

Amazing Love

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 June 2019

Preacher: Iain T. Campbell

[0 : 00] Now, turning back to the chapter that we read, and we can look today at the first two verses that we have in that chapter, chapter 55 in the prophecy of Isaiah.

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 you labour for that which does not satisfy. Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. And we can look at three things that these verses bring before us. Firstly, an amazing love. And second, salvation for the needy. And third, hope for the lost.

Firstly, coming to an amazing love. And our lives, one can say, is full of problems.

[1 : 15] We have marriage problems, health problems, faith problems, work problems, and so on.

And when you come to my age, you have old age problems. And where you are encompassed with infirmities that you never used to have.

Now, when you and I, when we deal with people who are needy, and needy people are classified today as being alcoholics or drug addicts, those who have mental health issues, those who have disabilities, learning difficulties, and so on.

And when we come to deal with such people, we are not at home. We are not at home at all in dealing with them, because they require much of our time and resources.

They require emotional involvement, along with the occasional bailing them, some of them, out of police cells.

[2 : 41] And being around them, of course, some of us have no choice but to be. With such, some are born into our families, where some others take that as the source of employment, to look after those who are classified as being needy, as having special needs.

We have no choice but to be. Some of us have no choice but to be around them. And we find, when we are around them and dealing with them, that it is very draining.

It is very draining upon us. And so we would like, instead of being, be found around those who are needy, we would like to be in the company of other people with whom we can have a laugh and share a joke, a people who will make us feel good about ourselves.

But the truth of the matter is, we are all needy people, carrying with us a heap of problems.

Carrying around with us a heap of problems. We make it difficult for others to love us. And when we see ourselves as God sees us, when we see ourselves in light of the picture that scripture paints of us, when we see ourselves as God sees us, then we have great difficulty even in loving ourselves.

[4 : 26] Never mind loving somebody else. And the word of God reveals to me and to you that it is for such that Jesus Christ gave himself over to death on the crushed tree.

God sent his son into this world to die for us while we were yet sinners.

It was not when we reformed our lives. And once we reformed our lives, we started attempting to do that which is just and good.

It was not then that Christ came to die for me and for you. But he came to die for us while we were still deep in our sin.

An alcoholic can reform his or her own life and stop drinking. That does not mean to say that he or she is saved.

[5 : 49] And supposing I had been living a life that was fast and loose or as we say today living a life that was on the edge. And the world applauds such a life and approves of such a life.

But then I reform my life. And I get my life back on what is a more even keel. It doesn't mean to say that I am saved.

I am still the same passion that I was when I was living a loose life. Living life on the edge.

Nothing has changed. Nothing has changed. So it's not when you or I, although I'm not saying that we shouldn't reform our lives if we are living fast and loose and living on the edge, I'm not saying that we shouldn't reform our lives, but it is not then at that exact point that Christ died for you or for me but while we were still sunk in our sin.

Surely this cannot be true and if it is true then surely God has lost the plot. Surely God has lost the plot.

[7 : 12] Jesus died for us when we were wretched sinners at enmity with God at home in our darkness.

That is the exact time that he died for us. Jesus died for you and me when we did not give a whit whether he would die for us or not.

and Jesus died for us when we were unworthy of dying for.

We were unworthy of dying for. The Son of God was stripped of all his dignity and nailed to a cross for our sakes.

For our sakes. And only a love that goes beyond our wildest imaginings could have created the cross.

[8 : 17] Yes for Romans it was a way of punishing those who rebelled against the empire. And yes there were two on either side of Christ when he was nailed to that cross.

cross. So what was the difference? The difference was in this. It was the just dying for the unjust. And only a love that goes beyond our wildest imaginings could have created the cross. And the cross should absolutely sweep away all our doubts about God's love for us.

About God's love for us. And these verses before us make very clear that it's only those who are thirsty who can come to drink of God's waters that give everlasting life.

That give everlasting life. And if we come with anything if we come with anything else, coming with anything of our own, then we will not gain entrance into God's kingdom.

[9 : 41] That is what these verses make very clear to us. It is only those who are completely broke and have nothing to offer and have nothing whatsoever to offer that can eat of God's bread that brings eternal life into one's possession.

If you come with your, these verses make very clear that if you come with your pounds, shillings, and pence, you are simply insulting God's generosity and demeaning the price of God's love.

God is not interested in my good works or in my pounds, shillings, and pence. God's love is not for sale like an insignificant trinket at a market.

Which brings us to the second thing that we have here, salvation for the needy. Now if you or I are going to be saved and we are going to experience God's love in Christ, what do we have to do?

We have to become spiritual beggars. It is not something that we find easy to come to terms with, but no other attitude will gain me or you entrance into God's kingdom.

[11 : 21] In a sinful state, we are spiritually bankrupt, we are spiritually thirsty, we are spiritually hungry.

And that's what these wishes are bringing before us. We have to have this sense of need before we can come to Christ.

thirst and hunger means exactly that, having this sense of need, that there is something lacking in our lives.

And that Christ alone has the answer for what is lacking in my life and your life.

life. And that is why he is bringing this before us. God is bringing this before us in these versions, about hunger, about thirst, about bread, about wine, about milk.

[12 : 28] We have to have this sense of need before we can come to Christ. We are spiritually bankrupt, spiritually hungry, spiritually thirsty.

we have absolutely nothing that we can offer to God in exchange for his love. Absolutely nothing at all.

It is imperative that we take advantage of his offer in these two verses. It is imperative that we take advantage of it.

He is not offering us, he is not offering to us a two-way relationship where both parties can give and take. No, God does all the giving and we simply take what he has to give.

And that is the reason why it is better to give than to receive. It models a relationship with God. God is the one who does all the giving and we do all the receiving.

[13 : 49] We do all the receiving. There is no bargaining with God. You cannot come to him and offer a diligent prayer life and an obedient lifestyle and think that you can then walk away with blessing after blessing going to be heaped upon you as a result of that.

Yes, I know that the Christian life is made up of a diligent life, a diligent prayer life and an obedient lifestyle. But so was the so was the Pharisee worship.

worship. So was the Muslim worship. So was every man-made faith, every man-made religion that you will find within this world that is made up of a diligent prayer life and endeavoring after an obedient lifestyle.

There's got to be something more than that. Got to be something more than that. And even if you come with that, you don't need to expect blessing after blessing to be heaped upon you as a result. No, we come to God as spiritual beggars, spiritual beggars, with nothing that is capable of winning over his favor. And we leave as sons and daughters filled with the blessings of salvation.

[15 : 26] We come to God with our thirst and with our hunger deflated and dehydrated and we leave refreshed with our cup overflowing.

With our cup overflowing. As C.S. Lewis once said, God's grace transforms us into jolly beggars and that is so true.

we are all beggars as far as grace is concerned because grace is simply undeserved favor. So we come to God empty, lost, unsatisfied, at odds with ourselves and with the world around us with nothing whatsoever to offer.

Nothing whatsoever that we can offer to Him but ready to receive whatever He has to give us. And that alone can gain an entrance into God's kingdom.

God, you and I do not come with ready-made excuses. We do not come with ready-made excuses trying to cover over our sense of need.

[16 : 55] Oh, but Lord, it was this person, it's this person's fault, or that person's fault that I am the way I am. They have led me astray.

They have led me up the garden path. Or maybe blaming this providence or that providence. If you hadn't allowed this providence or that providence to intervene within my life, then I wouldn't be the way I am.

I wouldn't be the way I am. But you see, God knows the reason behind our sense of need. And it's absolute folly on our part to try and cover over that reason.

It is precisely your sense of need that makes you fit to come to Christ. And nothing else. Nothing else makes you fit to come to Christ.

I can come to him with an awareness that he will supply the necessary grace that will enable me to overcome my thirst and my hunger.

[18 : 09] Neither will he bully me in telling me that I should never have allowed myself to get into the state that I am in or into the situation that I find myself in.

He's not going to bully me. He's not going to tell me. It's about time you got your act together and sorted yourself out. God, no, he's going to accept me with all of my failings.

And he's going to accept you with all of your failings as well. Did you ever pay heed to Jesus' words on the cross?

And he spoke many words on the cross. But he didn't speak one derogatory word. against those who were the reason behind him being there.

Didn't speak one derogatory word against me or against you. Neither did he speak one derogatory word against the father who had placed that cup in his hand which included the cross.

[19 : 32] He could have done but he didn't. He who was reviled did not revile in return.

He's a wonderful savior is he not? Which brings us to the third thing that we have here, hope for the lost. salvation. And this salvation purchased for us by Jesus Christ.

This salvation purchased for me and you by Jesus Christ the son of God it is not a figment of our imagination it is an experience.

and once we receive it, it affects every pore of our being.

Be that our emotions, our affections, our understanding, our mind, our conscience, our soul, our body, it affects every part of our being.

[20 : 42] it is not a figment of my imagination or your imagination, it is an experience. God, of course, as we look at these verses, God wants us to enjoy the salvation without price.

It is free. It is free. This invitation is too good to refuse. And too urgent to spend time pondering over it.

These verses are close to God's heart, for he repeats them once again at the close of the Bible. Let the spirit and the bride say come.

Let him who and let him who hears say come. And let him who thirsts come. whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Revelations 22 and verse 17. This is the message that God wants every member of the human race to hear.

[21 : 59] So what does he say? What does he say? Well, he is not wanting you to sit back and think about it. He is not wanting you to hesitate.

He is not wanting you to make excuses. He is not wanting you to meditate upon it. So what is he saying? He is wanting you to get up and act upon it.

Act upon it. Buy into this, he is saying. For someone else has paid the price on your behalf. Jesus said, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John chapter 6 verse 35.

And he also says in the same gospel, anyone who is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. John chapter 7 verse 37.

[23 : 08] Again, we need to have this sense of need, hunger, thirst. We have to have this sense of need.

Christ satisfies the unsatisfied and gives contentment to those who are discontent.

every real Christian experience comes from what he provides and not what we provide. However, being aware of that is not enough of itself.

We have to draw from his inexhaustible fullness if we are to experience this salvation. just like the woman in Samaria when she came to draw water from the well.

And she left and left the buckets behind her and ran into the city. Come, she said, and see a man who told me all that I had ever done, all that I ever did.

[24 : 25] is not this the Christ? Is not this the Christ? And that's what we have to do as well, to draw out of his inexhaustible fullness as if we are to experience this salvation.

Well, let me put this question to you. What stands today between you and this salvation? Nothing but your own stubborn belief.

Unbelief. Nothing but your own stubborn unbelief. And that is true about every person who confessed that they have found Christ.

Up until the point that they found him, nothing stood between them and him but their own stubborn unbelief.

And that is what is standing between you and the salvation on this morning. you do not have to deserve his blessing.

[25 : 45] You do not have to deserve his blessing. You cannot do anything that can earn his blessing. How can you pay for something that is not for sale?

will. So what ought you to do? Only what God wants you here to do. Come to Jesus.

Come to Jesus. Without money, without price, offering nothing that belongs to yourself.

Eternal life can be used for nothing. So why don't you come? Surely by now you are realizing that nothing that this world has to offer can ever satisfy you.

we have no excuses for refusing this invitation.

[27 : 12] None whatsoever. And there is no reason on earth why you should continue clinging to your idols. Absolutely none.

Absolutely none. That which is not bread can never satisfy. No matter how expensive it is, no matter how hard you try to make it work.

and the world in which we live is a vast marketplace full of costly trinkets that can never fill the void shaped God, the God shaped void that is within your soul.

yet we continue shopping in this marketplace don't we? Looking for a satisfaction that it can never provide.

Listen to Jesus' words. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

[28 : 29] why is this gospel, why does this gospel have such life-giving powers that can transform lives such as ours?

Well, listen to what Jesus says in John 6 and verse 63. The spirit gives life.

The flesh is to no avail. But if you put it in the way it is in the AV, the spirit quickens, which means gives life, raises from the dead, the flesh profits nothing.

In other words, if you carry on in your sinful nature, it will profit you nothing. that's what the flesh means. You carry on in your sinful nature, it will profit you nothing.

Why is the gospel so powerful? Because the gospel is the very words of the one who is spirit and life.

[29 : 48] life. If you read in Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, where Paul is talking about the first Adam and the last Adam, he says the first Adam was made a living being, but the last Adam, Jesus Christ, was made a life-giving spirit.

and may you come to him today, echoing the words of Maksheen, nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.

Because if you come with anything that belongs to yourself, he will be refused. Come as a spiritual beggar.

And he will accept you as you are. May he bless to us these few thoughts. Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.