

Sermon Outline

“Come, Everyone Who Thirsts”

“Desperate, Part 9 – Isaiah 55:1-13 – Joshua Harris – Dec. 12, 2010

Main Idea: Grace drives us to despair in ourselves so that we can find everlasting hope in Jesus Christ.

Context

1. The prophet Isaiah ministered more than 700 years before the birth of Jesus to the southern tribe of Judah. The people of God in Isaiah’s day were very religious, but their hearts were far from him (see Isaiah 29:13). Part of Isaiah’s calling was to announce God’s judgment for their sins and idolatrous hearts—exile at the hands of the Babylonians.
2. But Isaiah did more than prophesy destruction. He pointed beyond judgment to God’s future restoration of his people. Isaiah 55 is speaking to a generation yet to come who will read his words as exiles in Babylon, a generation who believed that their sin and failures would have the last word.

Verse 1: An Invitation of Grace

1. In Isaiah, water is the imagery used for God’s salvation. Our lives apart from our Creator are a desert—parched and dead. But our God is the God who causes streams of a water to flow in the desert. So he invites everyone who thirsts (i.e., every race, language, socio-economic status, etc.) to come and find salvation in him.
2. *“...he who has no money, come buy and eat! Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.”* In these words, God is calling us spiritually bankrupt. We have no ability to pay for this salvation. We have nothing—no goodness, no sacrifice, no personal merit—with which we can buy his favor.
 - a. But if we humble ourselves, if we lay down our self-righteousness, we hear the most amazing invitation: God invites us to buy and eat without cost. That’s a description of the free grace offered through faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 2: Impostors of Grace

1. In verse 2, God is reasoning with us. God is asking, why are you spending yourself on things that leave you empty, that aren’t bread, that don’t feed or satisfy your soul?
 - a. We need to ask ourselves the same question: What are we spending ourselves to get? What are we living for? In what is our identity? Is it our job, having people like us, our possessions, power, a relationship, or pleasure and entertainment? Even when we get what we want, it leaves us empty and unsatisfied.



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2. God calls us to eat what is good! Knowing him, trusting him, and worshiping him is the rich food our souls long for and the only food that satisfies.

Verses 3-5: The Person of Grace

1. In these verses, we are introduced to the Person who makes our free banquet possible.
 - a. The reference to King David in verse 3, who died long before Isaiah's generation, tells us that God's salvation is going to come through his chosen King. God promised David in 2 Sam. 7:12-14 that he would establish the throne of one of his offspring and that it would be an everlasting Kingdom.
 - b. So the relationship with God that we long for, an everlasting covenant, a promised relationship of favor—is only possible through a son of David—the ultimate Son and King, Jesus Christ.
2. The reason that God can invite spiritually bankrupt people like us to buy wine and milk without money is because Jesus has paid for the feast. We transgressed God's law, but Jesus was wounded for us. We deserve judgment, but Jesus was crushed in our place. There is no cost for you and me, but there was a great cost to Jesus who suffered in our place (see Isaiah 53:4-6).
3. In verses 4-5, we see Jesus' saving work is for the whole world. God raised Jesus from the dead to be a witness to everyone who thirsts for salvation.

Verses 6-9: Seek Grace ... Now

1. Verse 6 tells us to seek the Lord while he may be found. What this means is "Don't delay! Don't put this off!" The Lord is full of mercy but we can't ignore his salvation or think that it will always be available.
 - a. Grace is free, but it is not available for an unlimited period of time. When we die it will be too late. When Jesus returns, it will be too late. There will be only judgment.
2. This word isn't just for non-Christians. We Christians should feel a sense of urgency in our pursuit of God.
 - a. If we know God's forgiveness, we should desire to know him more. If we have tasted of his banquet, we should desire to feast more. If we have truly received his grace, we should forsake our sin and return to the Lord.

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3. God is calling us back to himself. He is lovingly pleading with us to wake up. We must let go of our sin, ungodly thoughts and desires. We must return to the Lord today. And if we do, Isaiah gives us an incredible promise: God will have compassion and will abundantly pardon.
 - a. But many of us want to argue with grace. We sin, and the gospel offers full pardon, and we say, "NO! That isn't right! I don't deserve you showing me compassion. I messed up for the millionth time, and I really don't deserve kindness this time. I'm going to try and pay you back for this one." God says, "You really didn't deserve grace the first time. You don't deserve it any more or less every time you come seeking forgiveness."

Verses 10-13: The Culmination of Grace

1. These verses are pointing ahead to the day when God's work of salvation will be fully realized. In verses 10-11, we are reminded that what God speaks will absolutely happen. His word is powerful. It always does what it says. His words will not come back void. They won't come back having failed to accomplish exactly what God promised.
 - a. When he says that a son of David will inherit an everlasting kingdom, it happens.
 - b. When he says that sinners will be abundantly pardoned, they are pardoned by the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - c. And when he says that Jesus will return to judge and remake the world, that promise will be fulfilled.

Fellowship Starters:

1. How often do you try to pay for your God's saving work and favor by your performance—your goodness, sacrifices, service, personal merit or discipline? How is the invitation of Isaiah 55:1 an amazing invitation of grace?
2. Josh exhorted us to evaluate our lives: Why do you chase after things that don't satisfy? What are you spending your time, money and energy on—success, money, pleasure, comfort, relationships, etc.? How can you repent and thirst after God alone?
3. Josh shared, "The reason that God can invite spiritually bankrupt people like us to buy wine and milk without money is because Jesus has paid for the feast." Is grace still amazing to you, or has it become familiar?

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4. Josh taught that Isaiah 55:6 is an urgent call to seek the Lord while he may be found. How are you responding to this urgent call to forsake your sin, return to the Lord, and seek desperately after him?