

# Do You Trust Him?

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 57:13-21

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## Hope Baptist Church

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Today's text is Isaiah 57, starting in verse 13 through the end of the chapter.

13 When you cry out, Let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry them all away, A breath will take them. But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain." 14 And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people." 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones. 16 For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made. 17 For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. 18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will also lead him, And restore comforts to him And to his mourners. 19 I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," Says the LORD, "And I will heal him." 20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 21 There is no peace," Says my God, "for the wicked."

*Father, Lord God, we come before you praying that we have a contrite heart and a broken spirit that we might hear you. Lord, please pour out your kindness and mercy upon Scott as he brings the word to us and let us have ears to hear, Lord. We praise your name. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

You think about how far gone you were before Christ rescued you, how far out were you? In this passage is fulfilled in our hearing today as a result of what God has been doing in the world and what Isaiah has been describing in this whole context of Isaiah 40 through 66 is that Jesus Christ has brought the wells of salvation for the everlasting joy of his people and he has offered that to those who were far off and far gone.

Isaiah has been piling up imagery to help us understand in this the passage, the contrast between those who are trusting God and those who do not trust him. And in the chapter so far up to verse 13 and up to the middle of verse 13, Isaiah has been pronouncing doom to those who maintain an outward religion but behind the closed doors they continue to find satisfaction in their idolatries and he talks about the dumb dogs and the blind watchman and the offspring of sorcerers and the greedy that make all this happen, that perpetuate this whole fake system of religion. Of course, it's all a call to come and then finally when we get to the middle of verse 13, something changes. It's a picture of a changed man or a changed woman and everything changes about it and he is showing us what happens to you when God changes you. He shows you what can happen to a person who is far off, who is far gone and way far out and it should give us hope, really for those who still find themselves in that place, and we who have been far off and far gone and far out, are being brought near. Continually, actually, being brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ and the work of his Spirit and it's such a happiness to be able to say those words here in this congregation and to look out and to see the kindness of the Lord and the ways that God has been so gracious to continually bring us closer. I have seen so much healing in this church. I have seen so much change in this church, it's amazing to me, and it should take our breath away. We should rejoice in it. We are here, actually, to rejoice in it.

So in these first 13 verses, Isaiah has been illustrating the life of those who don't trust in God and then in the middle of verse 13, we have a completely different picture of those who have shifted their trust in God and it's a picture of the life of God resident in the soul of man and how God enlivens the hearts of sinners who have turned to him and came to a place where they said, "I trust you Lord," and they laid everything upon him and trusted him for everything.

Now, before we get into our text, I want us to register something about Isaiah and it should help us understand how to interpret the whole prophecy. It's a matter of hermeneutics but it's more than that and that is this: that Isaiah paints pictures. I think we have seen that in many ways. Isaiah is more pictorial than he is systematic. Have you noticed that? Nor is he strictly chronological but he's rather organic. It's like he is throwing one image after another to describe this huge picture of the love of God toward sinners and his absolute war he's making on those who would not trust him. You know, at once he's pictorial and then he is didactic. He is historical. He draws from the far past. He jets to the present. He will then speak to the near future and then the far future of final judgment and glory. Look at chapter 57 alone, this chapter starts out with a funeral. He takes you to a funeral and he gives you this picture of this person that he is blessing; this faithful person who has trusted in him and what is he doing? He is taking him home. He actually causes him to die to remove him from the evil of the world and nobody cares in the world.

So Isaiah, he's painting all of these pictures, one after another and we're not done because in this passage you see the very same thing. At once he takes you to the top of a mountain and then to the absolute depths of degradation. In Isaiah you go to gardens, you go to rivers, you go to deserts, you sit with the jackals and the hyenas. He takes you to all of

these places to show you and he's just throwing one thing up there in front of you after another to say, "Don't you see how good God is? Can't you understand his beauty? His glory? Do you see it? Do you feel it? Oh, I'll tell you another one." And that's where we are today and here he is painting a picture of a people who are dwelling with God in the high and holy place. The far gone are now with the holy. It's astonishing. The unholy with the holy now? And it's this picture of a comforted people. They are experiencing something they never had before: healing, guidance, mercy. Then finally at the very end, he turns to a whole different picture. This turbulent raging sea is churning up mire; it's the picture of the disturbed person who does not trust in God. So welcome to Isaiah 57:13 to the end of the chapter and it is designed to illustrate God's matchless grace and he's telling how he reaches into the life of the turbulence of the human heart and how he draws them out of the raging sea and he gives them peace and he begins to lead them and he begins to teach them the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So you will see the outline in front of you. I have broken it down into 2 major sections: one of them is long and the other is short. The long section is formed out of verses 13 through 19 and these are the blessings that fall upon those who trust in the Lord in his holy mountain. Then finally at the very end, which we'll spend a proportionately much smaller period of time on because of the emphasis of the text, the hardships that fall on those who trust in themselves and it's life in the stormy sea. So there it is.

Verse 13 begins this piling up of blessings that God is declaring that he gives to those who he saves and I have given 6 words for these various verses and sections. First, inheriting. Second, building. Third, dwelling. Fourth, propitiation. Fifth, healing. Sixth, peace. So we'll walk through those verses as they exist that way.

So the first blessing that falls on those who trust in the Lord is inheriting. Now, why do I say trust in the Lord? Because of the second half of verse 13, the word "but, but he," so he's talking about someone different now. "But he," this is one of the most wonderful transitions that you find in the Bible. It's representative of it. "But God. But God who is rich in mercy." You have all these pictures of the lostness and the hopelessness of mankind and then you find this word "but" and that's what exists here. "But he," who? "But he who puts his trust in Me," and this is the key phrase that forms the transition of the thinking that God desires to lead us in and he's saying that there are 2 kinds of people in this world: there are those who trust in their own personal version of life, that is the essence of idolatry; and there is the same person who cries out in desperation but he loses everything. He doesn't have anything at the end of the day. All of his idols have defrauded him and disappointed him and he has nothing from them, but the one who trusts in the Lord gains everything and it's reminiscent of what the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of, "He who loses his life shall find it."

It's this picture of hope and it's a picture of trusting. What does it mean to trust in the Lord? I think that should be considered today. What does it mean to trust and we should be asking today, "Do I trust the Lord?" And here the language indicates "to have hope in the Lord." To have hope in his ways and his promises, that in him is our hope. We don't hope in this world. It has to do with the idea of refuge. In what or in whom do we seek

refuge? Do we seek refuge in the Lord or in something else? Do we rush to the medicine cabinets of our day? There are many of them and the medicine cabinets of our day have more than just drugs in them. They have all kinds of things. People are medicating themselves with all kinds of things. They want to get better somehow: through some film, some feeling, some entertainment, some relationship, some person, some amount of money, somehow, someday. This is the heart of man, desiring hope and he gets it by what he trusts in.

The word is used in many different ways. It is used of a fugitive man at war who is seeking refuge in the hills and in Isaiah 4:6, it speaks of the tabernacle of God, "And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain." This whole idea of whom you trust is the same idea of shelter and refuge that is in Isaiah 4:6. Isaiah 25:4 speaks of the same thing, "For You have been a strength to the poor, A strength to the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm." A refuge. So the question is: in what do you seek refuge? When you have a storm, where do you go? And this is a picture of the people that find refuge in the Lord.

We've read in Isaiah about those who trust in the shadow of Egypt. We have read in Ruth 2:12 where we found that she was given a reward because she came for refuge under the wings of the Lord. We can read about the same thing in Psalm 17:8 where we read, "Hide me under the shadow of Your wings." Hide me under the shadow of your wings. Do you seek all of your refuge in the Lord? What medicine cabinets are you running to, that's the idea. This is a picture of people who are shifting the medicine cabinet that they have been running to and as it is in progressive sanctification, it is a process. When God saves you, you finally realize that that medicine cabinet is bogus. That medicine cabinet of the world is so faulty and underperforming and it's actually devastating and so you trust in the Lord and it begins a continuous, progressive trust in the Lord as the Lord begins to identify different areas that you have not trusted him in. And I think the people of God, when they gather, there is always a mix of people who still find little props here and there and God has them in his church in order to sanctify them, to continue to deliver them from the medicine cabinets of this world and to seek all of their food and all of their medicine in him, all of their refuge so when they find themselves in that storm, they run to the right place. David said in Psalm 36, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings." There is so much in Scripture about the refuge of God for those who put their trust in him. Maybe this afternoon read Psalm 46, "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we shall not fear, Though the earth should change, And the mountains slipped into the heart of the sea."

There is a refuge in Zion and that's what he's speaking of here: those who trust will have something that will happen to them and that is they will inherit. They will be inheritors. They will, first of all, possess the land. This is the first thing that is promised in this verse, verse 13, "And then they will inherit My holy mountain." So those who trust become inheritors, actually co-heirs with Christ. We receive an eternal inheritance in the heavens. We receive treasures in heaven. His riches become our riches and he gives us

his holy mountain. What does that mean? He gives us his holy mountain where we are gathered on his mountain. The whole idea of the mountain of God has a number of meanings, one of them has to do with this gathering. God gathers his people on his holy mountain. These happy streams of people going up to the mountain of the Lord and rejoicing in his goodness, it really is a picture of the Sabbath day, but it's more than that, it's a picture of heaven. And it's really a picture of the every day opportunity that a person is in Christ has to stream, to actually live in the mountain. It's a holy mountain. It's a beautiful mountain. In that mountain, the Lord Jesus Christ has said that on his mountain he has created dwelling places and so he says, "Because I have created these dwelling places, let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God." Literally, to trust in God, this is John 14. To believe is to trust. Trust in God. "Trust also in me, in my Father's house, are many dwelling places."

So inheritance is this first blessing that is promised for those who trust in him. "Trusting the Lord with all of your heart and leaning not on your own understanding." This is what happens in the soul of man when the life of God invades there as an inheritance from that trust. Here in this verse you learn what God is doing with man. What are God's intentions? What does it mean to be a Christian? When Jesus Christ says, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden," what does he want you to come to? Well, he's wanting you to come to an inheritance on his holy mountain.

Not only do they receive these possessions that they have inherited but they will change and their whole conversation changes, the whole direction of their life changes and that's what we come to in verse 14. They start building. They start building something. A converted person who has trusted is changed and he begins a work of building. Now, here Isaiah takes us to another moment. He's painting another picture and you're standing with someone and that person is saying something strange. He is saying, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people." It's a person who is saying this and this is the person who trusts in God. He stops building his own kingdom and he begins building God's kingdom. He realizes his kingdom is going to get burned up, God's kingdom never will. It's eternal. It's a place of everlasting satisfaction.

So there is a person talking now. He is lifting up his voice because all of the heart the mouth speaks and this internal impulse arises in that person and he begins to build and he says 3 things: heap it up, prepare the way, and take the stumbling block out of the way. This is the perfect three-part sermon which we will not give right now, but this has to do, this heaping up, it has to do with building up a road. A road that is higher; it's better; it's visible; it rides above all the obstacles and the idolatries. Now, notice here in the previous half we read about the dumb dogs who don't bark, now we have somebody who is barking and what is he barking? He is saying, "Heap it up! Let's build up the highway of holiness." That's what he's talking about. In other words, "Let's be done with these idols down in the low lands of the world." Then he says to prepare the way and that is done by the heaping up and then take the stumbling block out of the way. That also is accomplished by the heaping up. That has to do with removing worldliness and recognizing these idols that are behind the door and getting rid of, rising above, getting

rid of that ridiculousness that has invaded your brain, these various idol makers in your life.

So it changes a person to begin to do that. Now, in the church we don't do that perfectly and anybody who has ever lived in the church long enough knows that the church doesn't do this perfectly so we're all on this road. Why is this verse standing in the way of your life right now, because it is? It's standing right in the way of your life. It's like a pillar of fire. It's like Balaam's donkey getting ready to talk to you about something. It's the whole question of how are we doing at building up. Are we investing our energies in the kingdom of heaven to build it up, to keep up that highway, and to get rid of the stumbling blocks. You know, all of us can relate to our socializing when we should be evangelizing. All of us can relate to our jive talk when we should be striving with souls. Or exhorting when we should be comforting. Talking silliness when we should be talking holiness. Boasting when we should be loving. Rambling about ourselves when we should be listening. Retiring when we should be inspiring. Withholding when we should be teaching our brothers and our sisters and our children. We can all relate to that so, on the one hand, when you trust in the Lord, it sets you off on a pathway to say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Build up the highway. Get rid of the stumbling block," but we never do it perfectly. Here is a marker for us in this church: let's consider where we are at. Every person here, and sort of redevote ourselves to it.

Now, this concept is in many places in Isaiah, you can read about it in Isaiah 62:10 where he says, "Go through, Go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; Build up, Build up the highway! Take out the stones, Lift up a banner for the peoples!" Take out the stones, what stones do you have of worldliness that are there? Take them out. Get them out of the field. Put them off to the side. Move on. Make a more fruitful field. Build up that highway. Make it be more luxuriant and fruitful. What stones need to be thrown out of your field? Take out the stones. I think this is connected with Isaiah 62. I think it is connected to Jeremiah 18:15 where he speaks of walking on the ancient paths. And speaking in Isaiah 35 on the highway of holiness where he says, "A highway shall be there and a road and it shall be called the highway of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it." This is the call to build, to build up, and how do you build? You first have to recognize what stones are in the way and get the stumbling blocks out of the way. So today, here Balaam's donkey in the form of this text is standing before us and saying, "Where of the stones?" Let's consider that today.

The church in one sense is a dangerous place or it should be a dangerous place and danger from what? Danger to what you trust in. Danger to those little stones of worldliness that are there. Danger to your lack of love. Your worldliness. The church should be a danger to all those things and when you come together, there should be some sense of what danger there might be to my sins today. There are often people, they don't come to church for that reason because there is too much danger there and I pray that our church is kind of a dangerous place, that people would have a certain appropriate fearfulness to come here that God might speak to them and then some day when they realize that is what is happening to them, they come and then they find themselves delivered. But maybe they fear for a while. It's not such a bad thing for people to fear

coming to this church. It's not such a bad thing if there is true deliverance and if Jesus Christ and his matchless grace are the solution.

So the stumbling blocks are taken out of the way, then the third blessing that comes to those who trust, I chose the word "dwelling." I know it can encompass all of this and these single words can't capture everything in these sections but I chose the word "dwelling," because you have this contrast of the high and the holy and then the humble and the contrite. Do you see the contrast? Isaiah's painting another picture for you. It's just almost incomprehensible. It's a strange picture. It's like a mouse and an elephant, something like that, and making some kind of comparison. There is no comparison at all except they are just both beings.

But here we read, "For thus says the High and Lofty One," verse 15, "Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'" So the first half of the verse is about the lofty, majestic, high one and then he goes to a human being and he is contrasting the high and holy God with the humble and the contrite and he shows how they mix. How it is possible that they mix and what happens when they mix.

God is speaking of his dwelling place, the highness of it, and we could spend a significant amount of time speaking of God's holiness, defining it and speaking of how high God's holiness is and all the people who have encountered his holiness and what happens to them when they encounter his holiness: the falling on the faces; the restoration; the blessing that comes from being exposed to holiness. And I believe what he is talking about here is also referred to by the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 1:15 where he says, "You shall be holy because it is written, 'I am holy.'" You shall be holy for I am holy. And you have the holy God and you have a man who is humble but he's not perfect and he's not perfectly humble. So you have the holy dwelling with the unholy.

Excuse me, I'm just skipping through miles and miles of doctrine of holiness because I don't think that's the primary focus here. The primary focus is what happens when you trust in the Lord and that is that you find yourself with holiness and the only way that that happens is through a humble and contrite heart that says, "I cannot trust myself anymore." And what happens to you? You are brought into God's holiness and we'll see more of what happens to that person who is brought into that holiness and their various words, but this is a picture of dwelling with God.

You know, this is why, if you go back and look at various occasions where the holiness of God is recognized by people like with Daniel or like with Peter after the Lord Jesus Christ calmed the sea or after he threw his net on the other side of the boat or even Moses, they saw the holiness of God and they fell on their face with fear and they were completely undone like Isaiah was in Isaiah 6, "Woe is me, for I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell with the people of unclean lips." When people see the holiness of God, they fall down but on those occasions, what does God do? Like with

Daniel, he says, "Come to me." With Peter he says, "Come to me." With Moses. He does not kill the unholy who have a contrite heart who trust in him.

Perhaps having a contrite and humble spirit is equivalent to trusting in him because when you find yourself desiring to do his will and not your own, that's trust and that's humility. It's the humility that Jesus Christ had before his Father when he said, "Not my will but yours be done." That's humility. You know, Satan wanted the high and the holy place and it only ended in disaster but here you have God bringing the lowly into his presence. I heard a statement by John Murray that went like this, "If you're not brought low by grace, you will be brought low by judgment." That's what happened to the devil and that's what happens to every person who does not humble himself before God.

Now, just a little bit more on this whole matter of being humble which has to do with being lowly. These are people at the bottom and God doesn't leave them at the bottom. He takes them to his glory and he gives them his inheritance. "Contrite" is a word that has to do with "being crushed." I believe he is speaking of being crushed by the consequences of sin. The consequences of sin are always operating and they are always crushing. They are soul crushing, happiness crushing, contentment crushing and they breed all kinds of things.

But the unholy receive the most wonderful blessing an unholy person can receive and that is to be dwelling with someone who is holy. That is how you change. You dwell with someone. Have you ever been in someone's home and you have lived there for a little while and you learn something that you never knew before and you change, you are never the same again? Often you have people who don't know how to be husbands and wives and they don't know how to raise children because they have never been in a home where the word of God has governed that. They haven't seen it and they need to be with someone who has. I mean, this is actually one reason why God gives elders to churches, so that they become an example to the flock. Well, here with God, we have something so profoundly wonderful that he brings the unholy to him in order to make them holy. This is the most wonderful thing that an unholy person can experience is God and his holiness.

Holiness is the most wonderful thing. Jonathan Edwards likened holiness to happiness. He was right because that is the ground and being of God and he revives the humble. "To revive the spirit of the humble and revive the heart of the contrite ones." You know, God is in the resuscitation business and when you trust him he starts resuscitating you. He starts remaking you and you're changed into his likeness and that happens through his revival.

Maybe some of you have read that old book that was published in the mid-17th century, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," by Henry Scougal. This book was printed in, I think, 1677 and about 68 years later, Charles Wesley gave a copy of that book to George Whitefield and George Whitefield read the book and he said, "I am unconverted. I have never known God. I have never experienced the life of God in my soul." And he repented. Then later on somebody gave that same copy to William Wilberforce and the same thing happened. But they realized, they both realized that there was something more



to Christianity than doing stuff and believing stuff. That there was the whole matter of the life of God in their souls that they had not known. They had not been changed. They had a religion and this is exactly the same problem in Judah that Isaiah is addressing and when we get into chapter 58, we'll see this so clearly. You have this rocking and rolling religion and yet it's really all about them and not about God. All their fasting, all their keeping the Sabbath is really just for them.

But this is what revival is. Revival is the experience of the life of God in the soul of man and that life revives you. That life begins by saving your soul and making you holy before God positionally and then it continues on as God continues his work of sanctification and cleansing. Why? So that we would be like that man in Acts 3, walking and leaping and praising God.

Then propitiation. This is the next blessing of those who trust in him and, again, I recognize this word "propitiation" doesn't capture everything here but I think it gets to the main issue and this has to do with what God does in his anger toward the unholy. "For I will not contend forever." Oh, for I will not contend forever? "Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made." Now, propitiation is a change of God's attitude where he turns from wrath and he begins to pour out his blessing and propitiation is the restraint, it's something that happens in the mind of God that restrains his wrath and it is the atonement that accomplishes this. You read about the shadow of the atonement in Leviticus 16 and the Apostle Paul speaks about being saved from his wrath. In 1 John 4:10, the apostle says this, "This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And propitiation is a quelling of the wrath of God. Propitiation, you know, this is a word that every 5-year-old needs to know. Propitiation. Can the 5-year-old say propitiation? Learn what propitiation means. It has to do with the soothing of wrath. It's one of the most wonderful words in the Bible. Propitiation, the soothing of the wrath of God.

Here what we learn is that God does not bring the full extent of his anger and to those who trust in him, he pulls back his wrath and his whole disposition toward the sinner changes. God is angry with the sinner all day long. He never stops his anger toward those who do not trust him, but with those who have trusted him, he pulls back the full measure of his wrath. Why? Because the spirit of man would fail if he did not do that. He knows our frame and so as a father pities his children, so the Lord loves and pities those who fear him, those who trust him. This is why Isaiah says in Isaiah 51:22, "See, I have taken out of your hand The cup of trembling, The dregs of the cup of My fury; You shall no longer drink it." But then he says, "I will give it to those who don't trust me and they will drink it." They will drink it.

Then he speaks of covetousness and I think it's worth mentioning this matter of covetousness in verse 17 because this punishment for covetousness and his anger at covetousness is the heart of the matter and why propitiation is so wonderful and so important. He says, "For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart." Now, this is another picture. It's a picture of someone whom God is going to save. It is a covetous

person and he's going to save that person. He is covetous. He is far off, he is far gone and he is far out and he is hanging out there building his whole life on his covetousness and he is speaking of the lengths that God goes to heal the covetousness and he does 3 things to covetous people. He strikes them. He brings calamity into their life and often they don't understand what's going on so they just run to the medicine cabinet, the wrong one, and they take something out of the world's medicine cabinets because he strikes them and then he hides. He hides his face from them. Now, to have God hide his face, his face of beauty and truth and help, is the most devastating thing that can happen to a person in this world, but it can be the most blessed thing because when he hides and you realize it, you turn and you trust him. And then he is angry. Those 3 things: he strikes; he hides; and he is angry and you will feel it. This is what God does to save sinners. He brings them into days of calamity. He makes them wander and seek for this thing and that thing and they can't find it anywhere. God is hiding from them and then all of a sudden he opens their eyes and they see and he is no longer hidden from them. Then they are brought up into his mountain, put on his highway of holiness and everything changes. He wounds us in order to heal us. He strikes us, not to kill us, but to turn us.

This really speaks of how noxious covetousness is to God and he calls it backsliding and you can take this 2 ways and maybe I should just preach it both ways. It's perhaps the person who is backslidden into covetousness or it's the person who is just constantly on the slide backward who is unconverted. It could be preached both ways, I'm pretty sure. But we know in the Tenth Commandment, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not desire your neighbor's house. His field. His male servant. His female servant. His ox. His donkey nor anything that is in your house." This is the Tenth Commandment on this issue of covetousness. What God is saying here is that he is angry at covetousness and this commandment, it just proves God's concern for our happiness. He goes into the deepest recesses of our hearts in order to destroy this soul corroding sin of covetousness. To bring us to a deep and abiding peace.

Covetousness is an eagerness to possess something. It might be a grudging admiration to possess something that you don't have. It's a dissatisfaction with God and what he has given. You are not satisfied with the sovereign hand of God and so you are covetous and you become like that raging sea, never happy. He speaks of your neighbor's wife, wanting another woman that God has not given you. I think that has to do with a lot of things: the wandering eye in the workplace; walking down the street; or in the "privacy" of your computer because it's not private, it's in the cloud. It can have to do with your neighbor's house as he says in the commandment. It can have to do with your neighbor's field. It can have to do with his male or female servant, in other words, his resources to get things done. It could be his ox, in other words, his stuff; his equipment; or his donkey; his mode of transportation; his way of carrying things; his truck; his far, far higher quality vehicle than yours. Or it's anything that is your neighbor's. That's covetousness. Here God is angry with our covetousness and in the getting rid of covetousness there is a promotion of love. It's the abandonment of a wasteful and fruitless consumer mentality. It helps purify a man or a woman in their heart and focus them on things that are so good for them. So God is angry with covetousness. This is a blessing, the blessing of propitiation, that his

wrath subsides and when you humbly recognize your covetousness, it's such a blessing and to recognize that God is still angry at your covetousness, so keep working on it.

Then the fifth blessing, healing. Verse 18. It's hard for me not to camp on this for the entire first of the time and the rest of the time because this matter of healing has always been so captivating and wonderful to me and I think when I was first converted it was one of the chief things that I saw, healing. I saw healing and not just to me but to others around me. So he says, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." In other words, "I have seen his covetousness and I'm going to heal him. I am going to heal him. I am going to make him trust me and not want his neighbor's wife or his neighbor's land or oxen or resources or anything. I am going to change him and I have seen his ways. I have seen his covetousness. I have seen him think, I've seen him on the cloud, but I'll heal him and I will also lead him. And restore comforts to him And to his mourners." Now, the first thing that I want us to recognize in verse 18 is this is what God does. Man doesn't do this for himself. He didn't just wake up someday. God does this. He says, "I have seen and I will heal. I will lead. I will restore the comforts." This is what God does. This is God's kindness. This is his love. This is his mercy. His sovereign power over the heart of man to change it. To change that man who just goes from one medicine cabinet to another and then finally God rescues him. He says, "I struck you but it did nothing, but now I will heal." God is not ignoring the sin but God does intervene in the sin through the smiting and these various things.

And he restores comforts to him and his mourners. You know, when God heals, there are people watching. There are the other mourners out there, the others who have been so messed up by their sins and they see what happens and the friends of the ones who are being healed, they are also healed so I will restore comforts to him and to his mourners. I think he's talking about those who see the healing and they want to be healed too, your friends, the people that you know in the world. And perhaps it's that they begin to mourn for their sin and they are comforted. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." That's all part of healing as well. You know, there are so many blessings in the soul of man when you trust in him.

Then the sixth blessing is peace. Verse 19, "I create the fruit of the lips." That's such amazing language. "I create." Now, the word that he uses is the word "bara" which is the word of creation. "In the beginning God created." God is the Creator. He creates all things beautiful in his own time and here it says, "'I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,' Says the LORD, 'And I will heal him.'" He uses the word "peace" twice, "peace, peace," and he is speaking of the deepest, truest peace. It's the real peace. It's not the kind of momentary peace that you get out of the medicine cabinet of this world. It's not the passing pleasures of sin that Moses turned away from. It's real peace and you find this in Scripture where God wants to emphasize something to make it more powerful in your thinking and here he uses "peace, peace." It's what the apostle speaks of, it's the peace that passes all understanding. It's like nothing else that the world can give you. It's like when you read about the King of kings and the Lord of lords or the Song of Songs. It's superlative. It's beyond just a song, it's beyond just a king and it's beyond just peace. It is greater than that. It's something from heaven.

Isaiah speaks of peace 33 times in his prophecy. It's sometimes translated "rest." But remember who this is for now: this is for the people who are so caught up in their covetousness and then something happened. Whenever you see a covetous person, remember this verse. There may be peace for them. Don't be angry with them. Don't be put off by them because it says here that God can create something.

But peace, to who? To him who is far off and to him who is near. Now, that's code for a couple of things. The "far off" are the Gentiles which is translated the worldly of this world who have just drank of worldliness and cared nothing for God and his ways. They are not religious people. They are pagan people from the pagan nations. They are so far off from understand anything about God and you can see it in their cultures. Just travel all over the world and you can see it. You can see how far off the cultures of this world are and the despicable, ridiculous, harmful practices they engage in and the crazy societies they create and the stupid laws they make and the things that just wreck their people. Go to India and you find people sacrificing to rats. What's that all about? Or you can go to America and find many things that look exactly like that. But the "far off" are the pagan of this world who do not recognize God at all. These are those who I said are also far out. They are so far out it's insane and they are far gone.

Then there are those who are near and there he is speaking about his people, Judah; his people, Israel. The people who ought to know better. The people who know the religion. The people who come to church. The people who celebrate the Sabbath. The people who, they have their quiet time. It's the religious people who do this stuff are those who are near and he brings this peace to both of those and what he's saying is that, "Don't be deceived by the wretched worldliness that you see in the world and don't be deceived by the religiosity that you see in the church." Both of those need one thing and they need peace, real peace that comes from trust.

Now, the Apostle Peter speaks of this and he quotes it in Acts 2:38 where he says to the crowd, he says, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off." All who are far off and far out and far gone and, "as many as the Lord our God will call." In other words, for every one who will call on the name of the Lord. These are the people for whom God has reserved his peace and it comes from those who trust him.

And what does God do? He sees. He heals. He leads. He restores. He revives. He comforts. And he comforts the friends of those who have been comforted. And he creates the fruit of our lips which is peace. Your lips begin to speak of peace and they reflect that peace like never before.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this in Ephesians 2:11 through 22. It speaks of what it means to be far off. He says, "Remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." What a wonderful thing. Is that your epitaph? Is that your biography? "I was once far off. I was once so far out, I was once so far gone." Is that your epitaph? But you were brought near. Cut off. Excluded. No life. No knowledge. An alien. You can grow up in a church and in a nation where God is spoken of and you believe all the facts of the Christian life but you don't know the Christ of that life because you don't trust him. You're still scanning. You're still trusting in this world. You're still running to the medicine cabinet and here's a prophecy: you will keep running to that medicine cabinet either until God kills you or until God gives you life. That's it.

The religious people with the idol standing behind the door, the weary going on and one going through one motion after another, and what is your solution? Get it together? Read the Bible more? You're cold, do something to heat yourself up? Listen to a sermon? If that's your solution, you'll never know him. You can only know him when you trust him and when you're near him. When you with lowly and contrite humble heart are near the high and lifted up, he alone can give you what you're looking for for he himself is our peace.

Let's talk about the hardships that fall on those who trust in themselves. This is the life on the stormy sea. Just 2 verses. There is no peace for the wicked. There are 3 times when Isaiah ends a section with this phrase, verse 20, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 'There is no peace,' Says my God, 'for the wicked.'" He brings up this matter of peace again and he describes it, again, he's painting another picture. There is another one: the raging sea. Last week, off the coast of North Carolina and all off the East Coast was a raging sea from that hurricane Joaquin that was raging. Thankfully it turned in the other direction but this is the picture that is here.

You know, the contrast couldn't be more stark. With those who trust, they are inheriting, they are building, they are dwelling, the anger of God is propitiated, they are healing and they have peace. The contrast couldn't be more dramatic. It's like black and white. Now he takes you to this raging sea and there is muck driven up from the surface, the turmoil, the tumult without salvation from God. They are in a different kind of water because Isaiah does talk about water. He talks about streams in the desert, he talks about peace like a river, and now he's talking about the angry, raging sea. Aren't you thankful for Scripture? For God? For the way he reveals himself? How he tells you in a thousand ways and just when you get through a thousand, there's another thousand and here we are now and there is this raging sea and he saying those who do not trust God are like a different kind of water. You know, a young man in our church experienced an appendicitis and had to go to the hospital and get it taken out last week and I was with him after he got home from the hospital and I said, "What was it like? What did it feel like?" He said, "It was like my organs were battling one another. They were just tearing at each other, stabbing each other." That's how he described it. Well, that's the picture here: this angry, raging sea going on inside and this is what happens to those who do not have the life of God in their souls.

You know, these are the blessings of the life of God in the soul of man and the curses of the man who does not trust God, but he keeps running to that old medicine cabinet, trying to fix himself when it's really only found in the holiness of God. It's the holiness of God that is the answer. That's everything and so we ought to see the beauty of his holiness as we do here in this passage.

You know, the essence of Henry's Scougal's book, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," is that Christianity is the inward working of God in the soul of man and transforming him and pleasing him at the same time. He says that salvation is not found in theological correctness or outward moral integrity or emotion. George Whitefield and Charles Wesley and William Wilberforce had all of those. It's found in Christ working in your heart, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Lord Jesus Christ healing your soul as you meditate upon him in the night watches and in the secret places and throughout the day and when you gather on the Sabbath day. It's the fact that the holy God of heaven and his holiness entering into the soul and capturing and consoling the soul until Christ is formed in you. And Scougal says that the life of God in the soul of man is something that is motivated far more than merely by "the threatenings or the bribing promises or the constraint of laws." He says it has to do with faith. It has to do with love toward God to be delighted with him; to be delighted with his words and his ways. He says it has to do with the holiness of purity where a person begins to disdain and abstain from the things in that worldly medicine cabinet. And it has to do, he says, with humility. He calls it a deep sense of our meanness with a hearty acknowledgment of our owing all that we are to the divine bounty which is accompanied with a profound submission to the will of God and a great deadness to the glory of the world and the applause of men.

These things here are what the life of God in the soul of man is all about and this is what happens when you trust in the Lord. What a wonderful thing it is to have a God who would speak so graphically to us, who would teach us the beauty of his holiness, and that's really why we're here today. It's to acknowledge it. To saturate ourselves in it and to delight in it all day long. Praise the Lord.

Let's pray.

*O Lord, I pray that you would fulfill all these things in us. O Lord, come and rescue those who have the raging sea in their internal organs and that you would come and pacify it with your holiness and that you would provide for us, Lord, according to your sovereign hand. That you would create the words of our mouths today to delight in you. Amen.*