

Come and Get It! – Isaiah 55

Introduction – The Reformation is embedded in these chapters 53-55 of Isaiah. These were the Doctrines of Grace recovered in the 16th and 17th Centuries by the church: Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ's substitutionary atonement alone. This is what Isaiah preached (Isaiah 53:5, 54:8, 55:1). From a descriptive mode of what the believer may have in Christ (54), Isaiah proceeds to a prescriptive mode (55), calling Israel, and the whole world, to receive what is now ours to have – and to have without cost.

“Come, Buy, and Eat” (vv1-5) – Did abundance, reconciliation, and eternal security sound good (ch 54)? Come and get it, God says, help yourself. The only requirement is that you have nothing to pay for it (v1). *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled,”* says Jesus (Matt 5:6, also John 4:14, 6:33-35, 40). Verse 2 addresses why men do not come: *“Men are so enchanted by the devil, that they choose rather to wander through deserts, and to vex themselves in vain, than to rely on the grace which God offers to them”* – Calvin. But the Great Gospel Preacher will not give up (v3, *“Listen carefully to Me...”*), and so all other methods men contrive for obtaining salvation are useless expenses (i.e. Eph 2:8-9, Col 2:20-23) and condemned. As David experienced the certainties of God's covenant love – *hesed* – so all who will listen and come may participate as well (v3). The Good News of Jesus Christ is that salvation is all of grace. It is free. It is here for you – now. Come, buy, and eat.

“While He is Near” (vv6-7) – Some might want to argue that a “bait and switch” is occurring, especially in v7. “I thought it didn't cost anything; what do you mean forsake my ways?” But we are self-deceived; we think these ways, these thoughts, are worth something. But they are not, whether they are works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21), or self-righteous methods of salvation (Phil 3:4-11). Those who come to Jesus in faith find that what they have forsaken was worthless rubbish; in the end it will cost you nothing to get rid of your sin and rebellion. It is like the man who lets go of the filthy dung in his hands, has them washed, so that instead, a priceless gem might be placed in those hands.

“Seek the Lord while He may be found...” – Verse 6 has particular importance to two groups. When Jesus came to Israel, this was their day to come near and the nation did not – and He would never come near again in that way (Matt 23:37-38). But church-going people are also in view – people like you. The call is urgent to you. He is near today in your life, He may be found today – but you may be tempted to think you can bide your time and come to Him some other time. Today, do not harden your heart; you do not know if you have a tomorrow (Heb 3:12-19). And if you do have a tomorrow, how do you know you will respond then? The Good News of Jesus Christ is before you today; it is here for you – now. Come, buy, and eat.

Our Understanding is NOT the Measure (vv8-9) – How can a holy God have mercy on me? How can a righteous Judge abundantly pardon me (v7)? Human reasoning would argue that forgiveness is impossible in your situation. God's thoughts on these matters are not your thoughts. The flesh would argue that you are not really in that bad of shape before God. God's ways are higher than your ways. We flop back and forth: I'm not worthy and so I can't come / I'm not that bad and so I don't need to come. You must see that God thinks you have a problem even if you do not. He is not asking for your opinion. Our ways take us in the wrong direction and into judgment from God. But God's grace is enough – the saving power of Jesus Christ is enough – you cannot add one iota to the finished work of Jesus. These were some of the errors that were corrected in the Reformation, beginning with Luther resting on Rom 1:17, *“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”*”

One Little Word (vv10-11) – Martin Luther wrote, *“The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him....One little word shall fell him.”* God's Word preached (and shared by each one of us) never returns void; it always accomplishes what God intends (v11). It is sharper than a two-edged sword (Heb 4:12-13), and it is that upon each one of us first. It may forever sear one from the gospel, or it may be one of many little words and messages, and seeds planted that God uses to bring forth His mercy and grace (1 Cor 3:6-7). But this Gospel-Word is also like rain (v10). We can't control it; we simply receive it. We cannot quench it; it saturates us and we flourish as it brings forth its wonderful fruit.

The Gospel Goes Forth (vv12-13) – This is where the Gospel will bring you. This is where we all go when we come to Jesus – and this is where the kingdom of heaven is going, how it is and will advance. *“However you and I may respond to God's promises, the creation will respond”* – Ortlund. It is not meant to shut us out but to urge us in. The Gospel is going to explode with joyful freedom and resurrection life when God brings his saving purpose to fulfillment (Rom 8:18-22). This Gospel is tomorrow's world headlines today, and by faith, as we live according to it, then redemption of every kind, physical, emotional, and spiritual – and more importantly, eternal – is a wonderful reality.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is world-conquering by means of grace. It is going forth today and you have heard it. Come, buy and eat.