

The Gospel Call

Book of Isaiah

By Ken Wimer

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Isaiah 55:2-9

Preached On: Sunday, July 22, 2012

Shreveport Grace Church

2970 Baird Road

Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

If you have time some time, look up and read the testimony of Charlotte Elliott that wrote those words. I think you'll find them a blessing. The Lord sent into her home at a time of need a Gospel preacher from Switzerland by the name of Cesar Malan and he talked to her of Christ and the glory of the Gospel and his finished work for sinners and the Lord used that to open her heart to Christ. It's a very clear testimony of grace and the word is true.

Let's take our Bibles and look together in Isaiah 55. The last time we opened this portion a couple of weeks ago, we looked primarily at verse 1, the marketplace of free grace, that's how I introduced it. I want to read down to verse 9 today, verse 1 down to verse 9, and speak with you on "The Gospel Call." The Gospel call.

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. 4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. 6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The editors of this Bible put as a title of this chapter, "The Great Invitation," but I have to take exception to that. We have here what I have just read for you is not an invitation as

you would say an open invitation, "olly, olly oxen free," everybody come. It is rather a summons and it is addressed to a specific people. Right from the get-go we read, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," and I know that there are many that we encounter in this world that are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that is after that righteousness which our Lord Jesus Christ came and established and God the Father approved, who was put to the account of every one that he purposed to save that righteousness. These are the ones who are being summoned here.

These are the ones that are being called and everything down through here, the way these words are written, are in the form of a command. Imagine if you addressed your children and said, "Ho, I need you to come here." And they said, "Well, since that's not a command and that's an invitation, I think I'll just probably just keep doing what I'm doing." How long do you think they would get away with that? If they're your child, they're coming. "I'm not inviting you, I'm telling you to come," and the Gospel is such a command.

You can see even in verse 4, in speaking of Christ when Isaiah was directed to write, "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader," and underscore the word, "and commander to the people." The Lord is the captain of our salvation for his people. There is still a school of thought, and that's all it is, it is false but there is a school of thought that somehow you can come to Christ and receive him as Savior but never really ever bow to him as Lord. It's religion's way of trying to make room for a bunch of people that have made a profession that really aren't the Lord's, so they have been told to walk an aisle, say a prayer, bow a head, repeat after some religious leader, and then hold to that even though their hearts are just as rebellious against Christ as they ever were. The Bible knows no such doctrine. You don't come to Christ as you would to a smorgasbord. I guess they don't even call them smorgasbords anymore, it's buffets. I'm kind of dating myself, but you get to pick. If you don't want the veggies, you don't have to eat them, just go for the meat. But with Christ, that's not how you come. If a sinner comes to Christ, he has been drawn by that Spirit and that sinner will bow to the Lord Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest and King. It's not pick and choose.

So that's the command that we see here. It's what the Apostle Paul in writing called the law of faith. To those of us that believe the Scriptures as God has taught us about the grace of God, we are often accused of being what they say antinomian; that's just a word that means against the law and the truth is we do have a law. We do have a rule, but it's not our obedience. That's not our rule. That is not what gives us acceptance before God. It's Christ's obedience and that's what the law of faith teaches, that Christ accomplished all that was necessary; that Christ paid the debt; Christ fulfilled the precepts of the law and it is thereby his obedience that we are justified before God. That's the law of faith. When you talk about the law of gravity, if you want to test it, after work we can all go on a roof and jump and see what will happen. We'll prove it. It's a law. I'd like to see how long any of us stay up in the air. I'd probably be the first to the ground as big as I am. That's the law. It's the law of gravity.

Here the law of faith, you look in Romans 3:27 and in the verses previous, Paul has written these inspired word that we are, "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." That is how we're justified. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It's not our believing that justifies us but he is the justifier of those that believe in him; that we have been given faith to trust Christ, it's been because our sins have already been put away, Christ has paid the debt.

But here's the question in verse 27, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?" No, if you believe in the law of works, that somehow something that you do in order to find acceptance with God, then you would have room to boast if you could actually accomplish it but you can't. So by what law then are sinners justified before God? It says, "by the law of faith." That's that rule. That's that truth. I believe that the word "faith" here is subjective. It's the revealed body of truth concerning Christ and his death which is our foundation, which is our hope, that when he died he put away our sin. So that's the law we adhere to. It's a rule. If someone were to come in here and try to preach up works, we would stand up and say, "By the law of faith we have no such custom. We don't believe that here. That's not our custom." The law of faith declares Christ to be the Redeemer, the Savior; Christ to be our obedience before God.

Over in Romans 16:26, the reason I'm going through these verses is to show you the connection between the New Testament and the Old. It's one message, one Gospel. Here is a command given in Isaiah but it's the same thing that Paul declared. It's the same thing that I declare unto you. Here in Romans 16, you can see in verse 25, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel," authority, "and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." Bob, in his prayer, couldn't have prayed anything more plainly what I was about to say. He didn't know. He didn't see my notes, but he, with his prayer, addressed the God, the Savior of the Jew and the Gentile, sinners throughout the world. That was the mystery that was kept secret since the world began. God first began to work through that Jewish nation but it wasn't just for the Jew, it included Gentiles. It included sinners from every tribe, nation and tongue for whom Christ would die and now it is being fully manifest.

Verse 26, "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God," there it is, commandment, "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever." How do I know one has chosen the Lord? How do I know that Christ has paid the debt of a particular sinner? The Spirit grants this obedience to faith. It's not a personal obedience. It's not a trust in one's own righteousness. Far from it, but it's a looking to and a resting in exclusively and solitarily in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for what he has accomplished.

If you look over in Galatians 3, because if the message here is, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth," you notice down through here it says, "Incline your ear," or "hearken diligently unto me." Obedience to the faith supposes a hearing. Isn't that the one thing your children tell you, "Oh, I didn't hear you"? That's a good excuse, "I didn't hear you." Selective hearing. Where there is an obedience to the faith, there has been a hearing that has been granted and here in Galatians 3:2, Paul uses that very expression. What is the obedience of the faith? Well, it's a hearing of the faith. Do you see this? Verse 1, these are ones to whom the Gospel had been preached but there were some who were being persuaded by the preachers to go back to the law, go back to some sort of personal obedience. Conditional preaching is popular today. They speak of grace on the one hand but on the other hand here is a list of things you've got to do to receive it. So he calls them foolish any that reason that way, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you," you're under a curse thinking that way, "that ye should not," notice, "obey the truth." In other words, look to Christ alone, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" That's the one message that the true sheep of God respond to, Christ being crucified. That's their need.

But he says in verse 2, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law," notice here, "or by the hearing of faith?" There is no way of putting that as the law and which is it? It can't be both. Well, the answer is it's by the hearing of faith. Hearing of that body of truth in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and his death that caused you to bow to him alone and to own his work of righteousness alone that he accomplished for sinners. You see it again in verse 5, "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you," speaking there of the apostles, "doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

All this is vital. I could stand up here and declare unto you all day long to incline your ear and to come to Christ and to behold his person, to seek the Lord, but unless the Lord grant you that hearing, it would be like me standing out in the cemetery over those tombstones declaring to dead sinners to hear, to come. They won't unless the Lord grants them to hear.

That being established, come back here to Isaiah 55 where here we see these same commands of the Gospel in my text. I started off by saying they were eight but the more I read, I kept counting and that could be nine, that could be ten, so I'm just not going to say any number. We can go back through and count but there is an infinite number of commands. But beginning with the word, "ho" in verse 1, this is expressive of a calling or of a summons but to a very specific type of sinner. Is it open and public? Yes, just as right now many are hearing my voice, but it's addressed to the thirsty so I have to ask has the Lord giving you a hungry and a thirst after Christ? After that work of righteousness that he came and fulfilled on behalf of sinners?

There is a difference between having an appetite and truly being hungry and I'm not sure what the contrast is. We can say sometimes, "I'm getting thirsty," so we grab something, but there is a difference between getting thirsty and truly dying of thirst to where it becomes a life and death matter and I believe the sense here is, "Ho, everyone that is

dying of thirst." You have been made to see that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ being for you that fountain of life, that water of life, you will perish. This is the word that is addressed to these. It is those who by the Spirit of God have been made to hunger and thirst after righteousness. God's righteousness. Thirsty, not in a natural sense and much less in a sinful sense, but in a spiritual one. In other words, ask yourself: do I see the vital need of my soul for that forgiveness of sin that was wrought by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? How vital is it? Is it so vital that you can go nowhere but to him? You see, it's not just a matter of drinking out of any cistern but coming to the water of life. How thirsty are you after that righteousness that could only be accomplished through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? To be able to say, "If Christ is not my justification, I have no justification. My mouth is silenced."

How thirsty are you to know him because when it says here, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," it's in the present tense. A continual thirst. Have you ever had days like that when you can never drink enough water, it just seems like, "What did I eat? What is causing it?" Most of the time it's because we eat too much pizza. It's too salty. You drink and drink trying to quench it. But imagine being in the wilderness, imagine being in a situation where you have to ration your water. I read just recently and I've seen it in my experience in some of these other countries in the world, where they have to walk so far to get water that one goes along to carry the water that is necessary for both of them to drink on the way back to make sure they don't die before they get back and the other carries the water that will be used to help bake or cook so they keep the two separate. We just take a lot of these things for granted where we just go and turn on the faucet and there comes the water. They're working on the pipe down the street and they say it's going to be eight hours with no water and we're all bent out of shape. We can't live. Should we close the office? Let's see if we can't get a hotel room. Eight hours when there are some that live in this situation from day-to-day. Their first task, that's their only task is to get up early in the morning before the sun gets too hot and go out and get the necessary water and then come back. Bring it back.

There is a thirst. There is a continual thirst and I believe that's a good description of like the psalmist said, "The panting after God as a hart pants after the water." It's talking about a deer that is being chased by a hunter and runs for its life and it become so thirsty that it seeks out that water brook. Oh, to have such a thirst after Christ. More knowledge of him. Am I self-satisfied in what I think I know or is there that constant thirst of knowing him? Being found in him? Having communion with him? Whether I have communion with anybody else in this world or not, my fellowship with God is in Christ. Such a thirst or as Peter described, thirsting after the milk of the word and having that desire for him.

So, let's just go down through here and look at a few of these commands with the time that remains. The first one we see which we're used to hearing, but again, I wonder how much we hear: come. Come. I fear that just like a train that goes by down here, after a while we get so used to it that we don't hear it. I had someone recently tell me, "Well, every once in a while while you're preaching I can hear a train." I don't hear it. It's gotten to where, okay, I know it's down there but we just don't hear it because we get used to it. But to someone else, they hear it. I fear that we become so fat and sassy in hearing the

Gospel we really don't hear it. We hear the word to "come" and in our minds we're saying, "Well, I'm ready," but the way this is written is with urgency. If you were really truly in need and dying of thirst and you had someone say, "Come to the waters, where you're going in that direction is not it, it's over here." You would thank them. You would say, "You're a blessing of the Lord because I'm that needy sinner."

That's the word that's used here twice, "come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat," then the third time, "yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Do you think the Spirit directed Isaiah to write this three times in this verse just as a filler? I don't believe so. It's interesting because in the original, even though here it is translated "come," the command is, "go you." Walk to. Walk to the waters, obviously being led to the waters by the great Shepherd of the sheep.

Look at Psalm 23. I believe it's mentioned this many times for emphasis and how we need to be reminded of our need and Peter wrote of that. We don't just come to Christ one time. It's like a wife complaining that the husband never tells her that he loves her and he responds, "Well, I told you that when we got married." One time. Done. No, she needs to hear it, "I love you." We need to hear it again and again and that's what this is, "come to the waters."

Psalm 23, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." I'll not lack is what that means where the Lord is my shepherd. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me," where? "Beside the still waters." A sheep is made of such a nature that if the waters are rushing, it can't drink and I'll say there is a lot of turbulence in the waters or the cisterns that men have hewn out in their messages. A sheep can't drink. The sheep needs calm waters. A thirsty person needs water that is prepared, pure and given to drink and to drink of it.

That's the sense here, "come ye to the waters." This is not rushing water, these are not turbulent waters, these are calm waters, and the calm waters describe Christ. Christ said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." There is no better rest for me as a sinner than to hear of a Christ who has finished the work, is there? How about you? That's the calm water of the Gospel, the still waters, the fact that Christ has finished the work. So these are the waters to which we are drawn by the Spirit of God. We come, being drawn.

Secondly, coming back here to Isaiah 55:1, there is that word "buy." Buy, it's a command. It's not an invitation. "Buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk," then it says, "without money and without price." This same word in the original that you see "buy," depending on how the word is put together it can mean either buy or sell. But I believe you can see the sense here and that is when the command is given to buy, it's translated 15 times in hour King James as "buy" and it is translated six times as "sell." The point is, whatever it takes, partake of this grace as a needy sinner. Don't go to any other marketplace. This is a place where those that are commanded to come and drawn to come, find all that is necessary for their soul's need and salvation already procured. Not just secured but procured. He hath obtained an eternal redemption for us. I don't know about you, but

that's good news to this sinner. Christ is the one that gives that meat. Christ is the one that is that drink so buy without money and without price.

Down in verse 2, the question is asked, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Then in terms of works religion, all those works that men strive to do are going to be burnt up with them in eternal condemnation unless the Lord has been pleased to pay that sinner's debt and convert, turn in this life. But you can stand in most congregations today and ask this question, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?" Programs, preachers on the radio telling people if they don't give that they are going to have to shut down. It probably would be a good thing if they did shut down, but there are just enough people out there that want to keep them going. They just prop them up, push them up. "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?" Christ isn't being preached there. It's a ministry that a man has begun and wants to keep going. I've always said that if the Lord has ordered it, he'll take care of it. You don't have to call men to give. Our responsibility is simply to declare Christ in all of his freeness, and all of his fullness, and he'll do his work.

"Why do you labor for that which satisfieth not?" If you really believe that your salvation can be accomplished by your repentance even or your faith, my question is, how much is enough? You can get down on your knees right now and beg God to forgive you based upon your repentance but when you got up, there would be that niggling little thought in your mind of, "Did I repent enough?" You're going to go down one more time. And preachers like to have people running. They like to have something happening. They are making it happen. They'll fill a whole stadium full of people that are just waiting for the preacher to say, "Come out and receive and come down to the front and shake the preacher's hand." It gives them something to do. But that's what their salvation is based upon and it won't satisfy. That's why they have to keep coming back to the preacher for him to bolster them up, give them some assurance. There is nothing there. It is vain. It is empty. Anything that we do as far as works to try to establish a righteousness before God is nothing but husks, corn husks that are empty and vain. So the question is asked legitimately to cause us to think. It's like that prodigal son when he had come to the end of himself, spent his inheritance on something that could not satisfy and said he came to his senses. It's the Lord that brings you to your senses and causes you to see that, "To Christ I must go or die."

So here in verse 2, again, we have the word "hearken." In other words, and look it's not alone, "hearken diligently unto me." This is an urgent matter. I remember reading that in Pilgrim's Progress as the Lord began to deal with him and draw him away, separate him out, and his family was concerned that he was losing his mind. Finally he had to plug his ears from the cries of his family and run to the Wicket Gate. There was a separating out. There are some that will hear, shrug their shoulders and think, it's like when the Lord dealt with Saul on the road to Damascus, some heard something that they thought was like thunder. They heard something but then they went about their way. But Saul, he heard the Lord saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" There was a particular word addressed to him and he hearkened diligently. The Lord turned his heart.

"Hearken diligently unto me." Who is speaking? It's the Lord. You can come to a doctor and get it all straight in your mind but that's not necessarily coming to Christ. You can come to a ceremony of baptism, you can be dunked in the water because you want to make some sort of open profession, but unless the Lord has given you life, you go in a dead sinner and you come out a dead sinner. There is no life in that water. The life is in the water of life.

So, "hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Who has a thirst? Who has a hunger? Not a dead body. If it is dead, there is no hunger. There is no thirst. So here the command is literally to taste and see that the Lord is good and when it says, "let your soul delight itself in fatness," that word "delight" is something that is delicious. It's like when you take a bite of food that is just extraordinary and all of a sudden all of your senses come alive and you think, "Wow, what is this?" I've eaten meat before but never like this. I've eaten a dessert before but never like this. There is something to it that draws you. That's the word here.

Notice, it's not a physical sensation, "let your soul delight itself in fatness." This is a heart work. I could put together a message and come up with the greatest illustrations to make it plain but that goes from this mouth to your head and that's it. You would walk out of here and say, "Well, that's a pretty good message." What about the heart? A heart that is arrested by the Spirit of God and made to delight in the Lord, that's what's being described here, in exquisite delight. It's an interesting word. It's almost to the point of giddiness, like the man who couldn't shut up.

That's a rejoicing, to make merry in the goodness and here it says, "in fatness," of the Lord's house. I trust that's what we are doing right now, tending to his word. Why do we come? Is it just a perfunctory thing that we do it because it's Sunday? Put on our Sunday meeting clothes and come and put in our time and go back? Or is there a true peace? Is there a true delight in hearing Christ and him crucified? I pray there is, that each of us would come with that desire, "Give me Christ or I die." I am that needy sinner. I need to hear him again, again and again, just as I get hungry again and again and again, we get thirsty again and again. I need to hear Christ.

Look at Psalm 36:8. We'll have to draw the line here because our time is fleeting. Psalm 36:8, we'll start up in verse 7, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." When this Scripture here says they "delight itself in fatness," one could say that this would be a reference to those thanksgiving sacrifices of which when they were offered, the Lord had the people come and partake. Most of the time it was just an offering to the Lord completely consumed but there were those thank offerings of which the Lord said portions of the fatness of those sacrifices was to be eaten by those that brought them. That's a partaking in, a fellowshiping in these sacrifices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that's what's described here in Psalm 36 and 37. "Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." What was the psalmist referring to, "the

shadow of thy wings"? I believe it was the mercy seat where the two cherubim face each other and where it pleased God to show mercy when that blood was brought in and sprinkled once a year on the mercy seat. Delight when the Shekinah glory was there; it cast a shadow on those wings. It represented the very presence of God in that place where he is pleased to show mercy, that is in Christ.

Here in verse 8 it says, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house." He's talking about the sacrifices. I trust that you've got your Bible open right now but I trust that we all are sitting here by God's grace looking for one thing, the sacrifice, the Lamb. "What did you do today for worship?" We partook of the Lamb. We ate of the fatness of the Lamb, that describes his all sufficiency, his glory, the perfection of his work in what he accomplished for sinners. That's our delight.

If you look in Psalm 65:4. Psalm 36:8, I didn't read the whole thing, "and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." That's where God's pleasure is, it's in his Son. But Psalm 65:4, this will be the last reference and then we'll be done. Psalm 65:4. Do you really consider yourself blessed? Even have a thirst? Have a hunger? I trust that you delight in the fatness of the Lamb of God. Psalm 65:4, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." How is it that God in his holiness can show goodness on a sinner such as we are? There is only one way, through the sacrifice of his Son and that is that one in whom our soul delights. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Is that your state before the Lord? I pray so. If not, may he be gracious to grant us this comfort, this thirst, this desire, this taste of Christ and him alone.