

Isaiah 55:6-7

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[0 : 00] Well, we turn back with me then to this passage we read, Isaiah, in chapter 55.

I'd like to just take as our text today the verses Mark 6 and 7. I'm conscious that already I've considered the first two verses, especially with you in the previous sermon, but I'd like to focus on the words that we have here.

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. Seek the Lord while he may be found and call out to him while he is near.

Normally when we search for something, then we do it because it's something we either have to do, something we should do, or perhaps even just something that we want to do.

[1 : 17] And it's normally for our benefit, somewhere along the line at least. We don't go searching after something that's going to cause us real grief or real anguish, because that would just be foolishness.

But we seek something out because it's going to be to our advantage and it's normally available to us. Well, here we have this great invitation to search out something that can be found.

It's not something that's out with the reach of any of us here. We're told, first of all, to seek the Lord. And God wouldn't tell us to seek after him unless he is able to be found.

And we're also told to call out to him. And God wouldn't let us call out to him unless he is going to hear us. So in considering these verses here, I'd like just to put it under three headings.

First of all, to consider the invitation that we have here. Secondly, we can consider the conditions for entry to this great feast that's laid on here.

[2 : 31] And finally, to briefly consider the urgency of accepting this great invitation. So first of all, the invitation itself.

And we need to be mindful that God is, in the first instance here, he is dealing with his people Israel. And he is assuring them that despite all of their sins against him, and despite their time in exile, despite all that they've done wrong against him, that he is going to show mercy to them.

And he is going to grant full forgiveness of their sin. Nevertheless, it's also quite appropriate for us to consider this and to apply this teaching to ourselves today.

Because what God is doing in this section of the prophecy of Isaiah is he is revealing his new plan. So that salvation in Jesus Christ is available to everyone.

And we have this section in particular from chapter 51 up to chapter 55 here. Where God is revealing very specific details about his servant, about the Messiah.

[3 : 42] And within this section of the prophecy, the most significant event in human history is described in great detail. 700 years before it actually occurred.

And in particular, the well-known chapter, which I'm sure most or not all of us will be familiar with in chapter 53. We are given a very vivid account of the coming of Christ, of his sufferings, which will secure salvation for all who place their faith and their trust in him.

We're given that, these details, which are so vivid, which are so clear. They depict the suffering servant enduring the wrath and the curse that is due to us.

That's a price that is paid by Christ on our behalf. And in Isaiah chapter 54, it tells us of the promises that are now sealed for us in his word.

And Isaiah is reminding us that there is a point to all of these sufferings that Christ endured. The agony and the pain. He's reminding us that Christ has not died in vain.

[5 : 01] And that his blood has secured something precious for us. And that is the promise of full covenant blessings. This is the new covenant. This is the new way based on the perfect and

finished work of Christ.

And the promise of salvation for all who trust in him. Here in chapter 55, we have the outcome of all of that work that's been carried out by Jesus on our behalf.

And this passage that we have here, it's almost like a grand finale of the previous four chapters. It's described for us as a banquet.

A banquet that has the best of everything. The like of which has never been seen before. And in verses 1 to 3 there, we're told that the feast is prepared and the table is now set.

God has prepared a place in glory for all of his own people. For everyone who will place their own faith. Their faith and trust in him.

[6 : 17] And we see that this, the great rallying call is made to come. And there's a real element of excitement running through every verse that's in this chapter.

That Isaiah was given to write. And the reason for that is because it's an invitation to all of us. Because it's heralded in this new era.

This new way of salvation. By faith in the finished work of Christ. And not just that. But it's free. Because Christ has paid that price on our behalf.

And not just that either. Because it's no longer an exclusive event for just the people of Israel.

As it was in the Old Covenant or in the older part of the Old Testament. It's not just for a select few.

Because it says come. And it says come everyone. Come to this banquet.

[7 : 21] Seek after the Lord. While he may be found. Call upon him. While he is near. And this invitation list. Well it's been drawn up. And it's an open invitation.

And you know that all your names are on that list. I'd like you please to make sure that you keep your Bibles open.

On this page. Of this chapter. And on these verses. And when you look at these verses. And when you look at this chapter. You begin to realize.

That this invitation card. Is actually in your possession. Right now. Because God's word. Is here before us. And God's great invitation. Is given to you personally.

Right now. And you read this. And what does it say? It says come. And what an invitation that is. What love that has been shown by the Lord.

[8 : 20] Towards each one of us here. It means that God's abundant love. And his grace. Is now freely offered. To all people. Of every nation.

And of every race. Including every single one of us. Here today. And I ask. Each one of you. Can you see your name. On this invitation card.

Have you looked for your name. Are you doing anything. About looking for your name. In that invitation card. Are you looking for your place. At the table.

Are you determined. To be. At that table. At that great banquet. Which the Lord has set out. For all his people. That great glory. That awaits.

Every single one. Because we're told here. That this great wedding feast. That's now prepared. Christ the bridegroom. Well he's waiting for his bride.

[9 : 17] He's waiting for all of his people. To come. And to take. Their place. At that table. Come to the banquet.

He says. And experience. The wonderful blessing. Of a personal relationship. With Jesus. And not just that. But also.

All of the riches. The fullness. The fullness. And the preciousness. That he has to offer. And you know. That he is just so willing. To give.

That to you. We're told secondly. That there are. Conditions for entry. To this banquet. And I wonder.

If there's. Even one person. Or perhaps. More than one person. Perhaps many people. Here today. Saying to themselves. Well yes. That's what I want.

[10 : 13] And that's what I. Want to be. Well we need to read. All of the. The words. All that's written. On this invitation card.

It says. To seek the Lord. And to call out to him. But it also tells us. To turn. From our wicked ways. And return to the Lord.

Why is that? We might ask. If God has prepared. So much for us. And if there are. So many. Great blessings. And offer. Surely.

He's in a place. Where we can find him easily. Well yes he is. But we do have to. Obey his instructions. We do have to do. What his word tells us. And here are. The conditions. Of entry to the banquet. To put very plainly. And very simply for us. And that is to repent. To turn away.

[11:13] From our sin. To return to the Lord. God. And if we do that. Then he will abundantly. Pardon. And so.

In reading that. What God has told us here. It doesn't really make much sense. To accept. What the Bible teaches us. In theory. As well.

And then do something. Totally different. In the practice. Of our lives. It doesn't make much sense. To accept. What the word says. And knowing. That it's going to.

To lead to the great treasure. That will be of. Eternal benefit. To us. And yet. To decide. To ignore. These instructions. We can read. And accept it. But then decide. To practically. Ignore the instructions. To repent. Of our sins.

[12:08] To turn away. From our sins. And to turn back. To the Lord. To seek him out. And to call out to him. And isn't that just the same. Really as. If you begin.

To learn to drive. And. As you do now. You have to go through. This theory test. And you. You learn all the rules. Of the highway code. And you accept them. In theory.

And then. When you go out. To actually practice. Your driving. And to do it practically. You totally ignore. Everything you've been taught. In the theory test. And you just go out. And drive any way you want. Well you're not going to last.

Very long on the road. By doing something like that. And so it is. In much the same way. With. With what we have here. With God. It amazes me. How often. Also.

That people can accept. What God's word says. But not follow it. It amazes me again. How often. We're prepared to accept. All of the rules. And the regulations.

[13:04] For things that may be trivial. In life. Compared to this. And we'll follow them. To the letter. And we're thinking. That we're doing so well. In all of that. But yet.

When it comes to. To the most important issue. In our lives. What is to do with our soul. Concerns our soul. So many people. Seem to disregard that.

As if it doesn't matter at all. As if the price. That Christ has paid for us. Is irrelevant. And doesn't matter to us. As if the fact that Jesus.

Gave himself for us. Is totally. Is totally irrelevant to us. In our lives. And yet. The offer.

Is there. Of the release. From sin. And from the bondage of sin. And to be liberated. Through Christ's finished work.

[13:59] On that cross. And God is saying. Turn from your sin. Seek me out. Call out to me. And you will find me.

But he's also saying. Don't do that. In a half-hearted manner. You really need. To. To. To come. And to. To give me all of yourself. To place your life.

Your. Trust me with your life. Trust me with everything. And give yourself. Holy to me. And it's only then. That you will find me. So says the Lord.

He says. I am here. I am in my word here. And I have gifted you my word. The table is set.

For this. Great banquet. But you have to make yourself. Known to me. That's what God is asking. He's saying.

[14:56] You have to follow. All of the instructions. On this invitation card. Otherwise. You can't. Come into this banquet. And you can't share.

This glory. With all of my people. There's one thing. To find the place. To come to. And to follow. Some of the instructions. That you've been given. But what about. Other decisions you made.

Perhaps there's people here. And it's so good. To see you here.

You're in the right place. To be under. The word of God. God. But perhaps. There's some thinking. Well. I won't need to bother. With the rest of the instructions. I'm here. And I'm under this word.

But I won't need to. Look at repenting. I won't need to look at. Turning from my sin. I won't need to look at. Returning. To God. Because. I'm sure. I'll get in anyway. I'm sure.

[15:52] There'll be a way. That God's going to let me. Into this banquet. Into this. Great glory. I'm sure. I'll be fine. It's almost like. You come to church.

And. You live. A proper. And. An upstanding life. And yet. No real commitment. To the Lord. Just imagine.

The setting. And. This great banquet. Is laid out. And in doing so. Let me just. Just for a moment. And.

I mean. No disrespect. With all due respect. Just. For a moment. Just think of. The Cabra Fe Hotel. That we have out. On the other side of town. And especially.

The big glass frontage. That there is. In that hotel. That enables you. To look in. At any event. Or any. Any wedding. Or anything else.

[16:48] That's taking place. Inside. Inside. And you can see. Everything. From the outside. You can see. What's going on. On the inside. You can see. All the people there. You can see them. Seated at the table.

You can see them. Enjoying. Whatever banquet. Is laid out there. And you're at that door. And. The bridegroom. Comes to see. Who it is.

And. You show the bridegroom. That invitation card. And you ask to come in. But now. Of course. We need to. Consider this. In the context. That it is in.

And that is. Looking at that. From. The day of judgment. When we come. To meet Jesus. Face to face. And Jesus says. You want to come to the feast.

But. Do you really want to be. With me. Because being with him. Is what it's all about. If you really want to be. A part of this. Then.

[17:42] You must have followed. All the instructions. On the invitation card. I gave you. Have you. And you're left. With no option. But to say. No. But I have followed.

Some of them. And I have been. Attending church. And I have been. Under your word. But there's only one result. That's going to come.

Out of that. And no doubt. The bridegroom. Will look at you. With pity. And with sorrow. And say. The words that you. Dread the most. Depart from me.

I never knew you. Because you never made yourself. Known. To me. Does that not. Put a shudder. Right through.

Your whole being. That if you don't turn. To the Lord. And commit yourself. To the Lord. One day. You're going to hear. These words. As if he's saying.

[18:40] You didn't seek me out. You didn't call out to me. You didn't change your life. You didn't turn from your sins. You didn't come back to me.

So how can I. Have mercy. And compassion on you now. How can I. Abundantly pardon you. I can't. Because I am a righteous judge.

And I carry out. A righteous judgment. And since you have been disobedient. And rebellious. And you deliberately.

Fail to do. All that I ask you. You must depart from me. There are people here today.

And. You know. You found. The right place to come to. You're hearing. The instruction. Of the word of God. But you know.

[19:38] It is your choice. Whether you follow it or not. God. But. But. You also know. The consequences. Of disobeying it. It's only.

This truth. In Jesus Christ. That sets you free. And it sets you free. From sin. And from guilt. And from eternal punishment. You know. He asks you. To return to him. And to place your faith. And. Your trust.

And your hope. Holy in him. And if you will. Then he will have mercy. And he will. Abundantly. Pardon. Because Jesus tells us. He says. I am the way. And I am the truth. And I am the life. And we're told by Peter.

[20:37] In Acts. Chapter. Four. There is salvation. In no one else. For there is no other name. Under heaven. Given among men.

By which. We must be saved. Jesus. Is the way. That is set out for us. That will lead us. To God the Father.

That's the preciousness. Of the gift. That God has given to us. In Jesus Christ. And we're told also here.

That there is a real urgency. To this message. Why do we need to seek after him now? It's like it's offered.

Here to us. But it's for a limited time only. These words. While he may be found.

[21:36] And while he is near. Well these words tell us. That there will be a time when. He can't be found. And there will be a time.

When he won't be near. It may not necessarily be. At the time of our death. That we'll use all that hope. But it may be. That there is a time. Even on this earth.

When God will distance himself. From individuals. There's a real urgency. To seek him out now. While he can be found. And to call out to him now.

While he is near. As I said. It's for. It's offered here to us. For a limited time only. And it's just the same. As if there's. If there's. Sales on.

In. Some shop. Or some place. And there's items there. Offered for sale. That. That you really want. And have wanted. For a long time. But couldn't afford it.

[22 : 31] And yet. Here. Here are these items. Or there is that item now. And it's at a. A greatly reduced price. It's a bargain. You can afford it. But it's only there.

The sale is only. For a limited time only. It's a date given. For the sale. From such and such a date. To such and such a date. And after that. That item returns. To its normal.

To its normal price. Well. If that's the case. There's no point. In swithering. And dithering. Over it. There's no point. In. Putting off.

Purchasing that item. Hoping that the price. Might. Might go even lower. Because then. All that's going to happen. Is you're going to miss out. On the bargain. You're going to miss out. On what's on offer.

And you'll be full of regrets. Because it then. Goes back to a price. That you cannot afford. But it's much the same. With this. And with all due respect.

[23 : 27] Salvation. In Christ. It's offered free. To you. But it's offered. For a limited period. Only. And in much the same way.

There is. There is. There is no point. In swithering. And dithering. Over this great offer. Of salvation. Trying to make your mind up. Putting it off. Trying to get something better.

Trying to. Perhaps. Trying to. To find a way. Where you will have control. Of. When you will go to the Lord. When you will have control. Of your own salvation.

Because it's not going to happen. God asks us to give ourselves. Holy over. To him. And if you keep putting this off. Then the day will come.

When you pass from this world. Into eternity. And they will be full. Of regrets. Because this really is a matter. Of life.

[24 : 20] And death. His. Free gift to us. Jesus. He is a life giver. He tells us in his word. He says. I came. That they may have life.

And that they may have it. Abundantly. Because what he gives us. Is so precious. And it's so far beyond. Anything. That we might even ask for.

Or even think of. So precious. Is the life. That Jesus offers. To all of his own people. Who trust in him. Normally.

When we get an invitation. We see. Four letters. Written on it. And it says. RSVP. And it normally gives a date. And perhaps an address.

But it also gives a name. Well there is an RSVP. On this. Gospel. Invitation card as well. And it says. To respond to God. To do it with the utmost urgency.

[25 : 20] And to cry out to him now. To seek after him now. To call out to him. Now. While he is able. To be found. Please don't delay any longer.

Because not one of us in here. Knows. What even the next hour. Holds for us. That's how urgent. This. This call is.

And how urgent. How. How desperately urgent it is. That we respond to it. You know. We all have. Dreams and.

Goals in life. But when we do. We have to work at that. It doesn't come easy. And we have to persevere. And it's one thing.

To think of that dream. Or that goal. That we might have in life. It's quite another thing. To actually. Achieve it. And. I always remember.

[26 : 17] An interview. With. Venus Williams. The female. Tennis player. Venus Williams. And. She was asked. At one point. After. After. Winning the tournament.

If she. She was asked. If she ever thought. She would be at. Wimbledon. And her answer was. Well. I often thought. And dreamed about it.

But it's actually. Something. Very very different. To be here. To be a part of. Playing at Wimbledon. And to win here. And to hold that trophy.

It is so so different. To my dreams. That I had before. And it's the same. With the gospel. It's one thing. To think about it. But it's quite.

Another thing. To have that. Living. Personal. Relationship. With Jesus Christ. As your savior. Here. Because. You need to know Christ.

[27 : 13] For yourself. Nobody else. Can experience that. For you. It's no use. Looking to anyone else. We all have to discover. Our own need. And we all have to discover.

Our own. Sinfulness. You have this invitation card. In your possession. There is a decision. To be made. And it's your choice. What you're going to do. With that decision. Jesus has done. Everything. For us.

That's needed. And with this. Nobody needs to be an outsider. But neither. Will anyone. Be forced to enter.

The invitation. Will not be extended. Indefinitely. But yet. The invitation. Is there. Right now. And if you genuinely. Seek after.

[28 : 10] The Lord. Then you will rejoice. In finding him. You will rejoice. In finding. The one thing. Your soul needs. Just as we considered. In that.

In that. Children's address. Your soul. Is thirsting. After God. And you will find him. And you will come. Into that personal.

Relationship. With him. But you need to leave room. In your heart. For Jesus. But this word today. And this great invitation today.

Says. Seek the Lord. While you 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.

[29 : 07] Pardon. Let's pray. Lord. We ask. That you would. Bless your word. Especially today.

That you would. Glorify your name. We pray. That you would. Work in the. In the hearts. And the souls.

Of. Folk here today. Who are. Yet outside of. That relationship. With Christ. That they may come. To know you. Through a personal. Relationship.

With Jesus. We pray. Lord. That there may be. Much rejoicing. With men and women. And boys and girls. Just coming.

To know Jesus Christ. We pray. Lord. That there may be. That unity. That oneness. Together. That we may have a sense. Of your presence.

[30 : 02] While we remain. In the building. And even as we leave. This building today. To know that you walk. With us. That you are with us. And that your spirit. Dwells within us. Bless.

Lord. Your word then. Bless the singing. Of your praise. We remember those. Who are laid aside. Today. And who are unable. To be with us. For many different reasons.

And we ask Lord. That you would. Be very near to them. For we know. That you are close. To your people. Wherever they are. We ask your blessing. Lord. Upon our town.

Upon our island here. We ask Lord. That we might see. Great days of refreshing. In your word. Once again. That we would see. Many folk coming. To. And turning to you.

Turning from their sin. And turning back to you. And experiencing. That abundant. Pardon. That you are so. Willing to give. So bless.

[31 : 00] Our time together. And part us. With your blessing. Forgive our sins. In Christ. Amen. Amen. Well let's close.

Our service of worship. By singing. This time in Psalm. 89. From the Scorish Psalter. Psalm 89. At the beginning.

And you'll find that. On page 3. 4. 4. Of the blue psalm books. Page 3. 4. 4. 4. and we can sing the verses marked 1 to 4.

And may this be the words that truly we would sing. God's mercies I will ever sing and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

Psalm 89 verses 1 to 4 to God's praise. God's mercies I will ever sing and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

[32 : 23] For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to endure.

Thy faithfulness even in the heavens thou wilt establish you.

I with my chosen one have made a covenant graciously.

For mercy shall be built, said I, forever to remain.

Thy faithfulness even in the heavens that I thy seed established shall forever to remain.

[33 : 28] And will to generations all thy soul wilt and maintain.

We ask, Lord, that you would bless all that's laid out in the hall next door for the good of our bodily needs.

And we pray, Lord, that you would look upon us in mercy and in love. That the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may rest upon us and abide upon each one of us now and always.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.