

## **Review**

In chapter 54, God was telling the Jews about the future He had planned for them. In spite of the fact that they'd incurred His wrath because of their rebellion, He had only reassurance for them. In the future, they will grow in population and territory, and God Himself will teach their sons. They will never need to fear their enemies again.

Now, as chapter 55 begins, we are reminded that while God does have a plan for the nation of Israel as a whole, it is up to each individual to accept His invitation...

### **55:1-2 Buy Without Cost**

God calls out for everyone to hear: If you're thirsty and need a drink; If you're hungry but have no money, come to Him. He offers His blessings for free. This is obviously reminiscent of Jesus' call to the people on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when He cried out,

**John 7:37-38 ...“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”**

The person who desires to answer God's invitation would be one that could say as the Psalmist did,

**Psa. 42:1-2 As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God...**

And after an offer of free blessings, then the Lord asks why we waste our money on non-essentials and things that don't bring us any satisfaction.

### **55:3-4 Mercy As To David**

God promises that anyone who listens to and comes to Him will receive life - and a permanent contract with God. That contract, or covenant, will be for the same kind of faithful mercy that David received.

This is super-encouraging. Because David was far from the ideal believer. While he did have a heart for God, worshipped the Lord passionately, and operated in faith many times, he also had numerous failings.

He lost hope in God's promises after being pursued by King Saul. He convinced himself that life was always going to stink and that he should just escape into the land of the Philistines (1Sam 27:1).

He premeditatedly committed adultery (2Sam 11:2-4), and then had the woman's husband killed to cover up the resulting pregnancy (2Sam 11:14-15).

He had multiple wives and was a lousy, inattentive father. Overall, there are a lot of things to find wrong in David's life. But God still showed faithfulness and mercy to him. His promises to David never changed. His love for David never changed.

And the Lord is saying that when we listen to Him, when we come to Him, we find life and inherit that same everlasting covenant of faithfulness and mercy. How do we come to Him? Paul preached that we inherit these promises through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, Paul preached in Pisidian Antioch saying,

**Acts 13:32-34** "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.' As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.'"

### **55:5 A Nation You Do Not Know**

Although God's message has been to the Jews, He has opened that invitation up to everyone. But now, we see that He is specifically addressing the nation of Israel, when He lets them know that there is another nation that will come running to them because of the Lord glorifying them.

Who is this nation? It is a people group that the Jews did not know - the Gentiles. Some believe that this is fulfilled in the church - even as we read this morning in Acts 10 and 11. But it seems to be more literally fulfilled in the Millennium, when the people of the earth will flock to Je-

Jerusalem to hear from God (Isa. 2:2-4).

### **55:6-7 Seek And Return**

And again, a call to all people to seek the Lord. Notice that He must be sought while He may be found. Today needs to be the day of salvation, because God has said,

**Gen. 6:3 ...“My Spirit shall not strive with man forever...”**

There will be people who reject the Lord so long that they will be like Esau, coming up short of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15), because they waited too long in their bitterness.

**Heb. 12:17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

And so we need to call upon the Lord now, forsaking wicked ways. God calls for those who stray from Him to return, and they will receive compassion from Him.

### **55:8-9 My Thoughts Are Not Your Thoughts**

Of course, we are people who hold grudges. We say we forgive, but we keep a record of wrongs to guard against someone treating us that way again.

But God doesn't think like we do. And God doesn't operate in the same manner as us. The Lord's ways and thoughts are so much higher than ours. And for that, I'm thankful. Because if God was like me, then He would have smitten everyone on the planet long ago.

### **55:10-11 The Word Does Not Return Empty**

But God doesn't smite us all. He shows us mercy. Instead of sending out punishing death angels, He sends out His Word, hoping that we hear it and repent.

Some people use verse 11 like a magic spell. "Well, if I preach the Word, it's gonna plant the seed and people won't be able to resist the Lord. Because the Word never returns void!"

Other people take issue with verse 11. They say, "Well, since people don't repent every time I preach the Word, this verse can't be accurate."

The key to understanding this is to remember that Jesus told us Satan comes and takes away the Word that has been sown in some people (Mark 4:15). Does this nullify verse 11? No. God has shown us that the Word will have one of two results: either a broken heart or a hardened heart.

So even when the Word is rejected by the hearers, it's still accomplishing God's purpose. God sent Moses to Pharaoh to speak the Word, knowing it would harden Pharaoh's heart. That word didn't return to God empty. It accomplished exactly what the Lord desired it to do. It succeeded in the matter for which He sent it.

### **55:12-13 Go Out With Joy**

Again, some have interpreted this verse to be a prophecy of the return from the Babylonian Captivity. But I believe that this also speaks of the Millennium, when God will make a roadway in the wilderness (Isa. 43:19) and gather the Jews from all parts of the earth - some being carried by angels (Matt. 24:31). And the earth will rejoice, for the restoration of all things will have begun (Acts 3:21).

In that day, the vegetation of the land will be incredibly fruitful:

**Is. 29:17 ...Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field, and the fertile field will be considered as a forest**

**Is. 51:3 ...her (Zion's) wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD...**

**Zech. 14:8-10 And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. All the land will be changed into a plain from GHEH-bah to Rim-MONE south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the**

## **Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Khan-an-ALE to the king's wine presses.**

### **56:1-2 Blessed If You Preserve Righteousness**

When I was in high school, my two sisters and I had chores we were responsible for daily. But we always waited until our step-father was pulling into the driveway to think about it. Suddenly, we'd jump up out of our chairs and start madly trying to vacuum or empty the sink. It was always too late, and we'd always get in trouble for not having done them earlier.

Here, God is telling us not to wait for Him to return to start doing right. The one who preserves justice, avoids evil, and does righteousness BEFORE the Lord's return will be blessed.

Jesus spent a lot of time telling us to be on the alert (Matt. 24:35-25:30). We don't know the day Jesus will return, so we need to stay watchful and ready. We need to be found busy about God's business when that day comes. Remember that in the parable of the ten virgins, the five that were unprepared were locked outside of the wedding feast (Matt. 25:1-13).

### **56:3-8 Gathering The Foreigners**

God also reassures the foreigners who have come to faith. As we study these wonderful promises of God to His chosen people the Jews, never forget that we have been added in.

To the Romans, Paul said that because of God's kindness, we as wild olives were grafted into the rich root of the olive tree (Rom. 11:17). He also told them that we have been adopted as sons. (Rom. 8:15).

Never diminish your place in the kingdom of God. The Lord says that no matter how low your standing might seem, what He's looking for isn't your pedigree, he's looking for your faithfulness.

If you join yourself to the Lord, drawing near to Him, you'll have a better place than the Jews that never repented. When Paul was talking about those olive branches, he said that God actually broke some branches off to let us get grafted in (Rom. 11:19-20)!