

If you've studied Isaiah at any length, then you may be familiar with the term "servant songs." These are the famous chapters which speak in anticipation of God's chosen Servant, the coming Messiah. The first of these we saw last week, chapter 42. The second and third are found in chapters 49 and 50 respectively. And the final (and most well-known) of these is found in chapter 53.

Throughout these "servant songs" and the chapters which surround them, Isaiah weaves together a number of incredible themes—themes which speak beautifully of God's redemption:

- He speaks of his *commitment to his own glory*. "I have refined you," he says in 48:10-11. "For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned?"
- He speaks of his *plan to extend salvation to all peoples*, promising in 49:6 that he will make his Servant "a light for the nations, that [his] salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
- He speaks of his own *ability to rescue his people* in 50:2: "Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?"
- He speaks of his *active preparation to intervene on behalf of his people* in 52, observing that the watchmen are singing for joy because in the distance, they have spotted the return of the Lord.
- He speaks of his *enduring commitment to his covenant with his people* in 54:10: "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed."

These interwoven themes are massively important. They pave the way for God to rescue his people—initially by bringing an end to the exile, but ultimately by sending the Messiah. And these themes set the stage for Isaiah 55. God's resolute commitment to preserve his people, to rescue them, to provide for them, to appoint a Servant, and to do all this for his own glory—this is what sets the backdrop for the incredible invitation that we see in chapter 55.

This invitation is remarkable, because it reveals the missional mercy of God—mercy that is purposeful, focused, active, and it's sent out with the specific intention of drawing God's people to himself.

This morning, I want us to look at this passage in two parts. The first part, which is summed up in the invitation "Come" (v. 1), teaches us that God's mercy satisfies. And the second part, which is summed up in the invitation "Seek" (v. 7) teaches us that God's mercy transforms.

I. It Satisfies (vv. 1-5)

We'll start with the exhortation to "come". That word "come" is used 4 times in the space of 5 lines. The logic here is not, "Come, because it's the right thing to do." Or, "Come, because I said so." It's this: "Come, because the mercy of God satisfies!" And it satisfies in the following three ways:

Abundantly. The paradox of these opening verses is profound. Everyone who thirsts, come get water. Anyone who has no money, come buy things. You whose labor yields nothing, come enjoy a feast. God's mercy supplies abundant satisfaction to those who have tremendous need. John 6

Eternally. But not only does God's mercy satisfy abundantly, it also satisfies eternally. We see this in verse 3. God says, "Listen to me and you will live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you." The kind of satisfaction pictured here is permanent. Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Sam. 7; Luke 1:31-33

Globally. Thirdly, God's mercy promises global satisfaction. By this, I simply mean that God's mercy is able to satisfy whites, blacks, Latinos, Koreans, Indians, Sudanese, Saudis. It doesn't have limitations in scope. It isn't contained to this ancient Near Eastern people group known as the Hebrews.

See Isaiah 25:6-9

II. It Transforms (vv. 6-13)

After God says, "Come," he follows it up by saying, "Seek." And in this second part of the chapter, the theme is this: God's mercy transforms. Once again, there are three ways it does this:

Positively. This transformation has to do with pardon and compassion. The sinful person who turns to God gets transformed by mercy. He doesn't remain the same. He leaves behind wicked ways and sinful thoughts. And instead, he turns to the high and lofty ways and thoughts of God. Isa. 53

Effectively. But the transformation isn't just positive; it's also effective. This is the point of the next two verses. God tells his people that he will accomplish what he sets out to accomplish. What God offers in terms of transformation is an effective transformation, one that works. Phil. 1:6

Completely. This transformation is so thorough and so complete that it brings incomprehensible joy to those who experience it. In fact, the joy is so immense that it rubs off on the surrounding countryside and the mountains and hills and trees start getting in on the action, too. Isa. 44:23; Isa. 49:13; Ezek. 36; Rom. 8:20-23; Eph. 1:10

Here's the invitation once again: Come and be satisfied. Seek and transform. How will you respond to God's missional mercy? Luke 14:16-24