

GO OUT WITH JOY

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DATE: 02-08-2020

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 55: 1-13

Isaiah 55:1-13

*“Ho! 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.
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.
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.
Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
A leader and commander for the peoples.
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.”
Seek the Lord while He is near.
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.
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.
“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 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;
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.
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.
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.”*

Shall we pray and invite Him to touch us with His Holy Spirit, that we may understand what He has to say to us.

Our Father, speak for we Your children are listening. Touch our hearts through the power and the anointing of Your Holy Spirit. Make us malleable, moldable in Your hands. And Lord, let these words come alive for us. Show us Master, what it is that we need to hear from You, and then beyond that, what it is that we need to heed and do, so that we may be drawn closer to you. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

This is quite an interesting chapter. It captures a couple of verses that we have heard quite often, not particularly in this context of Isaiah 55, but we have heard before. “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” And then we’ve also heard, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,” says the Lord, “nor My ways, your ways.” But as we look at these verses in context, it provides for us a very interesting perspective on our own lives, and where we could be. I want us to look at it in the context that, as we look at these verses, we are eventually going to be moving towards communion, towards this wonderful memorial that Jesus has given to us, that He instituted with his death. So keep that in mind as we look at this 55th chapter of Isaiah.

Firstly, we need to realize that there are a couple of invitations. What do I mean by that? I like the way the first verse starts: “Ho!” in the American Standard version, and in the KJV and the RSV. Ho – which in present day lingo is: Hey, Listen up. And then, “Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.” So there are two invitations here:

1. COME AND RECEIVE.

“Come” captured for us in vs. 1. “Come and receive.” Who can come? There are two types of people that He is talking about in vv. 1 & 2.

- **To one who doesn’t have and is longing to be satisfied.**

The first type of person is the one who has nothing; absolutely nothing. Penniless as you may look at this passage, and say, “You have no money, but you can come and have. You can buy without money,” is the invitation from God. Those of you who don’t have anything, come and buy wine and milk and whatever you need to eat. Come to the waters, everyone who thirsts, and then receive.

- **To one who has and is yet not satisfied.**

The second type of person, captured in v. 2, is talking to those who have, who seem to have bought everything that they need, but are not satisfied. While it seems that

they are sufficient in the things that they have, it also appears that they are not satisfied with their sufficiency.

In fact, you can almost hear overtones of Haggai.

Haggai 1:6 You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.

What a situation! One has everything and yet, it is not satisfying. That is what Isaiah is talking about here in this passage. He says, “You spend money for what is not bread, your wages for what does not satisfy. The second kind of person that this invitation is coming to here in this passage, is to one who has but is not satisfied.

2. SEEK AND RETURN TO THE LORD.

Another invitation that is given is v. 6 says, “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.” This invitation goes out to those who are estranged from God, those who have got into wicked ways; and it talks about an unrighteous person. And the invitation is: Return to the Lord.

First, seek Him, and in seeking Him, forsake your ways. Then you will find pardon; compassion and pardon from the Lord.

So, two invitations:

1. vv. 1 & 2 – An invitation that goes out to come and receive from the Lord what is good and in abundance
2. v. 6 – To seek the Lord, forsake the ways that you are following, that have led you to this kind of estrangement, and then to receive compassion and pardon from the Lord.

Now, in the middle of this, God is saying, “Incline your ear. Listen to Me. Because if you listen to Me, then you will live; and if you do what I’m inviting you to do, I will make an everlasting covenant.” This means that God and us will be eternally bound together. God is saying: The kind of covenant that I had with David, I will make with you; an everlasting covenant, one that will bind us, hold us both together.

Then He goes on to amplify the covenant that He had with David. And we’ve read that: “Behold I have made him a witness to the people, the leader and commander,” and all of that. But the crux of what God is saying is that: If you will come to Me, if you will seek Me, then I will make a covenant with you, and it will be an eternal covenant.

It almost seems too good to be true. it’s almost like that’s exactly what is going on. And Isaiah kind of pre-empts that feeling and he says: Absolutely right! Yeah, sure you’re going to think like that why would God invite you to come to Him when you have nothing? Why would He want to give you a course correction when you have everything and you are not

satisfied? Why would He want to invite you to seek Him again and have compassion on you and pardon you? Why would He do that? I wouldn't do that!

Then in v. 8, it's almost like God is saying, "Of course you wouldn't. But I would. Because My thoughts are not your thoughts," says the Lord. "Your ways are not my ways. I operate on a different plane. I reach out with love and compassion because you are My children, My people. And when I see you in need, My heart reaches out to you. When I see you far away from Me, My heart reaches out to you. Of course, you cannot understand it, for your way is not My way, nor are your thoughts the same as My thoughts."

Then God says, "This is the way My Word takes place. When I give My Word, it never comes back empty. It always goes out and it fulfills what I'm saying. My Word never returns void." Beloved, as we just take that line and think about it, then everything that God has said is true, it will fulfill. From a place of need, God says "I will give." From a place of emptiness, God says "I will fill, I can satisfy." From a place of sin, God says "I can restore and pardon. My Word will fulfill what it says it will fulfill."

Then, He says at the end of it, "And when this happens, when you accept My invitation and we're in this beautiful covenant with each other, then unspeakable joy and peace is yours." Look at the way He explains it: "For you will go out with joy, 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. Instead of the thorn bush, the cypress will come up; 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."

This place of barrenness, this place of dryness, this arid place will suddenly become luxuriant and fertile and fruitful. And as you look at that place, it will be a wonderful lasting memorial that God has an everlasting covenant with you. There will be joy and peace that will be your companions in this state.

What a beautiful chapter! What a wonderful thing that God has promised to us, that He cares for the needy. He cares for you who are doing so many things, and yet, you find that it doesn't help. He cares for you that you have gotten into some kind of sin or gone off on a tangent and left Him. He cares and He says, "Come! Come to Me. You don't need anything. Just come. Forsake your way. Turn around and come to Me."

If we were to look at this whole chapter and wonder how you could appropriate this, I would say to look at vv. 12-13, and use it as a litmus test in your life. Ask the question: Do I have joy and peace? Is there that wonderful sense of joy? And note, I am not talking of being happy. Happy, as we have always said, is based on happenstance; it's based on circumstance. Something happens, and I'm happy. Joy is something that is eternal; it springs from within and is over every situation and circumstance because it has to do with this everlasting covenant that we can have with Him, and we have. It's the proximity that we have with God that produces that kind of joy, the fact that He lives within us.

And He gives us peace as well. Not that everything is hunky-dory or good and perfect in our lives. Everything may be in turmoil, but God says, "My peace is a different kind of peace." As

Jesus said, "It's not the peace that the world understands." Not that kind of peace. But it's a beautiful sense of well-being and harmony that God gives us to walk along the path. And so the question for you and me this morning is: Do you have that joy and peace?

Then v. 13 says, "We're not in a place of barrenness, or in a dry or arid place, or a place that is full of nettles and thorns. But we are in a good place. Again, I'm not talking about our situations and circumstances. We can't control so many of the things that are around us. But God allows us to be in a good place even in the midst of trying situations and circumstances.

So just to ask you: Are you experiencing this? And if the answer is, "Yes, I am." – Wonderful! That's just wonderful. But if you're saying, "Not really," then maybe we can take a few steps back into this chapter, beloved, and ask ourselves the question: Do I need to come to Him? Have I gotten to a place where I think I'm self-sufficient? I'm working so hard, doing everything I can, and yet, there's nothing to show for all my work. Seems like I'm getting things and it's going out through my pockets, as Haggai says. Or maybe, you just got caught up into some kind of behavior that is not in line with the will of God for you. And you don't know how and what to do. And He says, "Return to Me. Seek Me, and I will pardon." That's all you need to do – is to seek the Lord this morning and say, "Lord, I'm sorry. I leave that thing, Lord, and I come to you. Or Lord, I'm desperately in need. I'm in an impoverished state. Lord, would You give me what only You can?" Are you ready beloved, to make that kind of a decision at this time, to be able to say, "Lord, I'm hearing you loud and clear? I need to make a U-turn in my life. I need to trust You again. I need to depend on You. I need to reconnect with You." Will you do that, beloved?

A beautiful song that says:

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me, and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.

Maybe, you've just dragged yourself out and said, "Okay, I'm going to sit through this service." But I believe God is speaking to you and saying, "You don't need to be in that kind of place, a place of indifference – just okay. It's Sunday, I need to be at service." No. God is saying, "There is much, much more that I can give you. I can even allow the songs to rise up again in your life. I can give you back that sense of joy and peace and harmony in your life. Why don't you take this opportunity to realign with My will?" Are you willing to do that, beloved?

We have such a beautiful place to come to – the table of our Lord, and to recognize that this memorial, this bread and this juice remind us that Jesus paid a high price. He paid with His life so that, not only would we be with Him in eternity, but that we would have His Holy Spirit within us, to lead us, guide us every step of the way while we are here on earth, never

having to worry about the words we need to speak or which way to turn. For God says, "My will will be made known to you, because My Spirit, who knows My thoughts, is in your heart, and He will show you." So it's a beautiful place. And this memorial Jesus gave us helps us to celebrate it. To be thankful and to say: O Lord, how we bless Your Holy name for what You have given to us. And so, wherever you are, I invite you to come to the table, and I invite you to come within the scope, the breadth of these words from Isaiah. "Ho, everyone who is thirsty, come, seek ye the Lord while He may be found, calling upon Him while He is near."

Beloved, on the night that Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread. And when He had given thanks to God, He broke it and He gave it to His disciples and He said, "Take, eat. This is My body that is broken for you." In the same way, after supper, He took the cup and again, when He had given thanks, He gave it to His disciples and said, "Drink. Drink ye all of this. For this is the blood of the new covenant shared for the remission, for the forgiveness of sins."

We are reminded in scripture, to look into our hearts and our lives. And I invite you to do so, through the grid of the 55th chapter of Isaiah, and see if there are any course corrections any realignments that need to be made, remembering of course, that He says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. As far as the east is from the west, thus far has He removed our transgressions from us. And though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow. So, would you take a moment, pause, allow the Spirit of God to speak to you. If you're making a commitment to do, or make a change, would you speak to Him as we take a few moments of silence?

Dearly beloved, this is the body of our Lord, broken for you. Would you now take a piece of it and dip it in the juice which is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ shed for the remission, for the forgiveness of every sin. Would you dip it and then partake and be blessed?

Our heavenly Father, bless each one, Lord, who has partaken of this memorial of Your Son. Bless every home Master. Bless parents and children, grandparents, uncles, aunts, family members, friends, whoever, Master. We pray that Your presence would permeate every place and that each one of us would feel Your resurrection power flowing within us, energizing us for the days that are ahead. In the most precious name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.