

## ISAIAH 55

## THINGS THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY

Despite the materialistic worldview of our culture, there are certain things which money cannot buy. It would be absurd to bring gold or silver or any such equivalent for them, for they are without price. Therefore, they elude the rich, who have acquired the habit of supposing that money is the only medium of exchange; and yet at the same time, they are within the reach of those who have no money, but are in desperate need. These things are contained in a Person, and it is impossible to have them unless we enter into a relationship with Him.

It was highly necessary for Jehovah to call the attention of the Jewish people to these unpurchasable possessions. Their life in Babylon had become so luxurious, and they had acquired so much wealth, that there was every danger of their losing sight of the great facts of the spiritual world. Therefore, they needed to be reminded that the immortal thirst of the soul cannot be quenched by waters whose source is in the depth of the earth! Nor can its hunger be satisfied with the provisions found upon the surface of this planet. Truly satisfying bread that delights the soul can only be obtained where the coins of this world do not pass as currency; for it can only be found in fellowship with Him Whose voice is always speaking in the markets of commerce, saying, "Ho, everyone who is thirsty! Come and listen to Me! Buy wine and milk! Eat that which is good!"

This abundant provision is described under several terms: water, wine, milk, satisfying bread, and good things. We are invited to come for water, and behold – we find a feast prepared as well! It is often our habit to pray as though our entreaties would obtain for ourselves what we need for life or service. We say, "I will pray day and night for this blessing or for that grace; I will buy favor from God by tears and sighs and many prayers." O that we could realize that the feast is already spread; that there is enough for us to be filled and satisfied; that our name lies on the card between the knife and fork; that the doors stand open, and that all we must do is sit down and eat! All that God can possibly give us has already been given. All that our soul needs is ready at hand. We may partake of this feast as the Lord's beloved sons and daughters! We may eat and drink abundantly, for there can be no stint for those whom He calls to His table. Come, for His rich provisions are "without money and without price!" Is it truly so? Is there indeed nothing to pay? Not after the manner of this world! To give up yourself; to renounce all faith in prayers and tears and entreaties; and to be willing to take blessings from the open hand of God, as a little child would – this is the purchase-money for the priceless wealth of heaven!

Let us now turn our consideration to the thoughts of God! They are not anything like our own thoughts (verses 8-9). We can form some idea of them

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ An invitation to freely receive the blessings of the Gospel of Christ – verses 1-5
- ❖ Gracious offers of pardon and peace are extended – verses 6-13

through His works of nature, Providence, and redemption. The Psalmist describes them as permanent in their endurance, as surpassing the reckoning of human arithmetic, and as being a fathomless deep. It is said of Johannes Kepler that after spending hours one night in observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, he exclaimed, "I have been thinking over again the earliest thoughts of God!" But there are even earlier thoughts than those which are impressed upon nature. The love that led to His choosing us in Christ is infinitely older! Let us think more often of these thoughts of God, until we cry, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"

Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, it is in precisely the same proportion that the abundance of God's thoughts of pardon are beyond the furthest reach of our imaginations. There is no parallel between our forgiveness and His! Even when we do forgive others, we are often cautious and chilly toward those with whom we have supposedly been reconciled. It is no wonder, then, that we cannot really realize the completeness of God's forgiveness, or fully comprehend the meaning of His assurance that He will remember our sins no more. The returning prodigal thinks that the very most that he can expect from the Lord is only a stinted pardon and a servant's meal. That is because his notions of forgiveness range no higher. But it is far otherwise! The father runs to meet him! He falls upon his neck, kisses him, clothes him with the finest robes, and seats him at the table with the most royal provisions. That is the difference between our notions of pardon and Christ's! When He forgives, He ceases to remember. He does not treat us simply as pardoned criminals; but He clasps us to His heart as His beloved sons and daughters, imputes to us His own perfect righteousness, and transforms the sad consequences of our sins into blessings. Thus, as we return from the far country where our souls have wandered astray, the mountains break forth into singing, and the trees of the forest clap their hands. Instead of thorns, the fir-tree comes up; and instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree sprouts. And these transformations become everlasting memorials of what God's love does for the repentant sinner. Surely this is as much above our own notions of forgiveness as the heavens are high above the earth!

*Thank You, dear Lord, for the true pleasure that becomes ours when our sin is pardoned; for the joy which You bestow upon Your reconciled ones is so great that it overflows and seems to fill all nature itself with delight! All praises to You for filling us with good things, and for feasting us with the Bread of Life and Living Water – without money and without price! Amen.*

