

God's Great Invitation

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Preacher: Nathaniel Hutchison

[0:00] Matthew chapter 22, we're going to read the first 14 verses. Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner.

My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet. But they paid no attention and went off, one to his field, another to his business.

The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Then he said to his servants, The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.

[1:08] So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.

Friend, he asked, How did you get in here without wedding clothes? The man was speechless.

Then the king told the attendants, Tie him hand and foot and throw him outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For many are invited, but few are chosen. Well, it is our pleasure to have our brother Nathaniel Hutchison to preach to us the word.

So brother, come now. Well, good evening once again. We have had a wonderful week with you here in Bremen. And it's always like coming home, back to the Midwest, when we come back here to visit, at least for myself it is.

My family may not share that view, but we've had a wonderful week of feasting. And my Midwest taste buds have been very happy to be back here. Thank you for all the food you've given to us and the fellowship.

[2:25] It has been wonderful. Well, it's graduation time of year, isn't it? High school, college, and so on. Elementary now has graduation, understand. And those graduation parties are usually an invitation to send out, correct?

And then you have to sometimes respond or go to that party as a proper response. And let that be a good introduction, a reminder to our text this evening, Isaiah 55.

Charles Spurgeon, that great evangelistic preacher, preached almost 20 sermons from this text throughout his ministry. Fascinating what he preached upon over the years in his ministry there in London.

And as we look at this passage in Isaiah 55, God's great invitation, it is also an invitation that begins with a feast and an invitation to a feast. And that isn't something isolated in Scripture.

It is a common theme from Genesis to Revelation. It's an intentional theme. We read about it a moment ago in the Gospel in our Scripture reading. Isaiah, I believe, is a great evangelist.

[3:32] He's a great missionary, even though he didn't go to foreign nations. But he wrote about the age of the Gospel. He knew that Christ was coming. And he writes some amazing things in his book.

This is really like an Old Testament version of Romans when you study the book of Isaiah. It's a fantastic book. And one of the reasons why I like Isaiah so much is because Jesus quotes it so much in the New Testament.

And the apostles, the writers of the New Testament, this is the second most quoted book in the New Testament by New Testament authors, are from the Old Testament into the New Testament. And it's filled with great insights as you study those quotations.

As we read Isaiah tonight, we have to appreciate, again, the immediate hope and fulfillment that the original audience would have understood. They knew that this would one day be fulfilled in return from exile, from the Babylonian and the Persian kingdom back home to Jerusalem.

But that is just the earthly fulfillment. There is a greater fulfillment. There is an eternal heavenly fulfillment that is fulfilled in the work of the servant of the Lord. It is found in Isaiah 53, a well-known passage.

[4:38] And that is really the ultimate hope. And that is why this passage applies to Christians today. It ultimately and only applies to Christians. The earthly political deliverance was just a shadow of something far greater that Jesus would accomplish on the cross.

Isaiah 55 is part B. Isaiah 54 is part A. It's a two-part series, and it follows what? Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 is the fourth and final climactic servant song.

And we read that text at communion, don't we? Because we know that Jesus is the only one that could fulfill Isaiah 53. The New Testament confirms that for us as well.

And so we'll move on into our first point this evening. God promises rest and satisfaction for ruined sinners. That's what we'll study briefly in the first five verses.

If you have your Bibles, let's look at Isaiah 55 and read 1 to 5. Here Isaiah says, Come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And he who has no money, come buy and eat.

[5:43] Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live, and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and a commander for the peoples.

Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you. Because the Lord your God and the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Isaiah is one of the few prophets that uses this title, Holy One of Israel, for God. And I think that's easy to understand that after you read Isaiah chapter 6 and the vision of God that he saw.

And as we come to this text tonight, it's a familiar text, but we need the reminders that we must invite the world, the lost, to salvation in Jesus Christ. Letter A, we must, you must announce God's great invitation to the world.

[6:52] This is an invitation, and it comes from God. It's not just a graduation invitation. Those are wonderful. This is a universal invitation. It's a call for the world to come and to repent.

And there are two points I want to emphasize. First, God has prepared an expensive banquet, or you could say special banquet. And then, of course, secondly, it's going to be an exclusive banquet. But first, let's think about this expensive banquet that God has prepared. He is the one that is preparing all the cost, the money that is going into this great banquet for people to come and freely eat.

And so we must announce to the world this great banquet. And the mood that begins in Isaiah chapter 40 is pretty sad. Isaiah sees the Gentile world. He sees his own nation is lost in their idolatries.

And yet, hope begins to come out in his writing. He knows the people, the plight of sinners in this world. But as you come to Isaiah 55, he is bursting forth with this invitation.

[7:55] Redemption is accomplished in Isaiah 53. And it only makes sense logically to announce that to the world. Does that make sense to you? Jesus accomplishes redemption in Isaiah 53.

And so it's only natural for us to tell the world, invite them to this great feast that God has prepared. And even though Isaiah in his day, when you read the first five chapters, basically the introduction to the book, it is dark, it's sad.

And many people rejected his message, even his own countrymen. And yet I'm convinced that what he writes about in this and other passages filled him with hope. He may have lived during the day when people rejected the gospel, but he also wrote of the coming of Jesus Christ.

It's a book of prophecy about Christ. He writes about the age of the gospel and the great consummation at the end of the ages when God would make all things new. And I think that filled

him with hope.

Even though he lived in a day, many people would not listen to him. In that sense, it's a great missionary book. And although he is a prophet, he is a great evangelist.

[9:01] He is extending the grace of God to the Gentile world, even in this text. I just read a moment ago, especially verse 5. And yet Isaiah is a great evangelist.

He has a sense of pity and compassion upon the people of this world. And you can sense the urgency in the first few verses. There's great purpose and importance of what he writes.

He has compassion on people in this world that are lost in sin. They're beat up by sin. And he wants them to come to this great invitation. If you noticed in Matthew 22, the parable that we read about, Jesus draws several of his parables.

He's drawing from Isaiah. He's drawing and quoting from Isaiah on a number of occasions. He begins his public ministry by quoting Isaiah, doesn't he? And it's a fascinating book.

In Scripture, not just here in Isaiah, water is a common metaphor for salvation. It's a way to teach us about God saving, his redeeming grace.

[10:04] And here Isaiah is calling thirsty people. He is saying, I'm going to tell you where you can find something to quench not just your thirst, but your soul. You can come here and you can find satisfaction.

We must remember that much of Isaiah is written in poetry, like some of the parables of Jesus. And so Isaiah begins with beautiful description. He describes the water, the life-giving water that only the Spirit of God can give.

He does this explicitly in chapter 32 and 44. In 12:3, he speaks of drawing water from the wells of salvation. And that is almost what Jesus does in John 4.

He is witnessing to the Samaritan woman. Do you remember that passage? And he's speaking about water and she is confused. And then he begins to describe about the living water.

He is the true living water. And he speaks to this lady and says, everyone who drinks of this water, the water in the well, you're going to be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty.

[11:11] The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. So water is a common metaphor in Scripture of the saving work of God.

Feast and feasting is also a common metaphor in the Bible for the blessing or the cursing judgment of God. Proverbs also describes the two great feasts in that book.

You're invited to come and dine with Lady Wisdom or Madam Fowling. One of those banquets will lead to death. The other one leads to life. And so this is a common metaphor in Scripture.

And I'm reminded in the Philippines when we wake up in the morning we hear people walking by and they say, Tahot! They're selling a little drink and they're announcing that they're coming and they want you to buy the drink if you like the drink.

It's a soy milk. It's delicious. But Isaiah is like an ancient water vendor. He is calling the world, come to the waters, come and you will find satisfaction for your soul.

[12:14] And Isaiah is extending this great general invitation to people that don't have any resources to buy what they desperately need. You can read verse 1 alone and you can sense the urgency in his message.

He wants people to come to listen, to buy, and to eat. Water is given to quench our thirst, isn't it? We need water. You remember days in the summer when it's hot.

You can't wait to drink a cold glass of water. It quenches your thirst. And Isaiah says, you come to this banquet and this water that God can give. It'll quench your soul.

Remember in the Mosaic covenant, those people in Israel, they would have understood this quite well, wouldn't they? No rain was a sign of a curse from heaven, wasn't it?

When God didn't send rain in the land of Israel, that was a covenant sign of curse against them, a unique sign to that nation. Deuteronomy records that. A lack of water was a consequence of your sin.

[13:12] And Isaiah uses a physical reality to illustrate a spiritual truth to the people that he writes about. Not only does he describe water in some of these Old Testament texts, he says there's going to be wine at this banquet.

And the wine is a common symbol in Scripture of the joy of being at the Messianic kingdom, the table with the king. And people that can purchase things like that, well-aged wine, takes a lot of

money, doesn't it?

This isn't just going to be Kool-Aid and crackers at this banquet. This is going to be an expensive banquet that God is providing. And he is providing the choicest of food, the richest food that money can buy.

Wine is often a symbol of joy in Scripture. Psalm 104, 15 and following. It brings joy to our hearts, the Bible tells us. It is a great sign of a bountiful harvest in the ancient world.

When they had that, it meant God blessed their crops. And here, a nation that is in covenant violation historically when Isaiah writes this passage. And they're not having big crops produced, are they?

[14 : 20] They're not having big harvest. They're ready to go into exile. And they're going to stay there for 70 years. And Isaiah writes of a day when people will come to the great banquet that God has provided.

It's a picture of God's expense that he brings into this banquet. He covers the cost. And some passages require and describe milk at this banquet.

Why would there be milk? Because it's there to nourish. It's not junk food. God has the best quality food at this banquet in this poetic text of Scripture. And then we read the apparent paradox, the apparent contradiction in verse 1.

Come by without money. I don't know of any wise sales lady or sales man that would have that philosophy in a business. Come to my shop and buy without money.

You'd be bankrupt, wouldn't you? Only God would think of something like this. A great expensive banquet. And he tells through the prophet Isaiah, come and buy without money.

[15 : 21] That is a beautiful description of the grace of God. Although great cost has gone into this banquet, it is free to the sinner who sees his or her need and is willing to come and be nourished by what God alone can give.

It saddens my heart and even my wife's heart as we drive in the Philippines into Manila and we come home and I see a long line of people dressed in old clothes, shorts and t-shirts that are dirty and they're standing in line to buy a lottery ticket.

They're just hoping if they can strike it rich that all their problems will be solved. I wish they could visit America where people have lots of money and their problems aren't solved either and we can think that if we simply just have daily bread, right, our daily things that we can make ourselves happy and we can see the philosophy on our television screens.

You remember when Bernie Madoff took all that money from all those investors and in Japan when all those people just a few months ago lost all that money, there were people that were committing suicide because they had no more hope.

they couldn't satisfy themselves with what they had. Deuteronomy 8 reminds us that we don't just live by physical bread, we're not nourished just by the food that we eat and the things that we have, we're nourished by the Word of God.

[16 : 46] As Augustine, remember, said that our souls are restless, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. That is the reality that we live in in this world.

Isaiah also will remind us in these passages of 53-54 and 55 that someone else has paid the cost so that you and I can come. You and I could never afford to come to this banquet, could we?

We don't have enough money, we don't have enough righteousness, and yet God has provided a lavish banquet, an expensive banquet, and Jesus Christ has paid it all.

People that live in our day, in this country, in this state, that are moral people, and they want to contribute something to get into the banquet. They try to bargain with God, and God doesn't appreciate that.

That is a rebuke to God. They want to contribute to their salvation, and yet here in this passage, for us, it is absolutely free. Yes, it costs Jesus his life, his blood, but it's free to us.

[17 : 48] Charles Spurgeon, in one of his sermons, has a great quotation. He says this, quote, Every other salesman cannot get his customer up to his price. My difficulty is that I cannot get my customers down to mine.

The terms of the gospel are without money and without price, and we have a hard time telling people that, don't we? They think that they must give a little something in order for them to get in to the banquet, but someone else has paid everything.

As you note in this passage, the gospel, this invitation, it is a command. It isn't something optional, and yet when people refuse to come, they're insulting, God. God has not only prepared an expensive banquet, secondly, he has prepared an exclusive banquet.

And what I mean by that is something very simple. It is only the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ which allows people entrance into this banquet. You can't be a good Muslim even if you're moral and get into this banquet.

You can't remain with your own secular philosophy, a pluralist, or whatever that might be, and think that you're welcome in this banquet. When you come into this banquet, it's a testimony that you have been forgiven of your sins and that Jesus Christ is your Lord.

[19:05] You know, there are many evangelical missionaries today that are teaching that creation unlocks the door of salvation. That's exactly what Jason was saying is not true in the beginning of this service.

Creation tells us that there is a God, right? Romans chapter 1 and 2, Psalm 19. But it's not enough knowledge of God to lead us to salvation. We need scriptures for that.

We have to see it and read it in scripture and there are many missionaries today that would claim to be evangelical that would not believe in that anymore. They believe God can save people without scriptures.

And there are even some missionaries today that are switching the name God when they go to a Muslim nation. They're saying, just pray to Allah. Allah and God may come from the same root word historically.

I know that. Baal and God come from the same root word in the Old Testament. But it's very clear that Allah is not God because Allah is not Trinitarian.

[20:07] And so we should never tell people to pray to Allah as so many missionaries are doing in this world. And they think they're on the cutting edge of missions when they do that. They have just undermined how exclusive this banquet is that Isaiah describes for us in this passage.

Jesus said that He is the way, the truth, and the life and that no man, no woman, no child comes to the Father but through Him. And so there is no other choice.

You either come to the banquet and worship Jesus Christ as the Savior of this world or you remain in your idolatry and in your unbelief. We believe the gospel is unique in this world.

Don't you ever stop to think and wonder why we send missionaries around the world? We send missionaries and maybe you have missions conferences because we believe the gospel is the message that people need to hear in order for them to be saved.

They cannot remain as a good moral person in their religious beliefs and still get into the banquet. It's an exclusive banquet. The Christian faith is the only faith in the world that is true.

[21:15] Everything else is idolatrous. And when people refuse to come to the banquet, when they want to remain in their intellectual thinking, they are eating junk food. They are trying to feed themselves with their own junk food that they are providing and it only makes them what?

Get sicker or more sick. Grammatically, I don't know which is correct. You correct me later. But it makes them sick. It reminds me of the Philippines as people, as they get off work and they like to walk on the streets, they like to go to these little carts that sell fish balls and Adidas, fried chicken feet.

They got three little feet and so they call them Adidas. And they take the blood from the chicken. It coagulates and they barbecue coagulated blood and they like that. My friends, that is garbage. It's junk food. You might like that, but imagine if you've been given a coupon to go free to a five-star restaurant and have all the best food that you could eat and you say, no, I want to satisfy myself with fish balls, you're out of your mind.

And that is how people without Christ think. They think they're feeding themselves, but they're only making themselves sick and empty. And maybe that is not your problem, but some of us, we struggle with trying to find satisfaction with money.

[22:33] Maybe we can think that if we have enough money that we can find satisfaction or certain pleasures or worldly entertainments, a college degree for some of us would make us happy, so we think.

And yet, Scripture reminds us that when we seek from earthly things that which God alone can provide, that is idolatry. It's like a broken bucket with a big hole in it and you fill it with water and you try to carry it.

It's useless, isn't it? It only tires you out as Jeremiah says so beautifully in his text. And so verse 2 is a sad description of lost humanity and Isaiah has pity upon them.

He pities the poor choices and decisions that people have made in their lives and he sees people working without Christ, without the gospel to the point of exhaustion. What do they get?

They get damnation if they refuse to come to this exclusive feast. What a tragic picture of ruined sinners. God alone has provided a very expensive banquet, but this banquet is exclusive.

[23:40] You have to acknowledge Jesus Christ for who He is. He died and rose again for our sins. Letter B, God guarantees mercy for all who come to His banquet.

He guarantees mercy in verses 3-5. First, God promises mercy. How? Through His gracious covenant. He is patient with sinners that come to this great banquet and repent of their sins.

No person that comes to God's banquet will ever be sorry that he or she came to the banquet. You will never say, I wish I would have stayed out and eaten my fish balls or whatever it is.

You will always be so thankful in our closing hymn we're going to sing a little bit later or in a moment. It's going to testify to that. The great feast in God's grace that draws us in to feast in the grace of God.

This feast is a blessing to sinners. It's described as a feast like that given to David not Moses in our text. And Isaiah talks about a covenant that's going to be eternal.

[24:43] It's not like the Mosaic covenant. One that could be broken and one where you could be exiled. This is a covenant that is unconditional. A covenant where when you come it's not going to change.

You're going to be a permanent guest forever in this banquet. It's a covenantal banquet and at this point in Israel's history they were in serious violation of the Mosaic covenant and they would soon pay the price by being sent off into Babylonian exile.

And it may not have been immediately clear to them if they wanted to go into another covenant because they had broken one. Why would another covenant be good news to them? But Isaiah moves on. Secondly, God promises mercy through his righteous king.

Verses 4 and 5. And here is where we begin to see there's royalty involved here. The people that come into this banquet will be included in the king's family. You're not just a guest.

You become part of the family of God when you come into this covenant. When you submit yourself to Jesus Christ and to all the promises of the gospel. just as God promises these great things to David in 2 Samuel 7 and so on.

[25:56] You realize that Jesus comes and he is the only one that can fulfill all of those promises. And when you come into this covenant you are a royal guest. You become royalty yourself because of the grace of God.

And remember again the people of Israel the people of Judah they knew what it was like to have an evil king didn't they? Especially the kings of David the sons of David the anointed ones the messiahs that lived in his years after him the centuries after him most of those kings were evil.

They didn't serve the people with joy in their hearts they fleeced the flock didn't they? You read about king after king in the Old Testament that was a terrible ruler. Why would you want to go into a banquet with a king?

Why would this passage make you happy? Because it's talking about a king that is entirely different from the earthly sinful kings it's talking about King Jesus. I saw something on television a few months ago on the Discovery Channel there's a show I don't even know if it's on here it's called Machines of Malice have you ever watched that?

There was a description of all these ways that leaders of the ancient world tortured people tortured people they didn't like and there's a picture a description of a bronze bull a big bull and one king a Greek ruler he had a famous artist design a bull for him and in this bull there was a cover a lid and inside the lid he developed kind of a long horn something like a long trumpet and there was an air vent inside and he asked the man the artist to get in and check it out see if it works close the lid on him what did he do?

[27:41] lit a fire under the bull that is terrible when you see when you can see the description of what this king would do he would trick people he would kill them without mercy the Davidic kings were like that in Israel's history they didn't take care of God's people and yet when you see what Jesus the kind of ruler he is he isn't like those kings is he?

he is a righteous king he is a king that loves his people he protects his people when you come into this banquet you become a citizen and he is a leader and a commander that we would like to follow he is a just king there never was a just king in Israel's history there were some godly kings and some righteous kings but none like Jesus Jesus fulfills all of these Davidic promises and as you read into verse 5 the nations the Gentiles that's us we will hear about this king and we will travel we will want to worship him we will want to submit to him this is the greatest banquet in the world people that did not know God previously outside of the covenant will be joined into this great feast Ephesians 2 11 and 12 again emphasizes the great truth that we weren't part of those covenant promises and yet in Christ we have been brought near we are now in the banquet and we sit at the table with the king of kings we are the Gentiles who were formerly ruined in our sin we were weak we were bruised sick and starving and we have found satisfaction in the greatest Davidic king who will live forever and reign forever he will protect us and we will be drawn like a magnet the nations will be drawn like a magnet draws metal into the mountain of God to worship and every time today a sinner comes and repents of their sin Isaiah 55 is being fulfilled slowly by slowly little by little multitudes are coming from around the world to worship this great king in the heavenly Jerusalem of which we now assemble that hymn how sweet and awful by Isaac Watts is a beautiful hymn that we will close with later that emphasizes the wonder and the joy that we as former sinners bruised weak and sick have come to find rest and satisfaction in this great feast this great banquet prepared by God now let's move on to our second point and see the development God provides pardon and blessing for repentant sinners he provides pardon and blessing for repentant sinners in verses 6 through 13 first pray for sinners to come quickly that's pretty practical isn't it we should pray and I know that you're praying that sinners would come quickly to the gospel in verses 6 and 7 it says seek the Lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon that's a wonderful promise for people starving and sick isn't it you can come into this banquet and you can repent of your sins first of all we need to confront sinners with the Lord's coming in verse 6 you've got to tell them that Jesus is returning he is the returning king isn't he that Tolkien writes about and we saw a movie about he is the returning king and Isaiah his message is intensifying hurry up he says time is running out when you get your newspaper you ever get a coupon in there we don't get coupons in the Philippines

I wish we did but there's an expiration date on there correct if you take the coupon this week and try to bring it in the store in July they may not take it they'll say it's expired you can't use it and when we present the gospel to people we remind them Jesus Christ is coming as a conquering king he's not coming back as a meek and lowly servant he is coming back riding a war horse and when he returns for all people who have not believed and submitted to his lordship that he is a savior and can pay for their sin the expiration of the gospel will end one day it is just like a coupon in that sense we can't preach the gospel forever you can't witness forever when Jesus Christ returns we won't evangelize anymore forever it's a temporary thing that we do only here on earth and it's a reminder that God's grace and his patience with sinners it will not last forever hurry up tell them that the lord is coming and we need to confront people with that and I pray that God would give us grace to be more bold in the days ahead to be bolder to be more creative in witnessing and evangelizing our children our friends our co-workers and the people that God brings us into contact with some of you have been praying for loved ones for years haven't you for decades remember to keep praying for them keep talking to them to that person when you have an opportunity

God can open up a door and save them in his perfect timing and may we be like the apostle Paul calling people to be reconciled to God secondly comfort sinners with the lord's compassion in verse 7 some people in verse 6 they need to be kind of hit hard on the head and they need to be told that Christ is coming back they need to hear the hard truths about hell and there are other people that God has created them with such a sensitive conscience that they simply hear the lord's compassion that he will forgive people and it causes them to want to come into this feast Jesus didn't always evangelize using the same scriptures or teaching did he he approaches people differently the way he approached the woman at the well was a little bit different than the rich young ruler and here he comes like the woman at the well and with love and compassion he exposes her ignorance and he directs her to himself the true Messiah when a sinner repents and comes to Christ it should be a time of rejoicing right across from our church in Manila where we live is a big catholic church

[34:13] Saint Peter's Parish this is a big church they have like five masses on Sunday and every time we leave our church it's overflowing the steps with people standing there there are thousands of people in this every time they have a mass they designed it to look like Saint Peter's in Rome it's a big church and yet people come out of that church and they see our little sign across the street and they come over and check us out I love it when Catholics come into our congregation just to hear we've had people come to listen and they've heard the gospel and they have become Christians it's wonderful to see that and I pray that God would give you opportunities and times in your week to witness to people that are lost it can sometimes come in the most unlikely times of your week and here in Isaiah 55 7 there are some people that simply respond their soul is troubled they hear a simple message that God can fully forgive them he can pardon them and they break down in tears and they believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ the tender patience of God and let her be plead with sinners to listen carefully plead with them to listen carefully in verses 8 through 11 in verse 8 for my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord for as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts in verse 10 for as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return but there water the earth making it bring forth and sprout giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word be that does so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it and first sinners must repent of the rebellion against God in verses 8 and 9 we talked about that in fact Stan talked about that this morning in our Sunday school class you're turning away from your sin and you're turning to God it's a U-turn in life isn't it that's what repentance really is you are going in one direction and you repent and you go into a different direction and sometimes we read these verses and maybe we think that Isaiah is just talking about a theological truth that God knows everything and that his thoughts are above our thoughts that is true isn't it

God's thoughts are too amazing for us they are different from ours but I don't I'm not sure if that's exactly what Isaiah is saying here his thoughts are mysterious and other passages of scripture teach us that but Isaiah may have wanted to teach sinners something about their wrong view of repentance have you ever met someone in your life that thinks I have sinned so great God can't forgive me that's a wrong view of repentance isn't it Isaiah doesn't want people to think that way he wants people to understand that it doesn't matter what you've done God is a God that can pardon and save and forgive sinners Psalm 103 11 is a great reminder for people like that that you witness to that they think they've stumbled so bad that God could never save them there are many people that think like that and Isaiah wants them to know don't think your thoughts about God like that when it comes to repentance he doesn't treat sinners like that he doesn't make you beg for forgiveness does he he is a God who quickly pardons the person that knows they're hungry and starving and needs to be nourished at this banquet for as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is the steadfast love toward those who fear him as far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our transgressions from us as a father shows compassion to his children so the Lord shows compassion to his children so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him he knows our frame he remembers that we are dust there are people in this world that think Lord I couldn't be a Christian I've heard it before and I understand what they're saying but I couldn't be invited to this banquet I'm not good enough well that part is true isn't it but they think they've committed a sin they've become so downcast so beaten up by sin that they think that not even the gospel can give them hope Satan wants sinners to think that doesn't he he wants people to think that they've sinned so bad that they couldn't be saved by the grace of God I knew a businessman in the Philippines who has a large company and they have two or three different shifts during the day and one time the maintenance man was called in to fix the lady's toilet something was stuck in there and what do you think they pulled out they pulled out a dead baby someone had taken medicine and they had had an abortion no one knows who the lady was there's so many people working in this business they could bury the baby and they could pray that God would help this lady but imagine this lady a lady like that who has done something and thinks that God can't forgive me I've done something so bad she needs to be reminded that God can forgive her at that church across our street the Catholic St. Peter's there's a cemetery there's a cemetery underneath this church there's about five levels to it and there's a cemetery there because babies get dropped off there in the middle of the night dead they come in the morning they find a little bag

and they bury that baby in the church there are people in this world that commit sins and they think I can't be forgiven and yet we must remind them God is a forgiving God number two God uses his word to achieve his purpose and I read that a minute ago God's word is dependent and it always accomplishes the purpose for which it is designed to do it's just like the rain the rain can come and water the flowers and the bushes so that they can grow or the rain can come in a great storm a flood and it can destroy nature can it?

and God's word is just like that it is like the rain it comes from heaven and it comes to water and to nourish those that hear and respond in faith or it comes and it does damage to the person that rejects it it is impossible to listen to the word of God and remain neutral no human being can do that you can't do it I often tease my students in class when they sleep you know you can sleep in my class you can sleep in my sermon but the word of God has some effect on you you may not be able to see it immediately but it will have an effect on you it either causes us to follow the Lord more in his grace or to reject his grace and yet the word of God even though it can condemn the wicked only God knows who are his and who are not it has positive and negative effects and so when Isaiah would preach his message in his day and when you share the gospel in your day we always must remember that the word of God the message of the gospel it always produces an effect you can't remain neutral and people can't remain neutral when they hear the gospel so we must pray and plead with sinners and finally letter C praise God for saved sinners who come that's us isn't it we praise God because he has brought us into this feast and here is the triumph of the grace of God in spite of the sin of this world the stubbornness of sinners

[41 : 53] God's word will triumph first God's people will be permanently transformed verse 12 for you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands verse 13 instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle and it shall make a name for the Lord an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off that was all true in the immediate historical return from exile and yet language in scripture especially in the prophets about transformation of vegetation from desert to beautiful flowing springs that again is salvation imagery for the spiritual transformation of people and of creation Romans 8 talks about that but here we see that God's people will forever and permanently be transformed when people come to this banquet the banquet where Jesus Christ is the center in the gospel they are forever changed you and I having come to this banquet by the grace of God we are supposed to be being changed daily in his grace towards us paradise is regained in Christ there is beautiful new creation theology in this text and so we must remember at the great work of redemption even creation will rejoice people will be permanently transformed even creation according to Romans chapter 8 and finally number 2

God's name will be forever praised in verse 13 God's great work of redemption it will stand as a testimony through all eternity all the earthly kings and what they have done are forgotten aren't they and yet the true Davidic king his work it is remembered throughout eternity he is the holy one of Israel he is the creator the redeemer and the consummator and people from Genesis to Revelation and even beyond will praise the name of the Lord forever and that is what we will do we do it on earth but it's going to be far greater when we get to heaven at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and as you come to the book of Revelation you begin to read about multitudes surrounded around the throne and it is no accident that creation ends in Revelation chapter 19 with two feasts it's not just arbitrary when you read Revelation and you come to chapter 19 just like Isaiah 25 verses 5 and 6 there's a description of this great feast a feast on a holy mountain when you come to that passage it is fantastic the marriage supper of the lamb that is what Revelation 19 is all about the people that have been saved by the grace of God gather around him on the holy mountain and they will sing praises hallelujah for the Lord our God the almighty reigns and they have come for the marriage supper of the lamb that is where we are going if we are Christians we will be at a great feast one day we partake of it now by faith but there's going to be a great day the marriage feast of the lamb but something in that text which is so shocking is when you read on into the next verse Revelation 19 11 and following especially verses 17 that's another feast that's the feast of God and it is not a happy feast it's a terrifying feast isn't it when you read that picture the angel of God calls the birds of the heaven and creation is reversed it is a sign of those people that are gathered on a different mountain and they are gathered there not to feast but to be eaten by the birds of the heavens and there is the picture of those that are outside of this marriage supper of the lamb they come to the supper of God to be eaten by the wild beast and the birds of the air and then that

passage ends their cast into everlasting hellfire and so my friends there are two feasts you will be at one or the other whether you like it or not you're going to be either in heaven rejoicing at the marriage supper of the lamb or if you reject Christ you reject the gospel you don't want that kind of nourishment you want to feed yourself with your own junk food of self-righteousness you don't have time for Jesus you're going to be at a different mountain and you're not going to be eating you are going to be eaten and that is vivid it is powerful in our minds and every human being must come to terms with that truth that reality and I believe something that helps us remember that while we're here on the earth is the Lord's Supper the Lord's Supper is food of the future as we eat it now in the church the Lord's Supper is preparing you and I as God's people to one day eat at the marriage feast of the lamb and Jesus said

I am the bread the heavenly man that has come down from heaven feed on me in John chapter 6 and when you gather together as a church and you celebrate that great supper it is a foretaste you're eating the food of the future in the present it is amazing the book of Isaiah and God's great invitation to this world to this feast and I pray that God would give us grace to invite poor fallen hungry sinners to the great feast of God heavenly father we thank you for Isaiah 55 we thank you for Isaiah's ministry for his faithfulness by your grace as he lived in a day when people didn't want to hear your truth but Lord I thank you even more for Jesus Christ the one who makes this feast possible we thank you for the great feast that is prepared in the work of Jesus Christ an expensive feast an exclusive feast Lord may we be nourished even in our days now until we make it to the heavenly marriage supper of the lamb

Lord would you encourage your people tonight and give us boldness to continue evangelizing even when we don't feel like it even when we are rejected Lord may you grant your word success and I pray that you would save our young people you would save people in this community in this part of your vineyard and we thank you so much for Jesus Christ your son we ask this in his name Amen