

PM Isaiah 55 He will Abundantly Pardon

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[0 : 00] And page 1075 of the Pure Bible. John 6, starting in verse 25.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi, when did you come here? Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.

Then they said to him, What must we do to do the works of God? Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in whom he has sent.

So they said to him, Then what sign do you do, that we may see you and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness.

[1 : 22] As it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat. Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. But they said to him, Sir, give us this bread always.

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. But I said to you that you have seen me, and yet you do not believe.

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

[2 : 40] And I will raise him up on that last day. Let's continue in that vein. Singing from Sing Sam's...

Isaiah 55, starting in verse 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. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. And clean 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.

Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 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 the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

[4 : 15] Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. 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. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 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.

So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth. It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish what I purpose, and it shall succeed in a thing for which I sent it.

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 fields shall clap their hands.

[5 : 36] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress. Instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle. And it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

This is God's word, and he gives it to us, because he does love us. Let's come to the Lord in prayer again, and going nowhere. Do you try, and try, and try some more, but you never seem to be any closer to fulfilling your five to ten year life plan?

Can life feel futile? Do you ever feel distant from God? You could feel all these things, or maybe you remember a time when one of these feelings were at the forefront, and dominating your life.

Isaiah 55 has an answer to all of these concerns. It speaks to our life when we feel pointless, and it teaches us how to deal with the major problem of being withdrawn from God.

This evening, we'll negotiate this chapter given to us by God by looking at three areas. First, come and seek. Secondly, abundant pardon, looking at both the quality and the quantity of that pardon.

[6 : 56] And third, everlasting bread and wine. But before we do that, let's turn to God in prayer. I was in lectures at ETS, and the lecturer was referring to verse 1 of Isaiah 55.

For the entire period of that lecture, I will admit I was distracted. By the beauty of the chapter, I just kept reading it. I had an urge that I must preach from it.

It's so deeply rich in God's heart for his people. You may remember, even though some of you here, and I can see some of you here, will be factually too young to remember Tony Blair's manifesto that brought him to power in 1997.

It basically comprised three words. Education, education, education. However, here in Isaiah 55, God's manifesto is clearly grace, grace, grace.

And are there multiple steps to this manifesto? No. Just one, Jesus Christ. Yes, you may be thinking, we are looking at a passage from the Old Testament, granted even from the prophet, who is associated with predicting Jesus.

[8 : 29] This is not Isaiah 7, she will bear a son and will call him Emmanuel. Or Isaiah 53, he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. But even though Isaiah 55 is not as explicit and direct mention of Christ as these two previous passages, I hope to make clear that Isaiah 55 is a tapestry of Christ woven through this whole section.

The manifesto could be called grace, grace, grace, or Christ, Christ, and more Christ. Let's look at our first section, come and seek.

Starting in verse 1 through 3. 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 cost. Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread, and your labour on what does not, that which does not satisfy?

[9 : 42] Listen diligently to me and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me, hear that your soul may live, and I will make an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

And then verse 6. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. Let's ground ourselves again. Who is the prophet speaking to in these verses?

He's speaking to God's covenant chosen people within the family of God looking towards post-exile period. This is brilliant. It's truly brilliant because it makes all these points immediately important not just to us, not just to non-Christians, come and be saved, but to Christians as well.

Come, come, come. This threefold come in verses 1 through 3, and this seek in verse 6, they are summons from God for his people to respond to his generous love.

It's not like playing tag with kids when you're on the opposite side of a table. However much you move towards each other, you stay just as far apart.

[11 : 04] God isn't playing tag with us, but he's calling us to come to him because he's already come to us. God walked in the garden with Adam, spoke to Moses and his people through the prophets, and he lowered himself in coming to earth in the God-man Jesus Christ.

Where in these two terms of come and seek do we find Jesus Christ? I challenge anyone in this room to hear the words come all who are thirsty and seek the Lord without hearing Jesus' own words of come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest or seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you.

Jesus always chooses his words carefully. He chooses them specifically as they highlight from the Old Testament in what way he is the promised Messiah of all the prophecies that are regarding himself.

What is the reverse of this call? Isaiah had a long ministry before the exile warning of the exile to come and preaching how the people should react on the other side.

He is well placed to know the sins which led to God's punishment. He saw the mass sin the unfairness but above all these shortfalls was the fact that Israel broke the first commandment.

[12 : 37] God was not first in their hearts. They had idols but even worse than that within their hearts as a whole they worshipped themselves. The reverse of this call is to come and go back to everything that brings enmity and death with God as was happening in that pre-exile period.

The real call is to those backslidden to come and to seek trust in Christ alone for salvation. Old Testament Jews who trusted in God were saved by Jesus Christ's death on the cross.

Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. This is faith in God. A whole life of loving God above all in their hearts is what Isaiah is calling the Israelites to.

Their salvation rests in Christ. Their summon was to have assurance in that salvation by trusting in God genuinely. Even if they did not know Christ or understand it in that time and in that place he would be in the way in which God would save them eternally.

Come seek come to God now today if you've forgotten the joy of being with Christ come back to him. No sin is unforgivable because Christ paid it all.

[14 : 04] if there's anyone here who's come just wondering what is all this Christianity thing about I'll pop along to church tonight I have good news for you all that hopelessness loneliness and uncertainty about the future can be traded in a second for the hope of becoming God's son or God's daughter and real assurance that your future is safe putting your heart and trust in Christ who died on the cross for your sins the call today is the same as it was to the historic truths trust in Christ he will not let you down if you're walking closely with the Lord the call is to keep coming and to keep seeking if you're a Christian who feels distant to God come back again to him once more seek him once more if you've never known Christ you're here today because Christ is calling you to come and he is calling you to seek we've seen how we are being compelled to come to God through Christ secondly what is this pardon like abundant pardon our second point so it's always a joy when I come to a church where we use the ESV as the reading pew

Bible because it's also the version that I use for writing and reading myself and the title of this whole sermon as a whole is he will abundantly pardon and the title for this section is abundant pardon the phrase doesn't come from any cleverness from me but straight out of the ESV's verse 7 let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts they are returned to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon I love the phrase abundant pardon it encapsulates the overflow of grace the sheer generosity of God I was in a bathroom at ETS and don't worry this story isn't going to take a really bad turn for the worst rest I was washing my hands I turned on the tap and out of this tap surged a torrent of water

I was soaked the floor was soaked it was a case of a very small sink and a very strong tap you can say a lot about Edinburgh Theological Seminary but their water pressure is something you cannot complain but it made me think after I got over that initial frustration that we all have when something like this happens that it's a bit like God and his endless compassion for us it's a complete overflow we said in our call to worship from Isaiah 40 that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins the hymn Rock of Ages has a line within it that I feel is inspired by this verse be of sin the double cure save from wrath and make me pure God says to us never worry there's always enough grace are you unsure

I tell you there is always double you will ever need it's a truly abundant pardon a complete overflow like bathing in a lake you do not need all this water your bath at home will do but there's a vastness to God's grace let's home in two aspects of this abundant pardon from the text here in Isaiah first abundant quality and then after that abundant quantity abundant quality verses one through two 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 why do you spend your money on that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food verse five for he has glorified you and verse seven let him return to the

Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon in scripture the terminology of wine and milk are statements of luxury not just bread and water but milk and wine we can see this in the Bible in the likes of Joel three in that day the mountains will drip new wine and the hills will flow with milk all the ravines of Judah will run with water a fountain will flow out of the Lord's house there's a luxury an indulgent abundance it makes me ponder heaven we can't imagine it but it will be a great astonishing thing and he always keeps his promises the term wine is also an important indicator to Christ here God promises wine at no cost in Isaiah 55 what does

[19 : 52] Christ do in his first miracle in John chapter 2 he provides wine at no cost and not only average wine but the best to the point that the master of the feast was in confusion that the best wine was not being served last Christ gives those good gifts John in chapter 2 11 states this the first of his signs Jesus did at Canaan and Galilee and manifested his glory God promises in Isaiah Christ fulfills in John verse 5 endowed with splendor brings us to Paul in Ephesians 5 25 through 27 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her cleansed by her by the washing of the word so that he might present the church in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy or without blemish that translation comes from the

NIV present himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing Isaiah promises the people of God will be glorified or endowed with splendor Paul tells us Christ is the way in which this happens he gave himself for the church she will be without spot she will be without wrinkle she will be holy and without blemish the quality of God's abundant pardon is without question abundant quantity abundant quantity our second subheading abundant quantity comes from verses 4 through 5 behold I have made him a witness to the peoples a leader and the commander of the peoples behold you shall call a nation to you that you do not know and a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God the

Holy One of Israel for he has glorified you we have previously spoken of the abundant quantitative overflowing of the nature of God's grace to us the individual for us for me for you that they are assured of being saved that there's always enough grace and God's well will never run dry but what about God's heart for people groups God would have the right if it were in his will to set his love upon the Jews to set his love upon Abraham and to send Christ to save them and we would be watching from the outside this amazing redemption plan for these people we would be sad and we'd be just to be sad we could still see the grace and the wonder for them have you ever walked through one of those proper high-end markets with that awareness that you just don't belong and people there will be judging you for your legitimacy for being there so myself and Hannah and Noah did this last October when we holidayed to

London we looked like tourists we had bags on we had non-posh clothes these were clothes to make our way around London for an entire day no one challenged us but there's still that vibe you just don't belong maybe what a Gentile would feel like walking in the temple in Jerusalem however that was not God's plan that's not God's will we are not on the outside we have been brought in to God's family verse 5 behold you shall call a nation that you do not know and a nation that did not know you shall run to you here we are seeing God's redemptive plan through the binoculars of scripture not just for the Jew but also for the Gentile which really does matter because most of us here are probably ethnic Gentiles and Hosea 2 23

God speaks of his intention for us I will show my love to the one I called not my loved one I will say to those called not my people you are my people and they will say you are my God Paul in Galatians 6 speaks to our status in Christ this is the mystery that the Gentiles are fellow heirs members of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel your sitting in that seat today is proof of Christ fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies God's pardon is not just abundant in quality it's abundant in quantity and we are beneficiaries of that truth abundant quality God's power let's look at our third point everlasting bread and wine and thank you for hanging in it is hot in here from verse 2 why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy listen diligently to me and eat what is good and you will delight yourselves in rich food we must ask the question what's this true hunger and thirst being spoken of here are we talking about literal hunger and thirst or metaphorical hunger or thirst in John 6 that we read before Jesus said do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the son of man will give you for in him God the father has placed his seal of approval the answer is found here food that endures to eternal life Paul says in Colossians 3 seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God set your mind on things that are above and not things that are on earth or even Jesus's very own famous saying in Mark 8:36 for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul we are looking at the human condition the strive for true reality the war against that feeling of futility in life what is the point and if there's one how can this be achieved we look outside and we see a world with so little hope because they have so little Christ often none at all the analogy that Isaiah and Jesus employ here is fitting as we can understand physical hunger and then we can apply that concept to things including eternal life I don't know how risky this is a statement but people do tend to get offended when I say I do not like McDonald's I don't if my son was here he'd be giving me what we call the warning eyes when you stare at someone in utter rage McDonald's costs a lot I can eat a lot and never feel satisfied full maybe but never satisfied you know there's a nutritional deficit from the choice that you've made McDonald's doesn't satisfy a good healthy meal satisfies living life for a bigger bank account the best technology that we can gain the greatest status that we can acquire none of these things will do anything for you when you die it's all a false promise living life for now brings no joy it brings no hope my son also did a project on the Egyptians not only would they leave objects in their coffins to use in the afterlife

[28 : 22] but they also go through rituals of touching things against their skin to give them senses in the afterlife too these are as useless as living for a bigger bank account all these rituals all these lifestyles will do nothing for anyone past death Jesus though has the answer to this realistic problem in his discourse with the Pharisees in John 6 we read earlier Jesus said to them very truly I tell you it is not Moses who has given you bread from heaven but it is my father who gives you true bread from heaven for the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life into the world so they said always give us this bread then Jesus declared I am the bread of life whoever comes to me will never go thirsty and whoever believes in me will never will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty not only this whoever anyone all who come to him will never be thirsty never be hungry and will always be satisfied however in this section in Isaiah you look at here there's another beautiful concept and he who has no money come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money and without price it's free salvation through Christ is free all Scottish people everywhere celebrate because it's free all we have to do is trust in him Paul sums up how we're to be saved in Romans 10:9 we confess with our mouth that Jesus is the Lord believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved it's free believe in him I hope we can see the links between what Isaiah prophesied and what Jesus stated of himself I hope we can see that we can only get everlasting bread and wine from him come and seek see God's abundant pardon for you it's true hope Christ is who satisfies trust in him there's no futility in a life following Christ I will leave the final words to Jesus in Matthew 11:28 come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest amen let's pray to our God father father still suicide cryna