

The freeness of salvation is what keeps many people away. But this is pride. We want to be able to contribute something to our salvation. And yet it is so costly that the wealth of all men of all ages could never pay for it. It must be accepted as a free gift, or it cannot be accepted at all!

We want to feel that there must be some reason that the Lord desires to save us.

Thomas Brooks in Vol. I, p. 145, has written:

Oh! you would fain bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him; you are loath to come empty-handed. The Lord cries out, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth . . . Isa. lv. 1, 2. Here the Lord calls upon the moneyless, upon penniless souls, to come and partake of his precious favours freely. But sinners are proud and foolish, and because they have no money, no worthiness to bring, they will not come, though he sweetly invites them. Ah, sinners! what is more just than that you should perish for ever, that prefer husks among swine before the milk and wine, the sweet and precious things of the gospel, that are freely sweetly offered to you, &c. Well, sinners! remember this, it is not so much the sense of your unworthiness, as your pride, that keeps you off from a blessed closing with the Lord Jesus.

THE GOSPEL CALL  
Isaiah 55:1-7

Intro: The doctrine of the sovereignty of God and of election is often referred to as being inconsistent with the free offer of the Gospel when we would beseech all men to repent and to believe in Christ.

Isaiah apparently had no trouble with that.

In Isaiah 54 we have salvation looked at from God's point-of-view. In these first 7 verses of Isaiah 55 we see Isaiah as the preacher and as the evangelist. Even in those days, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21b). Here we see the proclamation of the Gospel to all. More than that, we see Isaiah pleading with sinners to come to the Lord, and to repent. But even in such preaching Isaiah cannot get away from the sovereign work of God in salvation. See vv. 4, 5.

The chapter begins with . . .

I. THE GOSPEL CALL (Isa. 55:1-3).

Note the connection between Isaiah 53, 54, and 55:

- 1) In Isa. 53 we have the saving work of the Messiah.
- 2) In Isa. 54 we see the sovereign plan of God concerning the promised seed of the Messiah.
- 3) In Isa. 55:1-7 we see the preaching of the Gospel by Isaiah, a very essential part of the plan of God.

What can we observe here relative to Isaiah's preaching?

- A. The call was to all men -- to those who were thirsty (Isa. 55:1a).

While no one really seeks the true God, yet men thirst for satisfaction. See John 4:7-14.

- B. The offer was for a salvation that was free (Isa. 55:1b).

- C. Salvation is pictured in four ways:

1. As water. Cf. Rev. 22:17.
2. As wine. Cf. Prov. 31:6; Zech. 10:7. Also, John 2:1-11.
3. As milk. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:2, 3.
4. In v. 2, as bread. Cf. John 6:26, 27, 32-37.

- D. The rebuke (Isa. 55:2a).

E. The place where salvation can be found (Isa. 55:2b-3).

Twice the Lord said, ". . . unto me." And then verse 3 concludes with a promise of salvation, called "the sure mercies of David." Cf. Acts 13:34.

II. GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN IN SALVATION (Isa. 55:4, 5).

Expositors differ as to who the "him" is in verse 4, and who the "thou" is in verse 5. Let me tell you what I think.

It seems to me that the Lord was talking about David in verse 4, and about Isaiah in verse 5.

But neither of these men saw the complete fulfillment of that which was said about them, or to them. What was said to them had to do with the carrying out of the ministry of the Gospel. David's ministry (in v. 4) has to do primarily with "the people," i.e., the people of Israel. But the fruit of Isaiah's ministry is said to refer to the nations, i.e., the Gentiles.

So God is the One Who raised up His servants, gave them their message, and then made that message effective. There is only one Saviour, and one way of salvation -- for both Jews and Gentiles.

Note how the sovereignty of God is evident in both of these verses, 4 and 5.

We even have the basis for seeing that salvation is the work of the Father and of the Son in the names that are used in v. 5.

III. THE SECOND CALL (Isa. 55:6, 7).

There are three things to note here (and this should be in our appeals to others when we present the Gospel to them).

A. The urgency of the call (v. 6).

There is urgency because of the uncertainty of life. But that does not seem to be the main point here. It is that the Lord is near now, but He may not always be. That is, the people who hear the Word need to realize that salvation is in the hands of the Lord, and He does not always deal with sinners in the same way.

B. The need for repentance (v. 7a).

No person truly comes to the Lord who is unwilling to forsake his sins--outwardly and inwardly--"his ways . . .

his thoughts . . ."

C. God's gracious promise (v. 7b).

David blessed the Lord, as he said in Psa. 103:3a, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities . . ."

Concl: What a lesson in Gospel preaching this is! Isaiah preached with a burdened heart. He preached as though the salvation of men were dependent upon his preaching--and in a very real sense, it was! There was urgency to his preaching. He knew that men must come to the Lord, they must repent of their sins, they must trust in the Lord--in His promised redemptive work--OR THEY COULD NOT BE SAVED.

He only had one Gospel to preach--the Gospel of the Messiah of Isa. 53. And it was that Saviour, and that Saviour alone, who had provided for the salvation of all who would ever call upon Him.

Let us rejoice in the revelation of God's redemptive plan-- that He has a people that He will redeem. But let us see that it is just as certain that the Gospel is to be preached. Therefore, we must go with the message, and in the words of the Apostle Paul, beseech men to be reconciled to God!