

Reading: Isaiah 54 & 55

**The redeemed of the Lord are marked by faith and satisfaction in Him.**

In terms of public speaking and even preaching there are some important do's and don'ts to bring people along, and to make the word presented hearable. One rule I consistently break is that you shouldn't tell people to laugh at your jokes if they don't go over well.

What motivates this in me is a desire to give you cues as how to respond to what you hear. Attempting to father you by prompting you...

In our text today, which is absolute dynamite for the soul, we have God giving us the appropriate response to the work of Christ on the cross - we need these cues so we don't live under the burden of what used to be, of striving to earn something that has been freely given to us, salvation, justification in Jesus, the servant of the Lord. The Word then acts as an awakening out of a sinful stupor and into real life with God.

So we rightly need to understand what has come before - the suffering of that Servant in Isaiah 52 & 53. Who has taken on our grief, our guilt and transgressions. Who is wounded for our healing and by his blood making us righteous.

No other fulfillment than the cross of Jesus. That the innocent, obedient One would take on a punishment we deserved and then give us his reward instead. This means everything to us that believe in Jesus. It is the root of our identity in him, our hope for life now and eternity.

“In his saving work, the Servant has done everything, removing sin, establishing in righteousness, creating a family. The way is therefore open for response, pure and simple: to sing over what someone else has accomplished (54: 1), to enjoy a feast for which someone else has paid (55: 1).” J. Alec Motyer

The Calvary of ch 53 is followed by the growing church of ch 54 and the gospel call of ch 55.

Here then is the call to life after the cross - a life of faith and a life of satisfaction. Dare we respond in the same way?!

**The redeemed of the Lord are marked by faith and satisfaction in Him.**

## **1) Faith**

Complete confidence or trust in someone or something.

Because the Servant has taken our guilt, our transgressions, we are propelled into new life and Isaiah 54 shows us the life of faith.

This week I found myself over and over again asking if my life looks like this. Complete trust in God, in Jesus the One who has given salvation and life. I think I probably live a life of faith in fits and starts... but there is something extra here, that I passionately want for myself and for you beloved!

And just as salvation is a gift, so too is this faith, and when it comes, this is what it looks like.

The imagery used in this chapter is that of a woman/wife and a city. Would have been read as speaking to Jerusalem, the people of Judah... and in the wake of Christ's work, the church and those that believe in him.

Faith expresses itself in three unique ways here. First in "**worshipful expectancy.**"

"Sing... break forth into singing and cry aloud!" As a woman barren finally given children in abundance. Because the hopelessness of your situation is utterly changed, worship!

Now we wouldn't talk about worship so much if it was not so central to engagement with God, a commanded response to his grace and loving care. 54 is no exception. And it is worship both as response and expectation.

There is a call to expand the tent, a broadening of our place before God. What an encouragement for the church - "don't hold back' lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes because the family is going to get big.

I sing out loud just fine thanks, but prepping the table for more guests? Honestly we don't live expectantly. But it is not for lack of permission! God is inviting his people to live in this way, sold out and expectant.

But this life of faith is not only worshipful expectancy, it is also **fearless**. This is where the engine really starts to roar.

“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed...” Because of the work of Jesus shame is removed... what's more, you will get to the place where you don't even remember your reproach, the disappointment of your sin.

In its place your husband (that close of a relationship) is your Redeemer, and he pours out everlasting love on you... his compassion.

Because the ship has sailed on his wrath, he has dealt with your reputation and in his steadfast love, this covenant of protection and peace you have nothing to fear. Not even fear itself!

To fully, completely trust in the sovereignty, power, and everlasting love of God for you in Christ, is life-altering. Where we are inclined to make decisions out of fear, through Isaiah God is saying, shoot, I am holding you, I have sworn to never rebuke you or make you pay for the burden of the cross, you have nothing to prove.

**Matthew 10:26–32** “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. [27] What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. [28] And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [29] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. [30] But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. [31] Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. [32] So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,” (ESV)

Have a defining reverence of the Lord. Understand your standing... established in righteousness, the righteousness of Christ... humility, awe, wonder coupled with hope brings revival and a fearlessness unmatched.

Add to that the promise that no weapon formed against you shall succeed... and dang!  
Fearless.

When John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) was brought before the empress Eudoxia, she threatened him with banishment if he insisted on his Christian independence as a preacher.

“You cannot banish me, for this world is my Father’s house.”

“But I will kill you,” said the empress.

“No, you cannot, for my life is hid with Christ in God,” said John.

“I will take away your treasures.”

“No, you cannot, for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there.”

“But I will drive you away from your friends and you will have no one left.”

“No, you cannot, for I have a Friend in heaven from whom you cannot separate me.

I defy you, for there is nothing you can do to harm me.”

Who needs to hear that from you? Which fear? Which situation? Where does Satan speak to you that you can walk in this fearless faith because Jesus reigns?

The mountains may depart... the hills removed, but his steadfast love shall not depart from you... and if you have that you have everything.

A life of faith... worship expectancy, fearless... and **future-focused**.

Restoration is coming. The new city, adorned in finery; children taught by the Lord, generations of peace. Renewal in Jesus. This is God saying, live in faith looking forward to your place with me, act like you are headed there!

I think of another great hero, William Carey, one of the fathers of the missions movement in 1792 preaching this very text and his application was “expect great things from God; & attempt great things for God.”

All of this given to us by Christ, through his work on the cross, his resurrection for us. "the grace won for us by the servant of the Lord is not a theory. It's an experience. And God wants us to enjoy it freely." RO Isaiah 54 gives us a picture of the experience... real defining, realigning faith.

Some of us wear our faith like a dog cone where we are supposed to live in howling freedom.

“This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”

If the suffering Servant’s sacrifice was for you, this life is for you. Walk in it. Worshipful expectancy, fearless and future-focused.

This life is so good because it is life with Christ, in the Spirit. But this faith is only half of the equation this morning.

## **2) Satisfaction**

The grace of the suffering Servant goes outward and shapes our souls finally satisfying us.

From the cue of a life of faith comes the expressed compassion of the Lord.

**Isaiah 55:1** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” (ESV)

From the realization of need, of hunger, we have a place to go. Where the offerings are free, bought by another for us.

We do so many silly things... we go about life and somehow in our minds is formed this picture of God like that of the orphanage in the opening scene of Dickens's Oliver Twist. The poor boy, hungry and helpless, approaches the serving table and says “Please sir may I have some more?”

God is not the harsh caretaker, instead before you ask he offers. Come, consume your fill, and it's free. Not just a ration but all we need is found in Christ.

Water, wine, and milk. In him there is life=water, nourishment=milk and joyful celebration=wine.

In satisfaction there is first a **diligent delight**. God says “why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” Calling us away from idols - because of the finished work of Jesus there is a source that truly satisfies, described as rich food, a feast to be had.

Where we look all kinds of other places to fill the longing for God... to entertainment, accomplishment that drives my narcissism, approval of people, just one more instagram like... even attempting to be satisfied in my personality type... as if my introversion were the most important thing about me. Jesus stands before us and says come and drink, come eat. Be satisfied in what I have done for you and who I say you are.

Lyrics from S.O.'s song *Satisfy*: “How it feel like, chasing the wind hommie? Don't we do it all the time? We never chase God but think that the women or the money will forever satisfy. That ain't what we were designed for & I can tell you that with my eyes closed or blindfolded. It's mind-blowing, our souls need God cuzzy that there I know, [brotha] yes I know”

**John 6:35** “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (ESV)

I don't think we always realize the extravagance of this. This is not mere contentment or even a sanctified stoicism... eating what is good and delighting in the splendid meal. And everything takes on a new light when we find our satisfaction in Jesus.

“As we behold God's righteousness and are honest about our sin, we become able to experience his saving forgiveness. We turn to the Lord and forsake our unrighteous ways. Then we enter into the movement of divine generosity, proclaiming his grace and caring for others in need.”

Our work, our neighbors, our family, our church... being satisfied in Christ makes everything else brighter, joys are truer, emotions savored. And it translates to a life of witness and seeking.

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

With urgency we seek after the Lord and turn away from wickedness. Living a life of repentance, returning to the Lord over and over again, open to all, but the lifestyle of the redeemed. We only repent or fight sin because we have a God who abundantly pardons...

Because we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, that Jesus has the words of life, we go nowhere else.

Satisfaction in Jesus then also develops into **confident dependence** on him.

Who's thoughts are higher than ours, who's ways are beyond us. But who's word is effective, powerful, and purposeful.

It is his word that feeds and fill us and by it our souls live. Like rain from heaven so comes his words to us. This is such an important picture, and the people of Judah should have recognized it. Here God had provided a "Promised Land" for his people to flourish in, but it had no rivers. They were dependant on the rain for flourishing and the rain came from the Lord.

So we have a reservoir without any water but the water comes from the Lord - we are dependent on him for satisfaction, provision. And we find ourselves satisfied. Not independent but tied to him for all things. And his word shall succeed in the thin for which he sends it. Our salvation, his compassion, his providence, his plan.

"We realize the hunger that we have can only be satiated by God and nothing else. The way that God has devised this is that we encounter Him and His word which then begins to renew us... God has given his word to actually renew our minds - nothing else will do." Mark Sayers

In Christ we have confidence in his word.

**2 Corinthians 1:20** “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” (ESV)

Satisfaction as delight, as confident dependence also then develops into **joy**. Our souls living, enthused in Christ. “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace...”

This is the promised, very real experience of joy, more than situational, out of exile but into the renewal of all things. That God cares, he knows, and he is at work. Because of that we can rejoice in him.

**The redeemed of the Lord are marked by faith and satisfaction in Him.**

Isaiah 54 & 55 are for you. Jesus is for you. The appropriate response to the work of the cross for you is a life of faith and satisfaction. Go and do likewise!

***Sing O barren One*** - Worship your way into faith rooted in the righteousness of Jesus. Sin is dealt with, life is given. Believe and cry aloud.

***Listen*** - determine to trust the word of the Lord; that it provides, conveys his compassion, and accomplishes his purpose. Get more of it. Hunger for it.

***Live*** - Nothing more to do, no “labor” other than responding to the grace of Christ in all of life. This is you redefined. Supernaturalized. Made new. Live with faith, worshipfully expectant, fearless, future-focused, and Satisfied, delighting in Jesus, confidently dependent on him with great joy. Get around people that will live like this with you. Go for it.

I want to finish with a story that reflects what is at play in Isaiah 54 & 55... perhaps you remember Milo the mouse, a Shradar family staple.

Milo is a great little mouse, and we find Milo in his elaborate cage thinking through his day as he does at the beginning of each day. You see Milo has a thing for cheese, a defining hunger that drives his pursuits.

Like every day Milo stands before two trails, one has a mirror and leads him to a spinning wheel that turns a knob that eventually releases cheese, processed American cheese. The other way is a bright path that smells of the best of a cheesemonger's display. But there is a large gap from the entry to the path and each day when Milo looks at his options a hand slowly comes and fills the gap giving him access to the delights ahead.

But Milo has never gone the way his nose prefers. Instead he continually runs toward his own image, exhausts himself on the wheel and eats, day after day, processed cheese product.

One day though, like he has experienced an awakening, the lack of satisfaction in the well-worn path leads Milo to take a step further toward the other path, there the smell of the cheese is irresistible and there the hand gently bridges the gap, and Milo, braver than he has ever been crosses onto the path and is rewarded with an abundance of cheese of all kinds beyond his wildest dreams.

Isaiah lays out the paths before us and invites us to go the way of faith and satisfaction because of the cross of Christ.

He has given us our cue, where some would say it is time to laugh, Jesus says it's time to live.