grace can find you and FILL you in the coming days – here’s how to get IN on this:

First, God gave us at least 16 imperatives/commands in the first seven verses and they culminate (vv. 6-7) with the words, *“Seek the LORD while He may be found – call upon Him while He is near...”*

All the other imperatives explain what it is to seek the Lord – “come, buy without money, eat, come, listen, delight yourself, incline your ear, listen that you may live” – IN OTHER WORDS, rest and receive. Jesus Christ’s most basic teaching, *The Parable of the Sower* is all about listening (Mk 4.13) – just like the basic thrust of this chapter: *“listen, incline your ear, listen!”*

When the Presbyterians tried to define saving faith they wrote: “But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life by virtue of the covenant of grace”. (*The Westminster Confession of Faith* [1647] CH 14, Article 2).

Christian spirituality is essentially a receptive exercise, i.e. we receive or rest on or trust in Christ again and again. Faith is active passivity. St. Paul wrote as the very heart of his thinking, *“So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”* (Gal. 3.5)

It’s not the doing but the receiving that characterizes seeking the Lord. It’s thirsting and receiving.

Second, don’t waste time. See, there’s a window: “while He may be found...call on Him while He is near...” This is to say, “If there’s ANY inclination in you at ALL, it comes from God. So, don’t squander it... Get what God has for YOU!”

Third – your success at work or your kids or your next vacation or holiday party or your great abs MAY FEEL satisfying for a moment – but there’s only one Source of true SOUL FOOD – so seek Him like the Israelites sought the Manna – daily bread, daily satisfaction.

It’s a daily obligation to sit under the shower of that LOVE – it IS the NEW BELIEF that actually changes us and receives grace.

Last, it’s by faith...and by repentant faith that we seek the LORD. God is turning us away from sin because it offends Him, it’s a cosmic lie and it sucks the life out of life for US... We have every reason to repent and believe. We believe in these promises that *CANNOT* fail... Like rain that waters the ground, so the promises of God water us...And as usual, where we find repentance and faith in the Bible, joy is always around the corner: *"For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands."*(v. 12)

QUOTES:

The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before ... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God’s [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.

–Jan L. Richardson, *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas* (2010)

People do not give it credence that a young girl could leave home and go off in the wintertime to avenge her father's blood. But it did happen. I was just 14 years of age when a coward by the name of Tom Chaney shot my father down and robbed him of his life and his horse and two California gold pieces that he carried in his trouser band. Chaney was a hired man and Papa had taken him up to Fort Smith to help lead back a string of Mustang ponies he'd bought. In town, Chaney had fallen to drink and cards and lost all his money. He got it into his head he was being cheated and went back to the boarding house for his Henry rifle. When Papa tried to intervene, Chaney shot him. Chaney fled. He could have walked his horse, for not a soul in that city could be bothered to give chase. No doubt Chaney fancied himself scot-free. But he was wrong. You must pay for everything in this world, one way or another. There is nothing free, except the grace of God.

– Mattie Ross (played by Hailee Steinfeld), *True Grit* (2010 film directed by Ethan and Joel Cohen; opening monologue)

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– *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) CH 14, Article 2