

ISAIAH, A PREACHER OF GRACE
Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Intro: Since this is the Sunday evening on which we are to observe the Lord's Supper, I want the message to center on the Supper itself and the message that it conveys to us. So rather than go on in Isaiah, or even to take some other passage, I decided to look back through the passage which we have just completed for some of the distinctive characteristics of the message which Isaiah, the prophet, proclaimed.

In doing this you find much evidence of the grace of God, which is distinctive of the Gospel wherever you see it in the Word.

Grace is a word which yields more facets of truth the longer you look at the evidence of it in the Word of God.

Most everyone knows that it means undeserved favor--that God in salvation gives us that which we do not deserve to have, and that which we have not, and cannot, earn.

The problem is our sin. Sin has rendered us unworthy of any benefit which we might receive from God. Instead, we ought to receive eternal condemnation.

But grace also means that God has chosen not to give us what we do deserve. And so through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we not only escape hell, but we are guaranteed heaven--with all that that includes.

However, Isaiah brings out another aspect of grace which we do not always hear emphasized. In fact, our humanistic approach to salvation seems to indicate otherwise. It is this: Salvation is by grace also because, as far as we are concerned in our unregenerate state, it is unwanted!

Let us see how this is brought out in this great chapter which we have just concluded.

I. ISAIAH AND HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

A. His words for sin.

1. "Transgressions." This word describes a rebel, not just in the sense of violating the will of God, but in refusing to give God the allegiance which He deserves, and in refusing to be submissive to His Law.

This is really the rejection of God Himself which is described in the latter part of Romans 1.

1. "Iniquities." This is the tendency that sin has

which makes us inclined to turn from that which is right in God's sight to that which is wrong. For example, we do not have to taught that which is wrong, but that which is right--and then the battle is to keep us doing the right thing.

3. "Sin."

The first two words we have in vv. 5, 8, 11, 12. This third word is in vv. 10, 12.

Actually in vv. 10 and 12 we have two different Hebrew words.

The word in v. 10 means to fail in a duty, by which guilt is charged against a person.

The word in v. 12 speaks of a long series of acts which come from a sinful heart.

A study of these three words gives us Isaiah's doctrine of sin, and of the nature of man. Thus, God could not deal with any man except by pure grace.

But this is not all.

B. Man's evaluation of Christ. See v. 2, 3.

This indicates that Christ is unwanted. He is not what men think He ought to be. Men turn away from Him and consider Him to be worth nothing at all.

II. ISAIAH AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

Isaiah does not give us the slightest hint that any man was ever interested in being saved. No request was ever made by man that God provide salvation, that He send a Saviour. Instead, salvation was ordained and provided by God out of His own heart, and it had to be by grace.

The story is told in v. 4. See also v. 10.

It was God Who took the initiative in salvation. If He had not done so, no one would have missed it because there never has been a man who would seek after God.

The thought that men will seek after God, and that men want to be saved, never occurred to Isaiah.

But look at another point in Isaiah's Gospel message as it appears in this passage.

III. ISAIAH AND PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

See v. 8b and v. 11b. And then read vv. 4-6. V. 11 certainly indicates that the Lord accomplished all that He came to do.

Isaiah said "many" in v. 11 and again in v. 12--places where he could have said all if that had been what he meant to say.

Thus, in grace God determined to do what He is in fact doing --to save some, but not all, and to make sure that those some, or "many," would be saved. Isaiah makes some very positive statements along this line.

IV. ISAIAH AND ETERNAL SALVATION. See v. 11.

Although this particular part of the Gospel does not come within my subject tonight, note that Isaiah believed in the impeccability of Christ--His complete sinlessness. His nature is in view in v. 11: "my righteous servant." His life is in view in v. 9b: "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

But the eternal nature of salvation is to be seen in the word "justify" in v. 11. Once a person is justified concerning his sins before God, he can never, and will never, be condemned again!

Concl: And so we see that Isaiah preached a Gospel . . .
 -- which men did not ask for, and did not want,
 -- which they did not deserve,
 -- providing a way of deliverance which could never be reversed.

These are thoughts that should be in our hearts as we come to the Lord's Table to remember our blessed Lord. He did for us what we did not want Him to do, nor could we ever deserve it. He has dispelled the darkness from our hearts, and in grace has brought us to Himself. After we came, we learned that He drew us to Himself, or we would never have come. And now He has bestowed upon us a salvation which we cannot possibly lose because it was given to us because of what Christ has done for us and in spite of all that we have done against God.

The third verse of our SS hymn goes like this--a verse which we all can sing at the Lord's Table:

We have not loved Thee as we ought,
 Nor cared that we are loved by Thee;
 Thy presence we have coldly sought,
 And feebly longed Thy face to see.
 Lord, give a pure and loving heart
 To feel and own the love Thou art.