

Series: Word of God

Text: Isaiah 55

Message #2

IT IS A POWERFUL WORD!

Introduction

1. Have you ever thought about the power of God's Word? When God speaks, miraculous things happen. God spoke and the heavens and the earth came into existence. (That's a pretty incredible miracle)! When God the Son spoke, the wind and waves obeyed Him. When God spoke, even the dead were raised to new life. The history of God speaking is recorded for us in the book we call the Bible and because the Bible is the Word of God, He still speaks and great things still happen.
2. When He spoke, instantly His grand creation came into being. When He speaks today to lost, dead sinners, they become new creations in Christ Jesus. The material universe was the result of God's creative breath. This book is the creative breath of God – "God breathed" or inspired! And as God the Holy Spirit takes the Word and makes application of the word to our hearts, our deadness becomes new life. His word is powerful, would you not agree?
3. In many ways, that is what Isaiah 55 is all about. It is about the power of the Word of God. Let me take you back a couple of chapters to set the context. You are probably familiar with Isaiah 53. In amazing detail, the sacrifice of the Son of God is depicted 700 years before it happened. The work of redemption is seen as accomplished. ("Surely he has born our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken by God and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed"). In chapter 54, the prophet sees great blessing that will come to God's people because the Messiah has overcome the problem of guilt and sin. Then chapter 55 offers a powerful invitation calling the nations (not just the Jews) to receive an abundant pardon from this great God. Isaiah explains how this can happen.

I. A POWERFUL INVITATION (1-7) (We have all received invitations to various events and functions. An invitation comes because you are a friend or an acquaintance or a present

or potential customer, etc. Generally the invitation states what you are coming to and why you are being invited to come. Finally you are told what to do to accept the invitation (Just show up, RSVP, bring a gift, etc.) Here is an invitation from God to the nations, delivered through His prophet Isaiah. Let's consider it.

A. A genuine offer (1-3)

1. Those who are invited – This offer is extended to thirsty people who have a great need but have no money to pay for it. They are thirsty and broke (Been there?) It seems like He also invites people who have at least some money, but there is a problem. Though they have the means and the strength to earn such means, what they have does not satisfy. Probably all of us are in one of these two camps. We can't buy what will satisfy and what we can buy never does satisfy. So both are beckoned to come and drink and eat.
2. What is being offered – Verse one speaks of water and milk and wine. How do these illustrate what we need? Here is an educated guess. Surely water corresponds to refreshment. When we are the most desperate for life-giving fluid, only water really satisfies (“He leads me beside quiet waters; he restores or refreshes my soul”). Milk reminds us of nourishment – that on which we need to grow. If you are gasping for life, take the water. If you need nourishment, go for the milk. But there is more to life than survival and maintenance. There is also joy, emotion, and exhilaration. That is the wine. God is inviting us to partake of what He has – He can revive us and strengthen us and grant to us endless joy! So, what is the catch? What must I do to respond to this invitation?
3. What must be done to receive the invitation – Note that we are called to “listen diligently to me.” “Incline your ear...hear, that your soul may live.” So it has something to do with what God is saying. Earlier He had said, “Come to the waters.” Now He says, “Come to me.” God is the water of life. He is the “milk”, the Word. He is the joy, the source of pleasures forevermore! That which we need is free. These things could be bought (and were bought), but not by us. What God desires to do to those who accept His invitation, is to establish a covenant with them. The love He has for David is a love He shares with us. Who is this one identified as David in whom

this covenant rests? See Isaiah 9:6-7. The covenant made with David found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead and is now seated on the throne! So this is really not about David, but about Jesus. Let me see if I can prove that to you.

B. A bold proclamation (4-7)

1. Listen again to verses 4-5. Who has been made a witness to the peoples? Verse 5 is surely talking about David's descendent, the Lord Jesus. I assume that is also who is being identified in verse 4. God's intention to fulfill His purpose for the nations is through His appointed witness, the new David, the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus said to Pilate in John 18:37, when asked if He was a king, "For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of truth listens to my voice."
3. So, those of us who have accepted the invitation, who have received the water and the milk and the wine without cost, are sent to make known the one who is the ultimate witness, the glorified one! (One author has said it this way as the Lord speaking: "I intend that unknown peoples around the world be called to the banquet of salvation. And I intend that when they are called they will come running. I will accomplish this by sending my church to call them to the banquet, and by beautifying the church with holiness and grace. And I have appointed the Son of David as witness and leader to the peoples – he will go forth in word and power, and his word will not return empty but accomplish that for which I send him. To join him in this great work is not a burdensome caboose behind the boxcar of blessing. If one car is full of water to give life, if another is full of milk to give growth, this is the boxcar full of wine – the most exhilarating cause to live for in the world.")
4. And so the proclamation is given, "Seek the Lord while he may be found..." How do people do that? They call on Him. They cry for help! They turn from their wicked ways. We can't seek God where He is not found, and He is not found in sin! But He is found when we turn from sin (repentance) and look to Him (faith). The result is incredible. He will have compassion and He will "abundantly pardon." Until we seek

the Lord, our ways are not His ways and our thoughts are not His thoughts. Verse 7 was about the thoughts and ways of evil men. God's thoughts are different. There needs to be something to happen to connect the gap between God's thoughts and our thoughts and God's ways and our ways. Until we seek Him, we are far apart. Let's explore that a little more.

II. A POWERFUL IMPACT (8-11)

A. In the connection of heaven to earth

1. One of the first verses you may have learned from the Bible is Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Our thoughts and ways are far from God's. Continuing in this situation continues to get us into trouble. The contrast is clear: pure/impure, righteous/unrighteous, holy/unholy. So His place is in holy heaven and we are on unholy earth and there is no connection between the two!
2. There is no hope of any reconciliation from our side. We love sin too much. Even if we could completely change ourselves today, we could never make up for all the wrong and wicked stuff we have already done. It seems like a hopeless separation – until verse 10 where a door of hope is opened!

B. In the cycle to produce new life

1. The heavens do not always stand off from the earth. Sometimes they open and pour down their life-giving blessing. The moisture comes and waters the earth and coming forth is life, which, in turn gives life to many.
2. Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, connected heaven to earth and brought the gentle grace of God to a parched and thirsty land. The Word is seed of life. The Word is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word is the written revelation of God. Do you hear the prophet? He says to us, "Come to the Lord while He is near. Hear the Word that your soul may live and be abundantly pardoned." Please notice the promise that God has given concerning the power of His precious Word.

C. In the certainty of the promise of God

1. The promise here is none other than the guarantee of a sovereign God. The Word will connect heaven and earth. The span will not collapse. It won't be too short or too narrow or too weak. The seed of life will not fail to germinate. It will not give sprout

- only to wither and die. It is a promise from a God who always keeps His promises.
2. The Lord sent His Word (Jesus) to earth to redeem a people for Himself, from every tribe and tongue and nation. He gave His Word (Scripture) to make known the revelation of Himself and to provide the message and the power to redeem lost people whom He had purchased with His own blood. The covenant, promised in verse 3, is an eternal one. The nations of verse 5 will come when the message is carried to them via the proclamation of the Word (missionary efforts). The promised pardon will be abundant and overflowing. God along with His people will be glorified! The sovereign Lord will complete a sovereign work because that is the way God is!
 3. “When heaven comes to an end and the trumpet of God has sounded and the dead in Christ have been raised and the elect have been gathered from the four corners of the earth and all the unbelieving tares have been cast into the fire, God will spend an eternity showing us how not one jot or tittle fell to the ground of all that he purposed through his omnipotent word. He will take each one of his children and show us personally how every sentence we ever spoke from his word, in witness or exhortation, accomplished things we never dreamed of even when we thought they were spoken in vain.” (See **Isaiah 46:9-10**). So how does all of this come together, work out?

III. A POWERFUL INDUCTION (12-13)

A. Our glad response

1. So who is the “you” of verse 12? I hope it is “you!” For the prophet, the “you” is the one who senses need in his soul, who hears the Lord’s invitation of refreshment and nourishment and exhilaration, who seeks the Lord while He may be found, who calls on Him while He is near, who drinks from the fountain of life, who receives pardon for all his sins, who trusts in the triumphant promises of a sovereign God as He has given them to him from His Word. That is the “you” of verse 12!
2. All of creation reacts to the God of our salvation who has abundantly pardoned! All creation rejoices as the sovereign God continues His work of redemption and brings all things to completion! Don’t miss the point among the singing hills and clapping trees. All of God’s creation gives Him glory and praise and for good reason. So

should our response be one of glad adoration!

B. Our glorious future

1. Verse 13 surely must be about the future – or perhaps better – about our future. I am reminded of earlier words of Isaiah, such as 11:6-9 and words that would be recorded much later, such as those found in Revelation 21:4.
2. The times of persecution and torture and sweat and tears and trials and burdens will be over. The panic of hurricanes and tornados and earthquakes will be forgotten. The days of war and bloodshed and terrorism and gang violence all done away with – all of that is found in the future of those whose lives have been changed by the Word of God! In Jesus' words, "then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." How does that sound?

Conclusion:

1. It comes down to a question for all of us to ponder. What sort of future are we looking at? Even in Christ there is sorrow and trouble mixed in with our joy. But the day is coming when we will "go out" in joy! And we will be "led forth in peace."
2. To be led implies a leader and the Leader is the Lord Jesus and when we follow Him there is peace and there are pleasures forevermore! What joy will be ours in Christ Jesus when we see Him face to face!
3. All of this is for those who respond to His powerful invitation. One more thing before we close. All of these grand and glorious words are wrapped in "and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." It is still all about Him – but when we know Him that is all good! I should hasten to say that His omnipotent energy and zeal directed toward the glory of His name is the same omnipotent energy and zeal that engages His heart to bring us joy and blessing! In fact, part of God's means in memorializing His glory is in the establishment of everlasting joy in His people!
4. To paraphrase a commentator who helped me a great deal with this passage, the great invitation in this chapter is to trust in the promise that God is planning for us to be glad in Him forever. He is planning for us to live in peace forever. Even His remade creation will respond to Him and increase our joy. Our joy will be found in His fame, and His name shall be known everywhere! Is that not good hope?

5. Do you have this hope? It is found right here in this powerful Word. I am praying that God will take this Word and apply it to you, whatever your need. If it is life, may He give you life! If nourishment, may the milk (and meat) of the Word grow you up strong and stable. And if your need is to find exhilaration in Him, may His great glory become our great joy! Amen!