

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #83

Isaiah 55:1-13

Here is one of the most amazing grace chapters in all of the Bible. God offers His mercy, grace, full pardon to any sinner who will turn to Him. You may right now be so sad in your life that you want to cry. You may be in darkness, despair and gloom. You may be enslaved to sin and be living a life of dirty depravity. God offers you the opportunity to walk out of here a free person with the slate cleaned.

In **Isaiah 53** we saw that One would come who could give God's forgiveness. In **Isaiah 54** we saw a future time would come when Israel would have God's national forgiveness. In **Isaiah 55** we see a present time when individuals are invited by God to have His individual forgiveness. The work of Jesus Christ of Isaiah 53 is not just connected to Israel, but to everyone in the world.

**GOD OFFERS A SINFUL ISRAEL AND SINFUL INDIVIDUALS A FREE GRACE INVITATION TO TURN TO HIM RIGHT NOW AND IMMEDIATELY RECEIVE HIS SALVATION AND HIS SATISFACTION .**

Something will be missing in your life until your life is right with God. God can bring His satisfaction to any sinner right now. God can turn the dry, desolate existence of anyone into a fruitful, flourishing and happy one.

There are two invitations that God offers to everyone in the world:

**INVITATION #1** – The invitation to come to God. **55:1-5**

The chapter opens with God inviting “every one” to pause and consider the salvation He offers. We may notice that this first invitation is extended to “every one.” Every person of every classification and every type of sinner is invited to come to God. **The pronoun “you” in verse 3 is nephesh which refers to your soul . So this is an invitation for a sinner to come to God so his soul may live.**

According to **verse 1**, any one who thirsts for the salvation which truly satisfies, which is found in a relationship with God, is invited and welcome to come. **The only criteria that must be met is that one must thirst for the satisfying water God offers.**

Jesus said that whoever would drink of the water He would give them would never thirst again (John 4:13-14). If you are not thirsty for a permanent satisfaction and fulfillment in life, then this invitation is not for you. If you really think you can find happiness and joy in yourself without God, you are deceiving yourself. After you have tried it all and done it all you'll end up in total depression and misery. There is only one Person who can satisfy you and that is God.

In **verse one**, God poses a question to you - are you thirsty for a satisfaction in life you have not been able to find? Are you thirsty for a satisfaction in life that will fulfill all your dreams?

Do you know something is missing? Do you sense it? Are you totally satisfied right now? If the answer is “no,” then respond to this invitation and come to God.

There is a unique feature to the salvation and satisfaction that God offers you clearly spelled out in **verses 1-2: This salvation and satisfaction are offered to you without any cost to you at all.** It is totally given to you without any cost to you; it is given to you by the free grace of God.

**You can come to God right now and He provides everything you need for salvation of your soul and for satisfaction in your life.**

There are three different drinks mentioned in **verse 1** - water, wine, milk. The waters represent that which gives life; the wine represents that which gives joy; and the milk represents that which gives growth. God offers every sinner a full abundant life. God offers every sinner a fulfilling, joyful, and purposeful existence. He offers any sinner a refreshing, fulfilling, and happy, and developing life. All He asks is that you be honest enough to admit you thirst for it.

In the Middle East, water was a premium commodity. Having an abundance of water was considered to be a special blessing of God (Isaiah 41:17; 44:3). Wine and milk and bread were staples of the diet. What God does is offering them a free everything. Everything they were working for, God offers to give them by pure free grace.

Ladies and Gentlemen, see what God is saying here because this is totally foreign to every false religion. Every false religion presents the idea that you can be saved and fulfilled if you give it your best and if you try your hardest. The Pharisees in Jesus day had all kinds of things you could do to be right with God. The Islamic religion in our day has a strict list of demands which include prayers and pilgrimages and bizarre rituals to be saved. The Catholics have a merit system they have invented that if you follow, such as masses, money and candles, you will be saved. Many Protestants have developed their laws and rituals for guaranteeing salvation. All of these systems are based on the idea that sinful man can make a bargain with God. Salvation becomes, as Spurgeon once said, “an auction mart, where each man bids as high as he can ... to procure salvation” (*Spurgeon’s Sermons*, Vol. 10, p. 93).

God does not make deals with men. He offers free grace. God offers infinite, free grace without any cost to you at all. God doesn’t require your promises, your commitments, your works, or your pledges. All He requires is that you recognize your sinfulness; and if you have a thirst for God, the moment you believe on Jesus Christ or turn back to Jesus Christ, that thirst will be fully quenched.

When one thinks about it, what could we possibly offer God to buy His grace and mercy? What could you and I possibly offer God that would merit the sacrifice of Jesus Christ described in Isaiah 53?

Many people are spending their money on things that will never satisfy them. They buy this and that and still can’t seem to find satisfaction. Real abundant satisfaction comes from a relationship with God, not in something you buy.

In **verse 3**, God says listen to My Word and come to Me and I will show you the same wonderful faithful mercies I showed to David. God was very merciful to David. He was merciful in selecting David and He was merciful in forgiving David. David sinned greatly against God, but when he turned to the Lord, God mercifully forgave David and raised Him up.

In fact, God not only gave David His mercy but He covenantally promised that One would come through his line, who would sit on his throne forever and that One was Jesus Christ (II Samuel 7:16).

God made David a witness to the people and a great leader and commander. Why? Because David thirsted for God in the depths of his sinful despair and God has made him an example for us all.

In **verses 4-5** we learn that God's mercy and grace go far beyond David and Israel. God offers His salvation to nations and "peoples" that Israel knew nothing about. Israel knew nothing about God's program that would reach out to the Gentile nations. People of all nations, even those far away from Israel, can experience the mercy of God. One came through David's line who offers pure grace to you.

In the end, as **verse 5** says, nations will flock to Israel to honor this Holy One of Israel who offers free grace. Nations will realize how special Israel is and Israel will invite various nations to come and see her Holy One and honor her. Nations will honor Israel and come to Israel to want to worship the God of Israel.

#### **INVITATION #2** – The invitation to seek God. **55:6-13**

Now I believe that the first invitation of **verses 1-5** is offered to any sinful unbeliever who needs to come to God. However, I believe this second invitation is offered to any sinful believer, who needs to return to God. John Calvin believed **verses 1-5** were aimed at Gentiles who never had a relationship with God and **verses 6-13** were aimed at Israel who needed to return to God (*Isaiah*, Vol. 8, p. 165).

However, I think we may also apply it to any believer who has drifted far away from God into sinful things. There are many reasons I believe this, but one of the most important theologically to point out is that both the O.T. and the N.T. point out that no unbeliever seeks God; God seeks the unbeliever (Psalm 14:2; 53:2; Romans 3:11). We make the assumption, then, that the second invitation is given to believers who have wandered away in sin and need to "return" (**verse 7**) to the Lord. The pronoun "him" in **verse 7**, "let him return to the LORD," replaces the noun "man" who is described as wicked and unrighteous. So the wicked and unrighteous man is one who was once in a good relationship with God and needs to return to Him, whether Jew or Gentile.

**God calls rebellious people to seek Him and return to Him while He is near.** If you are a believer and you know your life is going nowhere, God invites you to return to Him right now. You may have sinned greatly and done perverse and depraved things. You may know that your life is on a dead end street. You are dry and you lack meaning, fulfillment, and purpose. It is true you have believed on Jesus Christ, but you are so far removed from Him that your life is

a mess. What do you do? What does God want you to do? Well, He wants you to seek Him while He may be found. I understand this to mean that the moment you sense a conviction that you have a real thirst which is not being quenched in your soul, then you need to seek Him. Satan will try to get you to put off seeking the Lord until another day. He will try to convince you that you have lots of time. God says I don't operate that way.

**There are three steps involved in this process of seeking the Lord:**

**(Step #1) - Seeking the Lord means calling on Him. 55:6b**

What this verse says is that every person must do his or her own business with God. You must call on God and you must do this yourself. If you are here today and you sense this is talking to you, then you get alone with God and talk to Him. You do not need to talk to me or raise your hand or walk down some aisle; you must, however, call on God. When God convicts you, you get alone with Him and call on Him. Tell God you are returning to Him and ask Him to take charge of your life and to help in the next two steps.

**(Step #2) - Seeking the Lord means forsaking wicked ways. 55:7a**

The verb "forsake" which goes with these next two steps, is one that means to let something go by ceasing to have anything to do with it. The idea is to actually desert something (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 617). The tense of the verb is "jussive" which means that God is stating a definite action that should take place. This is not a suggestion; this is what one definitely must do if one is to return to the Lord (*Hebrew Grammar*, p. 321).

What one must definitely do is cease and desist and stop and forsake wicked ways. The adjective "wicked" refers to those things that are unrighteous and wicked that would condemn a person (*Ibid.*, p. 781).

**(Step #3) - Seeking the Lord means forsaking unrighteous thoughts. 55:7b**

The word "unrighteous" refers to thoughts that are wicked iniquity. Thoughts that are evil (*Ibid.*, p. 21).

What is revealed here is that the thing that apparently starts the process of defection are thoughts. You start thinking about something evil, sinful, depraved and then you act it out. God says, if you want a fulfilled life turn to Me.

**God says if a person will return to Him, He will have compassion on him and He will abundantly pardon.**

Now why would God be willing to have compassion on those who have sinned against Him? Why would God be willing to pardon people who have thought and done evil and perverse things? Why would God take you back if you return to Him, and give you a wonderful happy life and restore you and lift you up and use you? Why would God do that?

There are four answers God gives to these questions.

**Answer #1** - God's thoughts are not the same as our thoughts. **55:8a-9**

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. God thinks about us in ways totally different than we think about ourselves. When we sin, we are miserable and we think we are useless and of no value. God doesn't think that way. God is able to take the most miserable of believers' failures and restore them to a full pardoned state.

**Answer #2** - God's ways are not the same as our ways. **55:8b-9**

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so God's ways are much higher than ours. Man's way of restoration and forgiveness is often harsh and hard. Some demand penance and promises. Not God. His ways are not our ways. God's mercy and forgiveness is infinite. No matter what you have done, you may experience a wonderfully blessed life by returning to Him.

Suppose a man with a lovely wife and two little girls walked out and abandoned his family. He went out into the world and plunged into sin. Let us say that the wife had nothing, so she moved herself and her girls into a small old home on the edge of town. To buy groceries she did laundry for people. Her girls grew and became beautiful young ladies. The mother helped both of them get through college. One day, years later, there was a knock at the door. Standing there was the husband who had walked out. When the wife first saw him, she didn't even recognize him. He was diseased and dirty and it was obvious his whole life had been ruined. Just imagine the grace it would take for this wife to say - come in and let us love you and take care of you the rest of your life. Let us fill your remaining days with all of the wonderful things we can do for you. That is exactly what God offers one who returns to Him. His ways certainly are not ours.

When people wrong us and then apologize, we often forgive but we also say, things will never be the same. Not God. God says, not only do I forgive but I will give you My full blessings.

Now the "for" of **verse 10** is designed to give further explanation to the reason why God would permit sinners to come to Him.

**Answer #3** - God's delights in using His Word to shower His blessings to people. **55:10-11**

God has always graciously sent His blessings to this earth. He sends the rain and the snow to water the earth so that it may provide for people, and He does the same thing with His Word. In the same way, He sends His Word from heaven that it may water the soul and provide life to people. God loves to bless people and when His Word is carefully expounded, that is what it does.

When this sacred truth about God goes forth, that He will mercifully pour out His blessings on any who will return to Him, it does accomplish just exactly what God wants it to accomplish in His people. God will always do what He promises to do, and what He promises to do is to give a wonderful life to one who will return to Him.

**Answer #4** - God, for a memorial to Himself, will give joy and peace and plenty to those who seek Him. **55:12-13**

Look at what God says He will do for those who return to Him. You will have a life of joy and peace. You will have His full blessings. You will make a powerful, memorial statement for God. God wants you to be a memorial for Him for His infinite grace and mercy.

Are you tired and disillusioned with life? Are you worn down and depressed? Are you sick of yourself and sick of your sin? Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling - calling, "O sinner, come home!"