

God Is Inviting You // Isaiah 55

Good morning church! So glad to see you all here today. Let's keep worshipping by turning to Isaiah 55. If you need a copy of the Scriptures, raise your hand and an usher will provide you one. Welcome, if you are joining us on the Live Stream. My name is Jesse Slinkman and I serve here as our College and Residency Pastor. It's my joy and privilege to fill in for pastor Rob this week.

What you're going to see in the text this morning is God's invitation for you. In Isaiah 55, the prophet Isaiah is writing to the Israelites who are in exile. His generation has committed sin and walked away from God and they are exiled from the promised land because of it. So, Isaiah is writing to those who will eventually return. And through Isaiah, God is giving an invitation to his people, not just to return to the temple, the city, or the land, but return to relationship with him.

That's the main idea. God is inviting you; - into relationship with him. This is not just for Israel long ago; this invitation stands for you, now. It's an eternal call for the people of God to return to him. To come back to him. If you feel distant from God in any way, listen to him. Listen to God's invitation to you: Is 55 verse 1.

[1] "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. [2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Do you hear the invitation? God is 1st inviting you....

- **To bring your hunger and thirst to him (v1-2)**

He says *[1] "Come, everyone who thirsts.* We all, as humans, have thirsts. I don't mean physically. I mean spiritually. We are all looking to quench the feeling of need that we have. The need for love, comfort, affection, home, for belonging. People have spent their lives trying to quench their thirst. But what God offers doesn't have a price. V1 *and he who has no money, come, buy without money and without price*

[2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? God says you're spending your money (your life) on that which isn't bread (Godly) and you're longing for things that won't satisfy you.

Are you going to the wrong things to be satisfied? Sin occurs when you bring your hunger and thirst to something other than God. That's how you fall into greed, or pride, or lust, or envy, or laziness. You fall into sin when you don't bring your desires to God. You turn to your job for value. Or your spouse for significance. Or you turn to money for your meaning. Instead of bringing those to the Lord himself.

You try to find other ways to satisfy yourself. But God says in verse 2. *Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.* God's invitation includes the promise that:

- **He will satisfy you**

Good food and rich food, spiritually, is delighting in God and being satisfied in him. When I mow the lawn in the summer (which I love to do) I get so thirsty. The sun is beating down. My whole lawn goes uphill. I used to use a push mower. And I would get so thirsty. I'd come inside and drink a huge glass of water. That's all I wanted.

In the same way, God is the only thing that can quench your internal thirst. He's the only one who can satisfy your hunger. Bring it to him. The more you bring your hunger and thirst, your desires, to him, the more he will satisfy you. The more the things of this world just won't matter, because God satisfies. Look at v3...

[3] Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. [4] Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. [5] Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. God is inviting you....

- **To be a part of his covenant and kingdom (v3-5)**

[3] Incline your ear (lean in, pay attention), *and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;* (continued invitation, and look at the promise if you come) *and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.*

Do you hear him calling you? Inviting you? When he uses that word covenant, that is not just rules and regulations, it's a relationship. God wants you to have a relationship with him. Not because you're so great that he needs you. No, God knows that you need him. He wants you to know him and love him. And he offers you the same love that he had for King David. V3 *my steadfast, sure love for David.* He's calling you. Calling you to be a part of his covenant and his kingdom he made with king David. Which we now know in the new covenant in Jesus, the true David.

And Christ Jesus is the one who the next 2 verses are addressed to:

[4] Behold, I made him (Jesus, son of David) *a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. [5] Behold, you* (Christ) *shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.*

These verses speak of Jesus, of the messianic figure, the offspring of David, who will welcome anyone who calls on his name. He will welcome anyone into this covenant and kingdom, v5. Including you. No matter who you are. No matter what you've done or what people think about you or what you think about yourself...

- **He will welcome you**

If you would come to the true David. If you would come to Christ, God will welcome you. No fear. No shame. No being turned away at the door. God will open his arms to welcome you into a relationship with him. And he continues to do that throughout your Christian life - he invites you to abide in him increasingly and unceasingly. v6:

[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; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. God is inviting you...

- **To leave your sin (v6-9)**

See the urgency here. *[6] "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;* (God is patient, but he won't wait forever. You only have so much time before life is done) *[7] let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD*

God is calling you to leave your sin. Leave behind all the ways that you break his law and his commands. All the self-absorbed thoughts. All the prideful deeds. All the hateful words. Leave all of it behind. That's what forsake means; to leave. You have to leave wickedness. Leave your sin and return to the Lord.

Look at verse 7 *that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* When you leave your sin and turn to the Lord...

- **He will forgive you**

God doesn't just forgive a little bit. He abundantly forgives our sin. He takes away our guilt by giving us the righteousness of Jesus. A clean slate before him. All the wrong that you've done in life is totally erased by what Jesus did on the cross.

That's how God expresses his *compassion* on us. It's one of the ways that he shows his love; by forgiving us. It's the greatest kindness. It's from the depths of his heart. Forgiveness flows out of the river of his compassion and love for you. He forgives abundantly. Look at verse 8:

[8] For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither 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.

These verses are usually taken slightly out of context to describe how God is much higher and wiser than us. And while that is true, the contrast is actually between God's holiness and our sin. If you look at verse 7, God tells the wicked to leave his way and the unrighteous his *thoughts*. In verses 8-9, God tells us that those things are not of God. Sin is not his way nor his *thoughts*. He's calling us to leave them and be forgiven. It's incredible that the very sin that he hates, he will forgive.

It's what he does when we believe in Jesus. When we repent and leave our sin and put our faith for salvation in Christ, we are forgiven by God. Our sin and its punishment is forever taken away from us. Leave your sin and experience his forgiveness.

Let's look at Verse 10 *[10] "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, [11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.* God is calling you...

- **To believe in his promises (v10-11)**

God uses the imagery of the nourishment of rain and snow to describe how his promises, his words, never fail. Just like the rain and snow accomplish their purposes to water the earth, so too God's Word, the promises that he says will happen, they succeed in what God says.

[11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it

His word never fails, including the promise of the invitation and calling he offers you. In this call that God is giving you, in this invitation, God says "you can trust it". You can believe that everything that God says is going to happen, will happen. It's because God is the creator of everything. Everything is under his command and his charge. No one thwarts him or stops his plan. You can believe in his promises.

Well, what are they? Here are some of the promises that God offers you:

God promises His unfailing love - God promises forgiveness - God promises peace and rest - God promises His presence - God promises to strengthen

and help - God promises freedom from sin - God promises guidance - God promises provision - God promises to work all things for good - God promises comfort God promises sanctification - God promises victory over death - God promises eternal life - God promises a New Heaven and New Earth Oh the rich and beautiful promises. And in every single one of these things...

- **He will be faithful to you**

In all of those things, and more, God will be faithful to you. The reason that you can believe in his promises is because he never fails. And he will be faithful to you. Meaning that he will come through and prove good on all that he has said that he will do for you. V11 *but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it*

If he says he will forgive you, then he will forgive you. If he says he will provide for you, then he will provide for you. If he says he will give you eternal life, he will absolutely give you eternal life and raise you up on the last day.

God is calling you to believe in his promises. Believe what he says in his Word. He will come through every time. He always follows through. He never runs away when you need help. He never has other, bigger, things than you that he has to worry about. He will prove his faithfulness, time and time again to you.

Look at verse 12 [12] *"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. [13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress (OT sign for life) ; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle (An OT Symbol of Peace); and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."* (ESV) God is inviting you...

- **To find joy and peace (v12-13)**

We live in a broken world - and joy and peace are hard to come by. You go out in the world, if you've lived for more than a day you know, there is so much hurt and heartache. Because of sin and its affects, there is devastation all around. Things are not as they should be. Does anyone else feel that? Because of the curse of sin.

And without God, all of us would be under the permanent curse of sin. Without God, without relationship with him, we would have no joy or peace. [12] *"For you shall (when you accept God's invitation to know and love him) go out in joy and be led forth in peace;*

Do you lack joy and peace? God invites you to come find it. He just told us in verse 12. We can have joy and peace. You can find joy in the heartache. You can find joy even in the midst of pain. You can have peace in uncertainty. You can have peace in calamity and confusion. How? Because you can have the deepest joy of Jesus as your savior and the truest peace - peace with God. Don't expect joy and peace in your circumstances, if it's not first in your heart. Once you have those, joy and peace in your heart, it overflows into your life. And he promises that...

- **He will provide it to you**

[13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress (life); instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle (peace); and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

He will give it to you. He *shall* - he will provide it. No one and nothing else can give you the type of peace that is found in God. You can try to search the world. You can try to find it in something else, but only God offers everlasting joy and eternal peace. He's promised to provide it, but will you respond to the invitation?

So the question we are left with is this: how do I respond to this call? How do I RSVP to the invitation that God has sent me? I want 5 things, but how? Here it is: draw close to Jesus. [1] ***"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!***

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (ESV)

The invitation to eat and drink; the invitation to be satisfied and never thirst is done through coming and believing in Christ. To love him and belong to him. That's how you respond to Isaiah 55. That's how you respond to God's invitation. You come and believe in his Son. That's what Isaiah and the prophets would say "come to the messiah". That's what the apostles would say - "go to the savior". And that's what Jesus said - "come to me and never hunger; believe in me and never thirst".

*****(Summary)*****

It's just that simple. And not as a one time thing, but life long. Continual. Coming to Jesus is responding to God. The call to be satisfied, to be forgiven and have joy and peace is offered by God. Respond to his invitation. He's inviting you. Let's pray.

Lord, help us respond. God, you offer us endless joy, forgiveness, and satisfaction, if we would only come to you. Lord, we are so thirsty and we admit it. We know it. We feel it. But we believe your son when he says that he can satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst. He is true bread and he is living water. In Jesus name amen.