

**Wednesday, May 1, 2024 • Read Isaiah 55**

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does v1a address? What does v1b invite them to do? Whom does v1c address? But what does v1d invite them to do? To buy what (v1e)? In what way (v1f)? What have they been spending on (v2a–b)? What six commands do v2c–3b give? With what promised outcome (v3b)? And response (v3c)? To what will the Lord pledge Himself to give them (v3d)? As what three things had He given "David" (v4)? And what will this David accomplish (v5a–b)? On account of Whom (v5c–d)? What will He have done (v5e)? So, what are they to do (v6a)? When? And what else (v6b)? When? Who must do what in v7a? And who forsake what in v7b? What must each of them do (v7c, e)? And what will YHWH do when they return (v7d, f)? What, about the Lord, explains how it can be that He would forgive (v8)? What is the difference, and the extent of that difference, between His thoughts and ours (v9)? What has He done in nature as a pattern (v10)? What will He send out (v11a) to give the repentance that He has urged in v6–7? How successful will it be (v11b–d)? Then what will their errands be like (v12)? And what will their labors be like (v13a–b, cp. Gen 3:18)? Unto what end (v13c–d)?

**Who are brought into the salvation of the Servant?** Isaiah 55 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these thirteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **all of the needy, who are given repentance by God's Word, are brought into the glorious salvation of the Servant**

**An invitation to needy Israel,** v1–3. Blessed are the poor in spirit. The threefold invitation to "come" is to everyone who thirsts and has no money. Those who are not needy, or who have resources of their own, are not invited. Jesus came to seek sinners, not the righteous; it is the ill who need a physician, not the well. But this is not a hand out of mere sustenance; "wine and milk" (v1e) speak of richness and fatness. The Lord offers you the full delight of your soul in Him.

Everything else a man may seek cannot even satisfy (v2a–b), but what the Lord Himself provides is abundance and delight for the soul (v2c–d). The threefold instruction to listen (v2c, 3a, 3b) instructs us that we must learn from the Lord alone what true religion is, where true hope is. And that place of true hope is the everlasting covenant in which God binds Himself to steadfast love unto David's house (v3c–d). The lavish generosity of God comes in and through Christ alone. Do not seek them anywhere else. Listen to Him!

**Israel an invitation, in Christ, to a needy world,** v4–5. Not only will Christ be a redeeming King for the Israelite people (v4) but also for nations that have thus far been strangers in darkness (v5a–b). YHWH, Israel's God (v5c–d), gives them the ultimate glory of being the nation of Christ, to Whom the world comes for salvation (cf. Rom 9:5). This glory is exalted in your own coming to Christ, dear reader.

**A command to necessary, and urgent, repentance,** v6–7c. Coming, eating, drinking and delighting all now find their object in YHWH Himself (v6). He is the banquet. This means that all sin must be forsaken (v7a–c), for one must choose between it and the Lord. Still, God's giving Himself as a generous feast is not merited by this repentance; YHWH's response is compassion (v7d) and pardon (v7e). Seek the Lord, forsake all sin, and enjoy the compassion of the Lord!

**A guarantee of forgiveness,** v8–9. After all that Israel has done, how can the Lord forgive them? More urgently for you: after all that you have done, how can the Lord forgive you? Because He's not like you or I. These verses are often quoted generally of the wisdom of God, of which they most certainly are true. But it is especially of His forgiving sinners in Christ that He speaks when He announces how infinitely above our ways and thoughts are His ways and thoughts.

**A guarantee even of repentance,** v10–11. So God will surely forgive the repentant sinner, but that brings up the question of how sinners will be made repentant. They have no spiritual life in themselves from which to produce this repentance. But just as God gives life to the earth by the rain (v10), so also His own Word brings not just the command to repent but the life that we need in order to repent (v11). To His elect, the Lord gives not just the Word, but His Spirit (cf. Eze 36:24–27; Mt 3:9–11), like the rain that He pours out. Dear reader, it is God Who gives repentance by means of His Word and Spirit. Look to His Spirit for it, by the use of His Word.

**A restoration of paradise, to the glory of God, the Savior,** v12–13. The goal of all of this is a restoration not only of joy and peace of the Lord's people (v12a–b) but even of the creation itself, personified in v12c–e as singing and clapping its hands. Indeed, v13a–b describe a direct reversal of the curse in Gen 3:18. God, in Christ, will reverse all that Satan has accomplished (cf. 1Jn 3:8), unto the everlasting glory of God's Name. For unending ages, dear Christian reader, we will enjoy Him, unto His glory, in a joyous and peaceful new heavens and earth.

When and how do you know your neediness? To Whom do you come with it? How? What does He give you to supply the need? How much? How sure can you be of this? How does He bring it about? What use do you make of the means that He has appointed for this? How have you responded to His restoring your joy?

*Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us, for we have often been proud, as if we had something good to trade for riches from You. And, forgive us, for we have often thought of other things as the great gifts from You, rather than You Yourself being the feast and the gift. Forgive us, for we have sometimes acted as if we could seek You without having to forsake our wicked ways or unrighteous thoughts. Forgive us, for we have treated You as if Your ways and thoughts could be understood by us. Forgive us, for we have not trusted that Your Word has the power within it to give us life by Your Spirit. But by Your Word and Spirit, You do give us repentance. So give us that repentance, we ask, and make us to have joy and peace of paradise with You unto Your own glory forever, we ask, through Christ, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP72C "May Waving Grain on Hilltops Thrive" or TPH508 "Jesus, Priceless Treasure"**

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Isaiah 55, these are the words of God. Oh everyone who thirsts? Come to the waters? And you who have no money come by and eat. Yes, come by of wine and milk. Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bred and your wages?

For what does not satisfy? Listen, carefully to me and eat. What is good? And let your soul Delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to me here. And your social life. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with you. The shore mercies of David. Indeed, I have given him as a witness to the people.

A leader and Commander for the people. Surely, you shall call a nation. You do not know and Nations, who do not know you shall run to you because Of y'all are your God and the Holy One of Israel. For he has glorified you. Well, he may be found call upon him.

While he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man, his thoughts, let him return to Yahweh. And he will have mercy on him and to our God. For he will abundantly. Pardon. From my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are my ways nor your ways, my ways says Yahweh.

For, as the heavens are higher than the earth. So are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For, as the rain comes down and the snow from Heaven. And do not return there, but water the Earth. And make it bring forth and but That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater.

So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth. That shall not return to me void. But it shall accomplish what I please. Then it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out with joy and be led out with peace. The mountains and the hills shall Break Forth into singing before you.

And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the Cypress tree, instead of the Briar shall come up the Myrtle tree. And it shall be to Yahweh for a name for an everlasting sign. That shall not be cut off. So far, the reading of Gods inspired.

And they're in tort. We were still hearing about what the servant has secured. By offering himself up as a sacrifice, offering his soul up. As a sacrifice, and That which he has accomplished. not just for himself but also for what chapter 53 called his offspring. And in the opening part of the chapter, it's still especially Israel.

who is being glorified, but one of the ways that Israel is being glorified. Is by the welcoming in of the Nations. Nations, that Israel did not know Nations that did not know Israel. And the ones who are welcomed. From both Israel and the Nations. Are, especially the needy.

Everyone, who thirsts you, who have no money. These are the ones that are invited. To come and to come and buy and eat. to come, buy, wine and milk. And so you have this threefold. Come Come come. but the ones who are invited, are the needy.

you do not Prepare to come to God by getting better. No, you come because you're needy Jesus says he came not to save the righteous but Sinners. Of course, there are no righteous. But there were those who thought they were. He said it is not the well who need a physician but the And even as we heard at the beginning of the sermon, on the Mount blessed are the poor in spirit.

And so there's this great invitation to come, but notice That the invitation isn't for mere subsistence. That they would receive just enough to keep them alive. That here come by wine and milk. Without money and without price. And so that which is lavish and Rich and abundant This is what we who are needy are invited to No, often one of the difficulties for the needy person especially for the neat spiritually, needy person.

Is to comprehend to wrap your head around the The greatness of what is being offered to you. thought what is being offered to you? Is to Delight in. The Lord himself. Which we'll come to in a moment in verse. And so there's this calm and calm and calm, but then there's this listen incline, your ear here.

So listen, listen, listen. In verse 2. Listen and then verse 3 incline, your ear here. And that's because, We need to learn from God what to come for. There are many, who Have an idea of what they want out of. Religion you know certain religious feelings or getting their life together.

Maybe being more effective feeling good about where they're going in life. Not feeling badly about themselves or Whatever. And there are man-made, coals and there are man-made ways. But all of these, he describes as what is not bread and what does not satisfy, he says, why do you spend money?

For what is not bread, your wages for what does not satisfy? And, These two things are always true about man-made religion. Man comes up with the effort that he is going to put in. Or the way that he is going to do it. When God is the one who by his grace, Does all the saving and God is the one by his word.

And God is the one by his word. Who tells us? the way to him through faith in Jesus Christ. The only right way of worshiping. and so forth. So That's one thing. One great difference. Between. Man-Made religion and the Lord's own Divine religion given to us in the Bible.

The other thing is that man has his ideas of what he wants out of religion but God intends To give us himself. And with himself an entire New Creation, a new heavens, and a new Earth. In which righteousness, dwells and which is filled with the knowledge of God. Um,

So he says, listen incline, your ear. Let your soul Delight itself in abundance. Here and your soul shall live. And, The Lord commits himself finds himself to those who come to him in faith. He says, I will make an everlasting Covenant with you. The sure mercies of David. And so there is all of this has said, all of this Covenant love.

Belongs. to the promised one from the line of David, the forever King. Of second Samuel 7. Who is called by his father's name. In Psalm 89 for instance, as David. the great greater David to come great. David's greater son. And everything that in the steadfast love of God, everything in the devotion and commitment of God, even unto himself.

As promised to this King. But this King does not get them only for himself. Like, we've been hearing the last few chapters, and Isaiah, like we've been hearing, in God's Providence to us in Psalm 118. He gets them for himself and for everyone that is in him. So that which Jesus has as a covenant from God.

And all of the covenanted love of God, for Jesus Christ, is for all of those who come to God through Jesus Christ. You trust in Jesus Christ. And when the the Lord Jesus comes, when the son of David comes and he is lifted up, he says during his Earthly life, he said when I am lifted up, I will draw All Nations to myself.

And indeed, this is what verses four and five say When he is given as a witness to the people. And a leader and a commander for the people. When he has lifted up, he draws all the nations to himself. Verse 5. And this is the great and Lasting Glory of the nation of Israel that they are the ones.

From whom the Christ came according to the flesh. So that when the Apostle is listening. The virtues and benefits of being an Israelite to the beginning of Romans 9. That's the dimax. that From from them, according to the flesh came, the Christ came the Lord, Jesus, the son of David.

And this is how as the end of verse 5 says, Yahweh. Their God. The Holy One of Israel. This is how he has glorified them. By giving this invitation in Christ, To a needy Israel, in a needy world. Well, what does it look like to come to Christ?

It looks like seeking the Lord seeking Yahweh. While he may be found for six calling upon him while he is near. And this implies to us something that is very serious and important. And that is that there was a time when he will no longer be able to be found by Sinners.

There is a time when he will no longer. Be extending this. Welcome To Sinners. There was a time when they are shut up in their sins forever. And will be punished forever without hope. Of repentance. Because as we'll see, in a moment, repentance is given by God's word. So as long as you're in this life and hearing his word, He is urging you to come and be urging you.

To repent. But the scripture says it is appointed for man to die once. And after that, the judgment Upon our exit from this world and we don't know when that is We will no longer have opportunity for repentance. We will no longer. Have the gospel. Preached to us. And so, Well, he may be found means seek him now.

Not you have some time left in which he may be found, you can put it off. Call upon him while he is near means call upon him now. Call upon the Lord to be your savior. To be your reward. For it. Is he who is this? Wine and milk without price and that, which Delights the soul with abundance.

That is he? Is the sure Mercies? The covenanted loves. belonging to The forever. King, son of David. And so you must seek Him and call upon him. And this requires, of course, leaving your sin. You cannot seek the Lord. Well, holding on to your sin. He said let the wicked forsake his way in the unrighteous, man, his thoughts.

So not only our behaviors that are sinful. But even sinful thoughts.

You have a fair amount of extra incentive. Two for six, sinful Behavior. It is embarrassing in front of The Godly. It brings you bad consequences in this life. if your parents consistently discipline. All sinful behavior will end up warming your bottom? But he says let the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts.

You see our ways and our thoughts. Are not only sinful here. In verse 7, they They are the source of all man-made, wrong religion. When he says, listen, Incline, your ear. And so, in order to seek the Lord, We must turn our back on our sin. And reject all man-made religion because this is serious business.

Now we're dealing with the Living. God, who is and The destruction or life of our soul forever. Hangs in the balance. He says, don't go by your ways, don't go by your thoughts. God's ways are higher than our ways. As high as the heavens are above the Earth. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

As high as the heavens are above the Earth. And so we must follow only his religion. On the one hand. And on the other hand, we must commit ourselves to live only according to his righteousness. It applies to both parts of what Isaiah 55. Has been saying so far.

So this isn't just saying You know, God and his Providence are difficult to understand. That's true. And, but when this verse gets quoted in that context, or in that way most of the time, you know, his ways are higher than our ways and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

And we just kind of shrug and say, Yeah, God works in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform as a Bible truth but that's not the one that's here. The one that's here is. Trust only in who Jesus is, and what Jesus has done because this is God's way.

Of saving. And turn away from all of your sins. Because God's way of for us to live as those who are saved is infinitely higher than the way that we ourselves would live. And so we must forsake our own ways. and our unrighteous thoughts. Then the blessing that comes is.

The blessing of the new heavens and new Earth. Restored Paradise. First of all, forgiveness is guaranteed. If God is the one who has welcomed you to himself, if God is the one who has given you the way of coming to himself. And if, as we're about to hear, God is the one who enables you to come in the way that he says, then certainly forgiveness is guaranteed.

So he says let him return to Yahweh and he will have mercy on him and to our God for he will abundantly. Pardon.

So, The Forgiveness is guaranteed because God is the one who brings us near. But you say, well, it's only guaranteed to the repentant. And my repentance is imperfect, and my repentance is incomplete. Well, that may be true. But the Lord is the one who is giving it. And he will not stop, giving it, he will accomplish it.

And so that's the comparison in verses, 10 and 11. For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven and do not return there, but water the Earth and make it bring forth and Bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eager. Okay, so the land is dry and dead and cannot produce life just like a soul that knows that, it should repent, but cannot repent.

But God sends forth his word. And God sends forth. His And he uses this language in Jeremiah 31 in Ezekiel 36. To talk about how his Spirit gives the soft heart, how his Spirit gives repentance. Like the pouring and sprinkling of water on that, which is dead to bring it to life.

And this is indeed what the Lord Jesus does when he baptizes us. God is able from Stones. To make children for Abraham. From our Stony hearts. He makes the fleshy hearts of the children of Abraham. And this is why it is such a glory that Jesus baptizes not with water.

But with his holy spirit, And so he does baptize the Earth with water as it were in verse 10. Notice? That's not immersion. That would have been the flood. He gives Life by the pouring out and the sprinkling. Of the water in verse 10. And he baptizes, our souls.

With by his Spirit by his word. It says social my word be that goes out. Goes forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me void. It shall accomplish what I please? And it's a prosper and the thing for which I sent it, And this especially is to give that repentance.

That he is commanding in verse 7, that seeking of him that he's commanding in verse six. So if you know, you ought to seek them and, you know, you ought to repent but you just can't find it within yourself. Do not be surprised. The Bible tells you, it cannot be found within yourself.

Rather keep coming. Keep reading his word, keep, especially coming and hearing his word and praying for his Spirit to use his word, praying for Jesus, by his word and spirit to give you That soft heart. He will certainly produce. The necessary repentance. And we shall be restored to Paradise.

Verse 12. Like something from A fantasy story except for it's not a fantasy. It is a description of someone for whom Genesis 3, 18 has been reversed. The curse has been reversed, the whole creation is singing and clapping. It's full of joy and peace. He could barely yeah he barely has to touch the ground and up comes the best sorts of trees and plants that can be That can be imagined, no longer the thorns and Briars that were part of the curse.

Because this is how God has decided to glorify his name forever. By redeeming, Sinners. Through his son, the servant as applied to them, by his word and spirit, so that they have repentance. And they have God himself as the reward and they enjoy him and glorify him in a new heavens and a new Earth.

And it shall be, he says, to Yahweh for a name. For an everlasting sign. That shall not be cut off. This is how God glorifies himself. Especially this is how God glorifies himself in his son, whom he glorifies, it will not fail. It cannot So, come come. And listen.

Listen listen. And seek seek Him. And forsake forsake. Your ways and your thoughts. And do all of this, especially By attending upon his word. Which is what he has designated. What he is appointed to send out and accomplish it in. Let this be. The habit of your life. Until?

He has brought you all the way to heaven. Let's pray.

Our gracious. God and our heavenly father. We pray that your spirit. Convince each one of our hearts. Of the sweetness and the richness. And the certainty. And the truthfulness. And the Of the gospel that is offered and proclaimed to us. In this sweet chapter, thank you for giving us to have.

In our family worship just now. Well, we pray that it would not just be something. That we Store away as A point to fact, somewhere. The archives of our minds. But that we would. Enjoy you and your gospel and be soft-hearted and responsive to you. More and more in our conscience, conscious and continual living.

Before you and with you by faith in Jesus Christ and the indwelling of your spirit in your son and in your spirit, you have given yourself to us. And so we ask it in Jesus name, amen.