

The Compassion of the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Let's bow our heads and just ask God's blessing on this word before we look at it. Lord our God, as we seek now to come and just to look at your word in just a little detail and what you're saying to us.

Lord our God, as we seek now to come and just to look at your word in just a little detail and what you're saying to us.

Lord our God, as we seek now to come and just to look at your word in just a little detail and what you're saying to us.

That it will not return to you void. We pray that it might accomplish that which you purpose. Bless our time together and forgive us our sin in Christ.

Amen. Amen. Well, let's read again at the beginning of chapter 55. Come, everyone who thirsts.

[1 : 4 6] 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 labor for that which does not satisfy?

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 with you an everlasting covenant.

My steadfast, sure love for David. And so on. Chapter 55 of Isaiah is the last chapter in a particular section of this prophecy.

The section from chapter 40 right up to the middle of this chapter. And we can narrow that down again into a subsection.

And what I mean by that is by taking chapters 51 to chapter 55 in one portion as well. And within that portion, of course, especially in chapter 53, but with all that we have in these five chapters, we see some of the most important events in human history described in great detail over 700 years before they happened.

[3 : 1 9] And we can tie in Isaiah's prophecy here, particularly the words that we have in chapter 55. From all that's gone before, just prior to chapter 51, the people, Israel, have had their sins and their shortcomings highlighted.

And in chapter 51 itself, we read of the comfort, the Lord's comfort for Zion. And in chapter 52, then we learn of the Lord's coming, salvation, and that anticipates what happens in chapter 53 and the vivid detail that is given of the suffering saviour.

And following that, we have the confirmation in chapter 54 of the eternal covenant of peace, God's eternal covenant of peace through all that is accomplished on the cross at Calvary.

And now here in chapter 55, as it's headed in the chapter, we see the compassion of the Lord to all people. His great invitation is the emphasis here.

And what Isaiah is doing for us here is, he's reminding us, as we go through that, particularly as we come to this chapter, he's reminding us that there is a point to Christ's sufferings, that Christ has not died in vain, and that his blood has secured something precious for his people, to all who will respond to the call of the gospel.

[4 : 56] And that is the promise of full covenant blessings. And these are the promises that are now sealed for us in his word through the new covenant, the perfect and finished work of Christ.

And so, now here in chapter 55, we read of God's evangelistic call through Isaiah. This call to come and to share in this banquet that he is providing.

And as we read through the chapter, and as it's a culmination of this whole section, then there seems to be an undercurrent of excitement just running through the words here, because of all that has gone before, and now what God is revealing through this call to all the people to come and to believe and to place their faith and trust in him.

To come and share in this banquet that he is providing. And this call, it's very clear that it's a rallying call.

It's a call for every one of us to pay attention to. It's a call for us all to take notice of. And it's a call for each of us to listen intently to what God is saying.

[6 : 23] To hear what God the Lord is saying. And Isaiah is calling out to attract their attention to this message. And the message is that God has a great concern for your soul.

And he wants you to listen to what he has to say here. And let's consider what he's saying here and what he's doing. And the first thing we see that he's doing is he's putting out this invitation.

God is saying, come to my banquet. And God is saying that to everyone. He's saying, come and listen to what I'm saying and come and see the provision that I've made for you.

Or that I'm making for you. And it's effective, I call to to all, to everyone to come and to share in this precious gospel that is freely gifted to all who will accept it.

People, it's especially for people who have a desire for the things of God. As we're seeing of there, particularly in Psalm 63 and in Psalm 42.

[7 : 37] People who have this spiritual thirst for God, who are thirsting after God and thirsting after more of Him, thirsting after more of His Word. Those who recognize that there's a deficiency in their lives which needs to be rectified.

Those who recognize that there's a gap somewhere within them that needs filling. And God is saying, come and I will fill that gap and I will rectify that deficiency.

It's for those, it's for those who hunger and who thirst for righteousness. As the Lord Jesus related for us in his sermon on the mountain, Matthew 5, where he said, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

And the thing is that there are many people who have heard this gospel before.

Many people who know much of this gospel. They acknowledge what the Word says and they acknowledge that it's absolutely impossible for them to save themselves.

[8 : 56] and yet they leave it at that. But that's not what God is saying here. God is saying you mustn't stop there. That there is something you must do.

There's a responsibility on your shoulders. And that is to answer my call here. My call to come. To come to me. Just as Jesus said, come to me.

All of you who labor and are heavy laden. and I will give you rest. And that's why this offer is so important. All that we have here.

Because this message is speaking so loudly to everyone who will acknowledge that. That they have this need. That they have this gap.

That there's nothing that they can do about themselves. But God is saying come to me and I will gift you everything. And I will do everything for you. Christ here is offered to those who realize that they cannot buy themselves into heaven.

[9 : 59] They cannot work their way into God's favor whatsoever. It's offered to those who realize that they have nothing in themselves to offer God.

But what we see here is that God has much to offer us. And we might ask the question here then what is offered by God?

And he says first of all he tells us there's water. And he says come come to the waters. And we know from life in general that water is one of the basic and natural necessities and needs that we all have.

and if we don't get water then we will have problems particularly when we're in much need of it. If we're thirsting and thirsting greatly then it can be one of the most distressing situations in life when water is not available.

It's one of the most difficult situations that anybody could find themselves in. and with a lack of water a real lack of water for any prolonged period of time it will affect our whole bodies and our bodies will eventually cease to function and we will die.

[11 : 27] And the same then has to be said of our soul because if we don't drink from this water of life if we don't drink from what God is offering here this water that only God can provide for us from the river of life from the fountain of grace many names for it for what God is offering here this water then if we don't drink what then we're not acknowledging that this is the very thing that is needed to save our souls we need to drink from this water of life to come and accept this gospel that has been offered so freely to each one of us an invitation is given to every man and woman and boy and girl in this world because none of us can satisfy our own needs and neither especially can anything that this world can offer us and I just wonder is there anyone in this church tonight who is just thirsting for the grace of

God and for the blessings of this gospel and to come to know Christ personally to draw close to him I wonder if there is well if there is and if you're going to benefit from this offer then you need to move from where you are now and move to where the supply is and that's why God says come to me come to me and you need to acknowledge before God your need of Christ as your savior and for him to to to to gift you his grace so that you will receive his holy spirit that is the gift that he is offering the gift of his spirit to come and dwell within you let me just read two portions from John's gospel that will give us a little bit more understanding of this with regard to the water that has been offered here and in John chapter 4 and verse 10 when Jesus was speaking to the woman of Samaria at the well

Jesus said this Jesus answered her if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you give me a drink you would have asked him and he would have given you living water and again in verse 13 and 14 Jesus says he said to her everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty that's the water of the well they'll be thirsty again but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life and then as Jesus spoke at the end of the feast of booths we read in chapter 7 of John's gospel and at verse 37 on the last day of the feast the great day Jesus stood up and cried out if anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given because

Jesus was not yet glorified so that gives us a bit more understanding about this water that has been offered because you see when the gospel speaks about our need of water it speaks about our need of the spirit of Christ to come to us and to open up his word to us so that the word becomes a living word and that we are given that grace to accept this gospel invitation God's invitation to come to him and then here we're told whoever has no money and that's quite a strange thing to us isn't it to come and to buy without money well no human could pay the price that was required here this way to receive this priceless gift of salvation was opened up by those who wish to receive who so thirst to receive but it was opened up by

God himself and we will never hear anything so important as what God is saying to us here we won't hear anything from any other speeches and we won't read anything in any other books and we won't experience anything in any other area of our lives as important as what has been said here tonight by the Lord because this is the way that has been prepared by God himself for us to receive Christ into our lives to go from being without him to receiving him and having him as our personal saviour and this invitation that's here it's an invitation that it's extended to those who are unable to provide for themselves and again we read from Matthew chapter 5 from the sermon on the mount blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven those who are poor in spirit and who are unable to do anything for themselves but who come to be totally reliant on all that Christ has done for them and even though anyone you here tonight you might have no resources to purchase this for yourself don't let that stop you because God is saying come by without money you come by and eat and what we see here is the mercy and the pardon of God freely offered to each one of us and he wants each one of us to sit at his banqueting table where his banner over us is love and we're told to come and to buy without money and to eat and this eating what that does it signifies the consumption of what's in our possession when we come to accept the gift when we come to drink of the waters we're consuming and it becomes a part of us and God wants us all to enjoy all that he's offering and the emphasis here to come and to eat and when we do this eating it becomes a part of you because it comes inside of you and that's the emphasis it's a personal emphasis it's an individual personal emphasis to each one of us how God treats us as individuals and gives this call to each one of us individually and the emphasis here is on the richness of what's offered and we see that in the next part where he says yes he says not just that but come and buy wine and come and buy milk and it's it's almost as if there's a progression here in what he's offering if that's the right word to use because we might view water and we might view bread as just been the basic necessities of life but what

[19 : 45] God is offering here he says come and buy wine and milk and he's offering us something much more in its fullness he's offering us everything that there is to offer perhaps perhaps summed up greatly in 2 corinthians 5 in the last verse where we read of he that's Jesus who had no sin he was made to be sin the second part so that we might become the righteousness of God in him that's the richness of what's been offered here by the Lord so we've been offered wine and we've been offered milk to come and buy wine and milk and what the word says about wine is that that wine gladdens the heart and we might ask them what is this wine and how is the heart made glad well when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within then that richness of all that God has offered becomes a reality to us as individuals and it's because the soul of every believer has been taken from darkness from the darkness of their sin to the light of the gospel they've been taken from darkness to light they've been taken from being an enemy of God and they are now children of God precious children of God and the believer has been gifted this precious inheritance and yet he or she has no more dependence on what the world has to offer anymore it's all dependence on the

Lord all dependence on Christ and that really is the wonder of salvation so we're offered wine and milk is offered here as well and milk emphasizes richness as well remember in Exodus chapter 3 what God promised the children of Israel as they began their journey out of Egypt and through the wilderness towards the promised land he said to them he said I'm going to take you to the promised land a land that I have set aside specially for you and it's a land flowing with milk and honey in other words a land full of the best things and you will want for nothing in that land I will provide everything that you need and that's what's on offer here to us you see this wine and this milk they are symbols they are spiritual symbols of abundance and of enjoyment and of nourishment and in the

New Testament it's perhaps taken a step further where we can understand that certainly all of God's people in here and everywhere will understand and acknowledge that this is what the gift has been given in the New Testament the gift is explained in this way is that their every need is met that's the need of every individual believer that every need is met exceedingly abundantly more than they could ever ask for or even think of therein lies the testimony of all of the Lord's people so precious is this gift of eternal life and then we look at these verses that we have here and we might ask the question or we will ask the question surely someone had to pay a price for all of this did they not well in the 53rd chapter of

Isaiah we're given a very vivid and detailed account of Christ's sufferings there which have secured salvation for everyone who trusts in him let me just read verses 4 to 6 which give us just a summary in one sense of it surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows and yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgressions he was crushed for our iniquities and upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with the stripes we are healed all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all and so on it was Jesus who went through the agonies of his soul it was

Jesus who paid the price that was required it was Jesus who became a ransom for many it was Jesus' blood that was shed on our behalf the Lamb of God who was without blemish Jesus has paid the price in full God through Isaiah then moves on here and he says why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy see God is asking us not to waste our money on the things which are not through bread and not to toil on the things that do not truly and really satisfy us and in doing so he's exposing through

[26 : 11] Isaiah here how costly and disappointing unbelief actually is and here is this is the code of it all this unbelief this wasting money and toiling away for nothing because if all you're doing is buying whatever you can to be comfortable in this here on earth and if all that you work towards is for things that this world offers you then God is saying you're wrong and God is saying don't do that because it will just lead to more and more selfishness and disappointment and it will lead you into total unbelief and you'll keep refusing this offer of my offer of the gospel and if you do that then you will pay the greatest of prices when you die that's what he's saying there not to waste our time on the things of this world but to focus on what he's offering here because the main nourishment we need is true spiritual food for the good of our souls and

God is just so willing to provide that for each one of us he's saying listen carefully to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food and take that in the spiritual sense and he's saying if you really want the best that life can offer then listen to my call and act on my call to come because only true peace and satisfaction and enjoyment that can only be found in our living and true relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and from the moment that the spirit enters into us that Jesus Christ comes into the life of a believer then immediately they experience this love of

God that is shed abroad in their hearts and this peace of God that passes all understanding and they experience the joy of the Lord a totally different outlook on life a totally new way of living and a life that is now focused on Christ and worshipping the Lord and if we look at God's commitment here which is given here he said incline your ear and come to me and hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant my steadfast sure love for David now this is significant because the blessing is focused here on the house of David and it said of the house of David that the word tells us the messianic servant will arise and all of the earlier covenants will be fulfilled in this final everlasting covenant that

God speaks of here this blessing is focused on the house of David let me just read from Acts chapter 13 and just verse 34 and as for the fact that he raised him from the dead no more to return to corruption he has spoken in this way I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David in this final everlasting covenant that Christ has suffered and died and Christ has risen from the dead no more to see corruption this is God's sure promise his covenant promise because once a person comes to him and places their trust and hope and faith in him in Jesus Christ and he is with you from that moment on never to leave you just as

Jesus said I will never leave you I will never forsake you and that is based on my covenant promise and all of these promises these promises of God they find their yes and amen in Christ and his finished work at Calvary they're rooted and grounded and sealed and secured in Christ because the Messiah Jesus he is the embodiment of all the covenant promises given to David and what we read here based on all of that is God says come and he's not saying get your life in order first and then come and he's not saying wait until you're a bit older and then come and he's not saying sort out all your bad habits and then come he's saying come come now and come as you are this is this great invitation that we have he says come to me and yet when we consider all of these things isn't it strange that there's something inside each one of us where we want to have an element of control in everything that we do and everything that happens to us in life and that's true and I'm sure we can all acknowledge that that there's something within ourselves even that wants to pay towards our own salvation that we want to have a hand in it in some way it can be so hard for us to understand how something as precious as this that cost as much as it did in the sacrifice of Jesus can be offered to us at no price it's come by without money that's what God is saying to us because

[32 : 54] Jesus has paid the price for our sin and that's the key to it all it's not about what we can give to him it's about what he has done for us and what he will give to each one of us God says you come everyone who thirsts come by and eat without money and without price and I suppose we can turn this in one way this is a special offer this is offered freely and lovingly and it's as sure as anything can be because it's rooted and grounded in the finished work of Christ but we're told something else here in the chapter as well and I'm just finishing with this in verse six we're told seek the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near and that indicates to us that there may be a time that we might go to seek the

Lord later on and we may not find him and we might call out to him and they might not hear us and what this message is saying to us is there's a real urgency every day is when God says come God is saying come now come to me right now there's a real urgency because we just don't know what's right the corner and we don't know when the Lord may withdraw us off from anyone personally we're told come now come now and all of these great spiritual blessings that we consider here in this chapter in the short time we've had here they're compared to a banquet and there are many references in scripture to a banquet not least in the new testament Jesus himself spoke of the banquet and there are many different references and that great banquet through the endless ages of eternity that speaks of they refer to the endless ages of the endless ages of the endless ages of the endless ages of the endless ages of eternity this intensely personal relationship of the believer being with Christ and in Christ and what I say is that the gates of the city they stand open again tonight and this banquet is spread once again once again once again once again once again once again once again this evening and all that's required now is for the invited guests to take their place at the table God says come

God says come this is an intensity personal and urgent invitation and it requires your immediate and individual response to him God says come please friend take him up on that special special offer let's pray Lord and God as we just consider these words this evening oh may it be that any or all who are here this evening who are still led of Christ that you would begin a work of grace in them and that they would respond Lord we pray that it would be the portion of each one of us to be found at that panqueting table.

And we know, Lord, that all of your people here would just love everyone in this building to be with them in Christ. May your name be glorified in all that was said and done.

In Jesus' name, for his sake. Amen. Well, let's conclude then. We'll sing in Psalm 89. That's from the Scottish Psalter.

[37 : 22] Psalm 89. I was just singing the verses from 1 to 4. The singing of this covenant, covenant, covenant, covenant, covenant, covenant, covenant.

God's mercy is on page 344, the Scottish Psalter version. Page 89. God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall thy faithfulness make to be known to generations all.

To verse 4, that I, thy seed, established, shall forever to remain, and will to generations all thy throne build and maintain. Verses 1 to 4.

God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall, thy faithfulness may to be known to God's mercy is I will ever sing, and with my mouth I shall.

Thy faithfulness may to be known to generations all. God's mercy is I will sing, and with my mouth I shall be known to generations all. Thy faithfulness may to be known to generations all.

[38 : 48] For mercy shall be known to generations all. For mercy shall be will, said I, forever to endure.

My faithfulness in the heavens, my faithfulness in the heavens, a wealth established sure.

I with my chosen one have made a calm and gracious need unto myself, unto my love.

I with my chosen one have made a calm and gracious need unto myself, unto my love.

I with my chosen one have made a calm and gracious need unto myself, unto my love. I with my chosen one have made a calm and gracious need unto myself, unto my love. I with my chosen one have made a calm and gracious need unto myself, unto my love.

[40 : 43] Kids Kids Kids Kids Kids Kids Kids Kids