

Isaiah 62:8-12 (NKJV)

⁸ The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength: "Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies; And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.

⁹ But those who have gathered it shall eat it, And praise the LORD; Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts."

¹⁰ 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!

¹¹ Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward *is* with Him, And His work before Him.' "

¹² And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Our text breaks into a logical outline beginning with 62:8 and ending with 63:14

Our text this morning is about God preparing a place for us that we will love. 63:1-6 displays an awful display of the bloody vengeance of God. Then 63:7-14 God's reminds us of His love for His people, even when they least warranted it.

My 9 to 5 "day job" is as a **help desk** worker for a big corporation. My responsibility is to keep the phones functioning. And every day I am involved in a brand new puzzle to solve. And I find that most of my failures in doing my job can be tracked back to one single thing. **Assumptions.** I often make wrong assumptions and those assumptions doom my efforts.

For example I once helped someone with a printer for 15 minutes before I thought to ask the person if any of the lights on the printer were lit. I assumed that no one would expect a device to work if it was not turned on. I started with a wrong assumption and it deterred me from coming to the right solution.

Well the same is true in spiritual things. We as human beings **believe things** without testing our assumptions. We believe them because.... Well... **we believe them.** And we **assume** them to be true. Now when we step back we can see just how arrogant that really is. But when we are in the middle of it, it looks perfectly reasonable.

Have you ever heard someone say, If God **did** what the Bible **says He did** in the Old Testament, and if He hasn't changed, I cannot love a God like that? Oh, there are a million different ways of saying it. But the assumption is that I am

in a place where I can **adequately evaluate God**. Now travel a billion miles out into space. And look at where the planet earth must be. And realize there is a God who made all of this. And imagine that there is a person on that planet earth, that you cannot see, who believes he is fit to evaluate the one who created this vastness.

Or do the reverse. View that same human being through the strongest microscope and delve into all the complexity of the processes that keep that person breathing and alive. And then imagine that this person **thinks himself fit** to evaluate the one who created him in all his intricate complexity.

Do you see the problem here? The problem is one of **assumption**. We assume we are capable of adequately evaluating our Creator.

God took Job to school on this. And Job got the point.

Our world looks at all the evil on our planet and they begin to conclude things. And they trust their conclusions because, after all, they are **their** conclusions. They say, based on what they see, that either God is not good or He is not Sovereign. But no good God would allow so much evil if He were capable of stopping it.

And the greatest problem with the argument is naturally in the **assumption**. We assume that we know enough to evaluate God. What if this planet is not intended to be a home but it is intended to be a training ground for a better reality? What if God's ultimate end for mankind is not temporary pleasure but permanent pleasure? What if evil is serving a useful purpose, even though it is not evident to us? No. We by nature **assume** too much.

Now, as always, to do us any good we need to bring this closer to home. What **do we assume?** What do we **think we know?** We have been talking about humility in Isaiah. It is bowing to God. It is bowing to the truth. It is the admission of knowing nothing in comparison to the God who **knows all**. Faith is believing what God says even when it goes completely against all of our frame of reference.

So when scripture says we can do something **by faith in Christ** that all of our experience has proven that **we cannot do**, what do we believe? The theoretical stuff is easy to get right, because it doesn't cost us anything. But what do **we trust** when we are looking at something **hard** in our lives? At that point, what do we believe? And if you are like I am, our assumptions are usually our first thoughts. But what wins at the end of the argument? What chess piece wins? That is the battle of faith.

So next week, Lord willing, we will be looking at a very bloody picture of our very loving Lord. And if we will allow the Word to have sway in our lives, our understanding of God will grow deeper. It may do damage to our

assumptions. But it will do good to our understanding of **who** this God really is that we love and serve. And it might make us a little nervous. So be it.

8 The LORD has sworn by His right hand And by the arm of His strength: "Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies; And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.

What is the most futile thing you have ever done? Where have you poured a great deal of energy and what you did completely failed? Many of us have invested a great deal of time and effort into relationships that then ended. Those who garden have years when the bugs or the weather destroy all the hard work that was done in planting. Maybe we exercise only to injure ourselves and we lose the benefit of the exercise. When I got home from church camp I watched a hail storm shred all of the plants that Carla had carefully planted and were doing so well.

I think of Elizabeth Elliot spending years translating the Bible into a primitive culture's language, only to have the whole work stolen and lost.

We are all subject to **futility** and **uncertainty**. There are always destructive influences. There are always the moths and the rust. Look how we fight futility every day. We purchase insurance. We do preventative maintenance. We try to think of what can go wrong and protect ourselves against it. But it never ends. There is always something bad that can happen around the corner. We simply cannot protect ourselves from all that can go wrong. This promise in verse 8 is a promise about the end of futility. The end of futility. Isn't that a wonderful thought.

Now what is standing behind this promise?

The Lord has sworn by His right hand and the arm of His strength. He is making a vow here, a pledge, a covenant. And He backs it with His omnipotence. The arm of His strength. All the power of God is behind this promise. So it is **impossible** for this to **not** happen.

Are you afraid of what bad thing can happen in this life? Isn't that really what worry is based on? No one ever worries that a **good thing** might happen. When is the last time you worried that you will have a bumper crop, or your car will last longer than you thought, or your kids might get rich and take care of you? No. It is always something bad. But look at this promise. The promise is not that **here and now** today nothing bad will happen to you. But the promise is that this kind of thing **will end**. And we can afford to wait for that day. Isaiah is pointing us toward hope. A day is coming when futility will end.

And what does the futility look like?

"Surely I will no longer give your grain As food for your enemies; And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine, For which you have labored.

We need to remember that these were subsistence farmers. If their crops were stolen, they would not have "a less profitable year farming". They might starve. So what is being described is not an **inconvenience**. It is a **tragedy**. When things were very good, the grain was abundant and so was the wine. Those things are often used in scripture as a sign of God's blessing. But when the people were being disciplined or punished, these things were threatened by disease or famine or enemies.

But now, as result of this wonderful Savior and having been given white robes of righteousness to wear, all the discipline and punishment will be over. It is no longer needed. And when evil no longer serves a good purpose God removes it. We can count on this. God truly is good to a level that we can't even comprehend. We certainly cannot identify with Him in this. So God gets no kick out of evil.

Now, imagine how you would feel if you had spent all of this time and effort in preparing your garden. And the crops are just ready to harvest. You can almost taste the bread made out of this new grain. And you look at the hillside one day and you see a mass of armed people coming for one purpose. They are going to take all your food, everything you have worked for. That is the futility these people were experiencing. And God promises that there is coming a day when this will never happen again.

⁹ But those who have gathered it shall eat it, And praise the LORD; Those who have brought it together shall drink it in My holy courts."

Notice how this is described. This pictures stuff in its proper context. This is blessing in its proper place where it can be most enjoyed. It is in the context of a **right relationship with God**.

Here we see people no longer subject to the futility of wasted effort. What they work on comes to fruition. And how do they enjoy it? They eat it in praise to the Lord and they drink it in God's holy courts. They are enjoying their blessings in the presence of God and surrounded by God's people.

I tend to be an introvert. People wear me out and ideas energize me. So I want to be alone or with people who I know well enough that I can just be me without fear of offending them.

But oddly enough I find that many of the things that have most enriched my life were things done in community. They were done surrounded by **church**

family or storage or natural family. And even though I am most comfortable in a secluded environment, that does not mean that this is best for me. Our text lays out how we are to enjoy God's blessings. And it involves a proper perspective toward God and being involved in those people's lives who are also loving God. That is really life as it is intended to be lived. And it displays a trust in God that is willing to hold every gift He gives us **in an open hand** in the **community of fellowship**.

And there is more. We see that the nature of this fellowship is inclusive.

¹⁰ 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!

Carla is preparing for a party in honor of her Aunt and Uncle. As such she is working hard to improve their enjoyment of being with us as much as possible. That is the kind of extra energy being thrown into the work in our passage. Something special is going to happen. It is a one of a kind in the history of humanity event. And so all the stops are being pulled out. The entrance of those expected is being prepared for. It is a huge deal and worthy of a huge effort and great emphasis. We see the double emphasis of **Go through**. This has always been God's plan. And it is always what He is pleased with. He is pleased when human beings **come through the gates into eternal unbroken fellowship with Him**. God is not happy with the death of the wicked but He is happy with the death of His saints. God **wants** people coming through those gates. The more the merrier.

We see lots of other attributes of God as we read the Bible, but we have to remember that Christ came for **this** purpose. He came so people could enter those gates. What place does **that effort** have in **our lives**? How much time and effort will we spend to offer people entry to those gates? How much will we even consider it when we are surrounded by people who are not familiar with what is needed to enter the gates? (mention our witnessing efforts on the wall.)

Then look at the road building going on. God wants effort spent on building that road that leads to His Kingdom as easy to travel and as accessible as possible. We see from all of this God's intent, God's purpose, God's desire, God's love.

This would not have been lost on His people. They would have understood what it meant to build this **highway**, this **clear path**, this **easy to travel** route. Then we have a **banner**. Every parade has a banner doesn't it? Well of course this one must have one. It will clearly define what this pilgrimage is all about.

So people will have a visual image to look at. But any good teacher knows you have to appeal to more than one sense. And here is the second.

11 Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.' "

Here is the marketing plan. The Lord will see to it that a message will be proclaimed to every tribe and nation. It looks to me like this is the Gospel.
Acts 13:46-47 (NKJV)

46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "
Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Revelation 14:6-7 (NKJV)

6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people--

7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Revelation 5:9 (NKJV)

9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

It is interesting that God takes the credit for the Gospel going everywhere. But it is probably people who are the instrument that God used to do so. Again we see the relationship between the Sovereignty of God and the human responsibility and decision making.

Now look at the message.

"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.' "

Who is the daughter of Zion? Maybe it is for Jews. Or more than likely it is for everyone who is one of God's children.

And what is promised? Salvation is coming.

Scripture speaks of salvation in three verb tenses. Past tense- we were saved. Present tense- we are being saved. And future tense- we will be saved.

I think our text is talking to people who **have been saved** about the ultimate upcoming salvation. They **will be saved**. Christ is coming back. The King is returning. And when He comes He will bring His reward with Him. So how should we be living with this kind of a message being pronounced?

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

6 But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

How do we please God in these various verb tenses of salvation. We are told here the **faith** that pleases God. We must believe that **God exists**. But it cannot stop there. The demons believe that God exists.

We must believe that there is **a reward that is worth the trouble**. And we must believe that **God will deliver** on that promise. We cannot believe that God is arbitrary and he might be toying with us. We can't believe that we might get to the end of this road and we will find God to be a scoundrel who was playing a cosmic game with us. No. We have to be the people who **hear about His present offering of salvation** and **we receive it** while **wildly looking forward to the future reward** He will bring with us when everything will be completed in salvation.

And what is the ultimate end of this plan?

12 And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.

Here is another passage about the holy people **1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV)**

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

10 who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Here is another passage about the Redeemed of the LORD **1 Peter 1:17-19 (NKJV)**

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear;

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Sought Out- A City Not Forsaken. The description here is probably one of a marriage relationship. Most women want to be sought out by a man they respect and desire. They want to know they are cherished by someone. That doesn't always work out well in human relationships. So the picture of a forsaken woman is not hard to come by. There are many of them.

What God describes here is essentially a happily married woman who is cherished and will never be forsaken. And that is what we see in Revelation.

Revelation 21:9 (NKJV)

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

These are all descriptions of saved people. They are true encouraging descriptions of the reality believers will live in forever.

So are you tired of futility? Are you tired of thinking about all the bad things that can happen. Well we need to put it all in perspective. It is a pleasing faith that counts on this **life Christ promises to us** to make anything we might face here and now worth the price we pay.

We have amazing status and privilege ahead of us. We will be the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord and a sought out bride never to be forsaken. In fact, we are that **now**, even though it may not be evident all of the time. Faith trusts God and depends upon Him to deliver on all these wonderful promises He has made to us.