

## The Blessings of the Gospel

Isaiah 54-56

### Main Idea

Isaiah responds to the rehearsal of the Gospel by rehearsing the blessings of the Gospel as well as the obedience that rises out of those blessings.

### Overview

#### **The Benefits of the Covenant (Isaiah 54-55.5)**

- Who is being addressed here? (Who are the you's or yours of this passage)
  - Jesus understands this passage to refer to all those that believe the Son (John 6.45-47)
    - He is quoting Isaiah 54.13 which gives us a key as to how to read who this passage
    - is to
    - It is to those that trust the Gospel that was laid out in Chapter 53:
    - To the Jew first and then the Gentile (Romans 1.16)
- Supernatural Siblings (54.1-3)
  - God would raise up righteous children from the nation that was unable to do so
- Fearlessly Innocent (54.4, 14)
  - Shame and disgrace are taken away in the Cross, therefore there need not be any fear
- Personal God (54.5-7a)
  - The God of the whole earth is said to be ours
- Everlasting Love & Compassion (54.7b-8, 10b)
  - With great compassion God gathers believers and showers them w/ everlasting love
- No Anger (54.9)
  - The anger God had for the nation of Israel also had to fall on those believers inside of Israel, however in the Gospel God is no longer angry towards us b/c of Christ's atonement
- Making us Beautiful (54.11-12)
  - Though through a difficult time, God is adorning His own with precious stones
- Taught by the Lord (54.13, see John 6.45-47)
  - The adorning is coming to us by the word as we are taught
- Our Righteousness is established(54.14)
  - Our beauty comes through the word that grounds us in righteousness
  - Righteousness is the Innocence of Christ or the purity of Gods character
- Vindication by God (54.15-17)
  - Through the accomplishment of the Gospel, or particularly in the resurrection God takes away the greatest weapon and therefore gives us vindication so that we can be sure that no weapon formed against us will succeed
- Free Redemption (55.1-2a)
  - Redemption comes by Free Grace to us and so God encourages us to buy w/o money
- Delight (55.2b)
  - This free redemption is a feasting upon rich food that leads to our good and our delight
- Everlasting Life (55.3)
  - This free redemption also purchases life ("the Good Life") for us...everlasting life
- The nations (55.5)

- Israel will take in the nations...Gods redemptive activity is no longer focused solely on the Jews
- Glory (55.5b)
  - The “prophetic perfect” case of this passage shows us that since Christ has purchased our redemption it is as good as done and therefore we are glorified
  - To be glorified is to be made perfectly beautiful and complete

### **People of the Covenant (Isaiah 55.6-9)**

- Seek the Lord...call upon him
  - In prayer
  - In the Word
  - Amongst His people
- While He may be found...while he is near
  - Urgency to knowing the Lord
- Forsake wickedness and evil thoughts
- And the Lord will have compassion on those that do
- And He will abundantly pardon

### **Obedience to the Covenant (Isaiah 55.1-56)**

- From the Word (55.10-11)
- For your Joy & Restoration (55.12-13)
- Keep Justice (56.1)
  - Do Righteousness (56.1)
  - Hold Salvation/Righteousness Fast (56.1-2)
  - Keeps Sabbath (56.1, 4, 6)
  - Refrains from Evil (56.2)
- Enjoy the Unity of the church (56.3-8)
- Guard against Bad Shepherds (56.9-12)

### Questions

**Discussion Starter:** Share some ways the “Un-Holy Trinity” (Sin, Satan, the world) try to get you to believe a different story from the Gospel.

1. Read Isaiah 54.1-55.5: How is this passage tied to the previous passage?
2. What images describe God’s grace to his redeemed people. List off all the benefits of those that are in this Covenant.
3. Which of these blessings have been especially appropriate for you this week?
4. Describe how this paints a beautiful picture of God.

**Did you notice that chapter 54 comes after chapter 53? ☺ Ray Ortlund says about chapter 54, “Isaiah looks at the sin-bearing servant of the Lord and has one thing to say to us: ‘Break forth into singing and cry aloud’ (v. 1)! In other words, ‘Let joyful song explode out of you!’” He goes on to say, “The test of a church’s faith is not only the wording of its creed, but also the gladness in its worship.” Help the group see the joy in 54 is flowing from the gospel in 53.**

**Isaiah present four images to describe God’s grace:**

- **A barren woman (54:1-3) – Isaiah pictures the excitement of such a woman at the prospect of a growing family. She is not less barren than before, but the offspring of Isaiah 53:10 will become her many sons. In Christ, we have a supernatural family that comes by supernatural birth.**
- **A wife who felt deserted but is reconciled (54:4-10) – Whatever she has done, he has forgiven her and taken her back. The relationship is now marked by great compassion and everlasting love.**
- **A city beautifully adorned (54:11-17) – This city built by God is reminds us of the beauty of the garden and the beauty and security of the city that is to come (Rev.**

21).

- **A feast where we enjoy the relationship with the Host (55:1-5) – Isaiah commands us three times to “come.” We come to feast upon the rich, satisfying blessings and we are commanded to “come to me” – that is, we ultimately come to God himself who is the feast. And we come for free!**

**Discuss these wonderful images and pictures and seek to get the group to apply them to our everyday lives. Let this help the group wonder at the character of God and how this brings comfort and hope no matter what we may face.**

5. Using Isaiah 55.6-9, Why would forsaking wickedness and seeking the Lord be so important in light of the Gospel?

**Help the group see, that coming to the Lord requires repentance. The one who seeks and calls upon the Lord must experience genuine sorrow for sin and make a conscious decision to confess them and turn away from them. Does this mean perfection? Of course not. But it does mean a life of growing and repenting. Remember Jesus' first words in Mark – “Repent and believe the gospel.” Discuss why we cannot come to the Lord and call upon him without repenting.**

**Notice that the Lord anticipates that we will not fully understand grace. His ways are not our ways.**

6. Read Isaiah 55.10-13. Why is the word so important to us? And what does it produce? Where do you see that in our church life together?

**Get the group to discuss the importance of God's word in bringing about life/salvation. This is how God calls sinners to himself (cf. 45:23; John 1:14; Romans 10:14-17). We see the life that is changed by the word has joy and restoration (notice briars and thorns, which make us think of the fall in Genesis 3, are replaced).**

7. Why is keeping Justice and doing righteousness on the heels of salvation (Isaiah 56.1-2)?

8. Read Hebrews 4.1-11. How do we keep the Sabbath? Why is it important?

9. Isaiah 56.3-12. Make some observations about what the community of the New Covenant is like based upon these verses. Where do you see this happening?

**In Chapter 56 we begin to see what joyful obedience to the covenant looks like. We are not saved by works, but our salvation works.**

**Talk about the community of the covenant. Those who though they were foreigners and not welcome are welcomed (cf. Dt. 23:1-8). Those who are eunuchs, though not able to enter the temple are offered wonderful blessings (cf. Dt. 23:1-8). Now the Lord says his house will be a house of prayer for all peoples. None will be excluded who come to Christ in faith (55:3).**

**Regarding the Sabbath – don't let this derail the conversations. Some people make have differing convictions on exactly how we implement the particulars of this Sabbath rest. However, what's most important is that the ultimate Sabbath is in Christ Jesus – he is our rest; in him the ultimate work is done. So in the most ultimate sense, we keep the Sabbath by resting in Christ alone for salvation. Sabbath was a weekly celebration of God's perfect creation in the beginning (Gn. 2:1-3). It was a foretaste of God's renewed creation at the end of time (Is. 66:22-23). Now we have that foretaste in Christ.**

**Accountability:** How are you specifically encouraged by the blessings of the Covenant? Where do you need encouragement from the blessings of the Covenant? Are you believing any lies about yourself that are not true in light of the Covenant?