

Isaiah 55:6-7

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: 12 September 2010

Preacher: Alex Cowie

[0 : 0 0] We are going to turn this evening to a familiar passage Isaiah chapter 55 Our text is found in verses 6 and 7 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 and he will have mercy on him and to our God For he will abundantly pardon We are simply thinking about this in terms of on seeking the Lord That is what it has to do with on seeking the Lord Now seeking things is something we are all familiar with Especially if we have lost something and we need to find it

My family know very well that a few weeks ago I lost an aerial that screws on to my computer It is for what is called a wireless router In other words it picks up the signal Very important thing And I put it in such a secure place that I lost it Effectively And I had to seek it and seek it and seek it Until I at last found it In fact when I eventually found it I had a replacement actually for a wee while But when I eventually found it I didn't even tell the family I found it We know about seeking We know that people in Glasgow City In Scotland In all the world Seek things Seek people And seek pleasures Seeking is something we all know about

And it is no exaggeration to say that The 21st century has brought upon our people A rapid increase in things to seek To obtain I wonder if you are like me And when you are looking at the news My Well I shan't be too specific But somebody in the family always thinks that I am addicted to the news program But to me it is a shortcut It saves you reading for hours the papers So I am very particular in what I listen to on the news And the beauty of the news is of course that you can see as well as here And it has always struck me as somewhat sad And yet illuminating To see very poor people In what you might call the mid-hit situation

With a skydish And a lovely telly in the house And not much else I always find that Sad And yet There is an intriguing side to it They have obviously sought To have such a thing As poor as they are They are going to have something Of the better side of life And there are so many things available to us So many consumables As they have it in the jargon That people go after this or that And they make a necessity What is not really a necessity at all If you ask any of the social workers They will tell you folk Oh they must have a television And they must have this And they must have that Things that In our In the past Say A generation ago Two generations ago People never bothered with They never thought

Of these things as essential As necessary But Things have moved on The shift is on A person would have a mobile phone And not a decent Pan for cooking with It is the way life is And people have sought These things That's the point I want to underscore here People are seeking Seeking Always seeking Creature comforts A little bit Of the better side of life Now don't get me wrong We understand that It's not that we don't understand it But we're We're endeavouring by way of introduction To put the thing in perspective To show that although Everybody wants a little bit More of what's available People miss the real Business Of seeking the Lord With all their heart And it's

[5 : 1 0] It is a very sad thing Therefore When you see people With With the sky dish And the med head I'm exaggerating a wee bit With the med head But you know what I mean A very basic home Very basic home Now the sky dish And the telly And a few other bits and pieces That they've sought To obtain And secured Seeking Things Seeking Seeking to have Some satisfaction Out of life Again we can understand that Seeking some security In an insecure world Seeking A bit of Space for themselves To enjoy life But you see Across the ages Of time The voice Of the eternal God Still speaks Through his prophet Seek the Lord

While he may be found Call upon him While he Is near This is the Great business It is The Lord We must seek Above all Other things And persons Seek him And find in him Life In all its fullness I have come Said Jesus That they might Have life In all its fullness That they might Have life In all its

fullness And so We want to spend A little while On this Familiar subject And learn Something more From ourselves Out of it To my mind Exegetically From the passage This is not Simply For the world

Outside It could be preached To the world Outside But it's For the people In the church As well In fact Some commentators Should argue It's more For the church It begins In the church Because We read In Isaiah Chapter 1 About people Who were Covenant people They were in The covenant Community And they Turned their Backs on the Lord Some were Quite flagrant About it Others Were going Through all The motions Of the religion That God Had given Them But their Hearts weren't In it And to them He addressed The word Come now Let us Reason together And here The prophet Says Seek the Lord While he May be Found Call upon Him While he Is near And so We want To begin In looking At this Subject On seeking The Lord With the Call to Seek him And I Think As we Go through It We Can Comfortably Sit With the Idea That There's Two Prongs To this To Those Who are Within The church And to Those Who are Outside It It Had Its Application In Isaiah's Day To the Covenant Community As it Was There In Jerusalem And Judah And it Comes to Us With that Same With that Same Prong As it Were Yes of Course It Comes to The Gentile World Alienated From God And it Comes to The Jewish People Today Who are Atheists And Agnostics And Buddhists And Hindus And Whatever Comes to Them Too It Is A Word That Comes To Everybody And Addresses Us Where We Are And It Comes

To Us Because God Has Made Us In His Image Genesis 1:26 Reminds Us That When God Was Creating He Said That At Day Six Let Us Make Man In Our Image After Our Likeness God Made Man For Fellowship With Him And We Have Been Taught Since Childhood That Sin Brought Separation When Adam And Eve Transgressed They Disobeyed God They Were Separated From God God Turned Them Out From The State Wherein They Were Created And They Lost What They Had And You See That's The Story Of Man Man Has As He Comes Into The World Has This Longing For God That He Can't Explain

[10:14] It It's This And He Can't Explain It Whether It's Our I Nearly Said Friend And In A Sense He's Become A Friend In Verted Commas Richard Dawkins Because We We Pray For Him And We We Speak About Him Whether It's Somebody As Apparently Far Away And God Denying As Dawkins Or Somebody Who's Brought Up In The Church Who's Switched Off People Have That Void In Their Hearts Some Of Dawkins Own Colleagues In Science Are Astonished At His Almost What They Call Evangelical Zeal Against Belief In God And He's Whipping It Up As We Know On The BBC Somehow Got In There Got A Good Foot Hold But

To My Mind And I Think It Can Be Demonstrated Amply And Some Do Demonstrated He's Fighting Against The Gnawing Emptiness In His Own Heart The Void That God Alone Can Fill And He's Seeking Yeah Notice The Word He's Seeking To Do Everything He Can To Not Only Go Away From God Himself But To Get Others Away From Any Belief In Him At All But That God Shaped Void Will Not Be Filled With Anything But God Himself God And This Is To To Fill Their Lives With Creature Comforts With Activities We've Said Recently We're Living In A Day When People Are In The Main Lovers

Of Pleasure More Than Lovers Of God They've Got A Tremendous Huge Appetite For Pleasure Seeking For Sport And So On Not That We're Against Sport Per Se But It's The Time That It Occupies In People's Lives And I'm Conscious That This Is Probably Been Recorded And I'm Conscious That I'm Going To Say Something No Deep Offence To David Robertson The Author Of Our Monthly Record But He Did An Article Recently On Well It Seems Recent To Me Anyway He Did It On The Time That People The Average Amount Of Hours Per Year That People Spend At The Television And It's Scary If You Take The Amount Of Time

The Average That People Will Spend At The Television Year On Year It Amounts To Years Of Your Life And In A Sense Much Of That Therefore Is Wasted And And I Suppose People Who Give Themselves To The Football Every Week Some Other Sport Another Week And So On If You Analyze It If You Step Back From It And Think About The Hours Spent On It Hours Spent Shopping We're Accustomed We're All Accustomed Now To Calling It Retail Therapy Retail Therapy That's A Cozy Way Of Putting It Isn't It Hours Spent On It My Family Know About Me But Seriously Think You Think About It Like You Step Back From It And You Analyze It We Only Pass This Way Once That's

It That's It We Pass This Way Once And Whatever We Seek The Call Is To Seek The Lord We're Living In Days Of Reckless Pleasure Seeking People Seek With Earnestness And Diligence And

Enthusiasm They Seek The Maximum Amount Of Pleasure From Life They Are Pleasure Seekers And Not God Seekers Each One Does This Seeking In His Own Way But The Lord The Eternal Calls Out Seek The Lord While He May Be Found And Seeking Him Is Something That Is To Be Done With Earnestness And Diligence

[15:17] We're To Seek Him Without Whole Heart And If You Remember When I Was Saying There At The Beginning If You Lose Something You Can't Afford To Lose You Keep Seeking It You Really Apply Yourself We've Said People Who Are Interested In This Pleasure Or That Pleasure Or Retail Therapy They Go For It And The Point Here Is In That Way And More We're To Go For The Lord We're To Seek Him We're To Look At What People Do In Terms Of Seeking This And That The Energy They Use And We're To We're We're Not To Think About Ourselves As Going A Bit Too Far Or Getting A Bit Too Serious Because We're Urgent And Earnest And Diligent In Seeking The Lord Don't Let Them Don't Let Them Tell You That This Is The Way To Be Seek

The Lord While He May Be Found Now You Know And I Know Because We've Been Well Taught It For Many Years That When We Really And Truly Seek The Lord It's Because He's Seeking Us We Know That Theologically But You See That Can Become An Obstacle In Our Thinking It In Fact It Can Become An Excuse I Don't Think I'm Really Seeking The Lord Because The Lord Is Not Seeking Me But You See The Lord Doesn't Say That To Us He Says Seek The Lord And If We're Seeking Him We May Encourage Ourselves To Think He's Seeking Us He's Put It In Our Hearts To Seek Him But The Important Thing Is To Recognize Our Responsibility

As It's Given To Us In The Word Of God To Do Just That To Seek Him That's Why It Is A Call First Of All To Seek Him But We Want To Think Secondly About When To Seek Him And We've Given An Answer To That Seek The Lord While He May Be Found Call Upon Him While He Is Near Most Of The Hebrew Interpreters Take Seek Him And Call Upon Him More Or Less As Coming To The Same Thing We'll Look At That A Little Bit Further On But For The Moment We're Just Taking Them Together Seek Him While He May Be Found Call Upon Him While He Is Near Clearly There is A Limit To Our Opportunity To Seek Him While He

May Be Found At One Level Of Course We're To Seek Him In The Present This Is Our Opportunity There's No Second Chance The Doctrine Of Purgatory Doesn't Belong To The Bible At All It May Be Pleasing Just As Reincarnation Is Pleasing To People Because It Gives Them The Notion That Well There's Another Chance That's Not The Bible Teaching It's Not What Jesus Told There's A Limit There's An Acceptable Time And It's The Now Of Salvation It's The Day Of Salvation I Think I'm Safe To Say That All Of Us Here Tonight Learned The Words Remember Now Your Creator In The Days Of Your Youth Before The Difficult

Days Come In Other Words Before You Become Hardened There's An Appropriate Time That's Not To Say The Time Has Passed For Us It's Simply To Remind Us Of Our Wasted Opportunities One Thing I Look Back On And I'm Sure Others Do Do Is The Wasted Opportunities It Wasn't Lack Of Light It Wasn't Lack Of Light The Careless The Pleasure Seeking Don't See The Importance And We Are Told To See It There's A Time In Which He May Be Found It Is When He Is Near I Remember And He's Still Going Round Isn't He Old The

[20:22] The Chap That's On The Shikli Opportunity Knocks And There's A Sense You See In Which It's The Opportunity While He May Be Found While He Is Near While With The Opportunity To Respond To Gospel Truth Well With The Opportunity To To To To Grasp The Lord Jesus Christ By Faith Before Our Hearts Become Hardened It's A Difficult Thing You Know When You Come Across People Who Have Become Hardened And Resistant Very Resistant To The Word Of God Their Time Has Passed And One

Has Come Across Them One Has Dared To Hope Beyond What One Feared But Sometimes One Comes Across People Like That One Thinks Of The Jewish Community People That I Saw Come So Close And Then Went So Far Away And There Is A Time When Opportunity Departs I Remember Coming Across Somewhere I Never Managed To Find It Again But I Came Across It When I Was Studying The Text Today If You Will Hear His Voice Harden Not Your Hearts And It Words Of A Hymn I Just Can't Remember Where I Found It But It Goes Like This At This Part Of It There Is A Line By S Scene That Crosses Every Path The Hidden Boundary Between God's Patience And His Wrath Oh

Where Is That Mysterious Board By Which Our Life Is Crossed That God Himself Has Sworn That He Who Goes Is Lost There Is There Is A Point It Crosses Our Path And Therefore It Ought To Concern Us That We May Be Near It And That We Are Bound To Respond To The Word In The

Day Of Opportunity We Are To Be Serious About This And To Use Our Opportunity And That Brings Us To The Third Thing How Must He Be Sought We're Told I Think In The Second Part Of Verse Six Call Upon While He Is Near Whilst I Recognize What

Expositors Say That That Seek Him And Call Upon Him Are Pretty Close Together I Think You Would Agree With Me That Call Upon Him Brings A Slightly Different Shade Of Meaning Because Seeking Him It Is True Is Important We Can Seek Him Quietly We Can Read Our Bible We Can Listen To Sermons We Can Read Books I Remember A Lady She Was Actually The Late Ronald Mackay Aunt And She Was In The Congregation At Home And She Used To Read Spurgeon Books To The Unconverted And And Then We Talked About Them The Subject Matter And Eventually She Came Into The Faith She Wasn't Young When She Came Into The Faith And Became A Great Asset

To Us But You See For Long Enough She Was Quietly Seeking She Was Reading The Bible And These Sermons And So On But The Time Came When She Called Upon The Name Of The Lord And There Must Be A Calling Upon There Must Be A Pleading With Him There Must Be A Real Resolve In To To To Speak To To Beg Him To Come To Us To Beg Him To Show Us That We Have Repented To Show Us That We We Have Come To Christ Sometimes We Can Be Saying I I Think I Did But I Am Not Sure I Am Not Sure We Need To Call Upon Him And Say To Lord Make Me Sure Confirm To Me Your Gracious

[25 : 26] Word Which I Did Gladly Hear Enable Me To Know That The Burden Of My Sin Is Rolled Away We Need To Speak To Him Like That We Need To Talk To Him Call Upon Him You'll Never Get Better Than Those Words Of Hosea You've Heard Me Say Them Before Take With Your Words We Need To Do That The Most Mature Christian Needs To Do That Again And Again We Take To Him Words Sometimes We have To Say Lord Here I am Again Sinned And Fell Wandered Away We Take We Take We We Call Upon Him We Speak To Him We Call Upon His Name And You see When we Call Upon His Name We Come To Him As Those Who Have To Own Up To Being By Nature As The Bible Says The Wicked Now

You see Some Folk Object Especially In 21st Century Christianity They object To Christians Being Called Wicked And There's A Sense In Which Somebody Born Of The Spirit Ought Not To Be Wicked But They May Do Wicked Things That's The Point They May Do Wicked Things Some People Say About A Certain Group We Better Not Name How Can They Be Christians Like That Well The Answer Is The More You Know Yourself In Your Own Heart The More You'll Say I Know How They Can Do That We Do Sometimes What We Ought Not To Do And The Word Therefore Reminds Us Of The Importance Of Coming Clean With The Lord And Telling Him We're Guilty Here Or There Come Now Let Us Reason Together

That's Why We Read In Isaiah Chapter 1 Come Now Let Us Reason Together Though Your Sins Be As Scarlet Well You have To Admit That's The Way It Is Else You'll Never Know The Cleansing You'll Never Know The Restoring I I Can't Remember The Exact Word John Used In Prayer Before We Come In Here But He It Was Something Like A Reconditioning Lord That You Would Recondition Us It Probably Wasn't Reconditioned But It Was Quite Close To That And I Thought That's It We Need To Be Recon We Need To Be Conditioned He Restores My Soul Doesn't The The Sam Say That There Are Times We Need To Be Restored And And What What About It We Go To Him We Seek Him We Call Upon Him Restore Me Restore Me A Sense Of Forgiveness In Christ Restore To Me The Joy

Of Your Salvation Coming From An Engineering Background Reconditioning Is A Good Word Actually See What The Point I Making Here We Go To Him And We Don't Modify What We Are We Just Tell Him As It Is And We Ask Him To Cleanse Us And Renew Us And To Rid Us Of The Iniquities That Often Prevail Against Us And Spoil Our Witness How Often We We Blown A Feud And Said The Wrong Thing Or Used The Wrong To And We Need Not Only To Be Cleansed But Renewed

Call Upon Him And Forsake What Is Wrong Whatever It Is That Is Is Wicked Is Defective Is Unrighteous The word Unrighteous Is Really Iniquitous And Iniquity Is Distinguished As The Outbreakings Of Sin Within In Wrong Words Or Conduct We Need To Be Rid Of These Things All That Is Adverse In Our Lives If You Tell Somebody That Stubborn Is As Witchcraft They Would Think You Were Off The Head That's What The Bible Says Stubborn Terrible Thing We

[30 : 29] Need To Listen To What God Calls Sin And Iniquity And Then Go To Him And Speak To Him And Tell Him That We We're Coming To See See What It Says Here Let Him Return To The

Lord We Need To Return To And I'll Guarantee You Here Tonight That There's Not One Of Us That Doesn't Need To Return To The Lord To Some Extent We Need To Return To Him And We Need As We Said A Moment Ago We Need To Take Words With Us Appropriate To Us Individually Seek Him In The Opportuned Time And Call Upon Him While He Is Near And If It Is To As It Should Be To Ask For Pardon Cleansing

Renewal Then Let's Do That Through His Appointed Means The Lord Jesus Christ If We Confess Our Sins The Bible The To Cleanse Us From All Unrighteousness Lastly And Briefly When The Seeker Finds And As We've Really Anticipated It Is And Only Then It Is When He Returns To The Lord You See That In The Passage Let Him Return To The Lord And He Will Have Mercy On And To Our God For He Will Abundantly Pardon As Someone Has Said When Sin Is Forsaken Mercy Is Sought Sorry I can't Tell You When Sin

Is Forsaken Mercy Is Sought And We Will Have It He Is A Merciful God But He Has Ordered Things This Way That We Seek To Forsake Our Sin Let The Wicked Man Forsake His Way And The Iniquitous Man Is Thoughts Let Him Return To The Lord It Is In Returning That We Have Quietness And Confidence This Is The Way He Has Ordered It When We Find A Place In Our Hearts For Returning To The Lord And Seeking His Forgiveness We Will Have Mercy From Him One Is Reminded Of Familiar Words I Hear Thy Welcome Voice Which Calls Me Lord To Thee For Cleansing In The Precious Blood That Flowed On Calvary I Am Coming Lord Coming Now To Thee Wash Me Cleanse Me In The Blood That Flowed On Calvary Dear Friends There's Not One Of Us Who Does Not Need To Say These Words Or Words Like And We're All In The Same Boat Here More Or Less And You Notice What Is Said When We Operate And We Act And React In This Way He Will Freely Pardon He Will Have Mercy Upon Us And He Will Abundantly Or Freely Pardon Now There's A Subtle Point To Notice Here As We Come To The Conclusion His

Acceptance Of Us And His Forgiveness Of Us Is Not On Account Of Our Repentance We Were Thinking This Morning About This That We Are Rewarded According To Our Works And Not On Account Of Them If We Are Rewarded On Account Of Them Then God Is A Debtor To Us And It's The Same With Repentance He Doesn't Grant Us Mercy And Pardon On Account Of Our Repentance But According To It As We Respond The Way We Should He Is Gracious You See He Freely Pardons He Abundantly Pardons He Pardons For His Own Sake He Pardons For Christ's [35 : 33] Sake That Is The Fountain Of Forgiveness If You Like As We Were Saying A Moment Ago It Is On The Basis Of The Shed Blood Of Jesus That He Freely Pardons The The The The Basis That Was Held Forth In This Very Great And Grand Prophecy Of Isaiah Isaiah 53 Is Full Of Christ And Full Of The Way Of Pardon In Christ How Often Jesus Highlighted Especially As He Approached His Death This When He Took The Bread This Is My Body Broken For You And The This Is The New Cabinet In My Blood All Of You Drink From It In Remembrance Of Me And That's Why You See As We Finish That's Why If We Sought The Lord And Found Him Gracious To Us

And Abundant In Pardon We Have An Entitlement To Remember His Death To Take Eat And To Drink Of The Cup It's An Entitlement He Gives Us If We Follow This Through If We Have Sought Him While He May Be Found And Call Upon Him While He Is Near Forsaken Our Wicked Ways Acknowledged Our Sin And Failing And Return To Return To Then We Have This Guarantee He Has Mercy On Us And He Gives Us Abundant Pardon And Therefore It is The Privilege Of Those Who Are In That Position To Remember The Death Of The Saviour And To Enjoy The Feast Of Remembrance Because It Holds Before Us Sought

The Lord And That The Lord Has Graciously Found Us And Received Us And Every Opportunity Then That Comes Our Way To Remember His Death Is A Time Of Living Fellowship Not Only With One Another But Supremely With The Lord Himself Let Us Be Encouraged Them And Take To Heart These Wonderful Precious Words On Seeking The Lord And On Experiencing His Abundant Pardon Amen