

Seek the Lord

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- [0 : 0 0] If you could take your Bibles, turn to Isaiah chapter 55. Isaiah chapter 55. It's a wonderful chapter in the Word of God, full of invitation and promise and blessing.
- Isaiah chapter 55. We'll read the entire chapter. Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come buy and eat.
- Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?
- Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest affair. Give ear and come to me. Hear me that your soul may live.
- I will make an everlasting covenant with you. My faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.
- [1 : 0 7] Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you. Because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.
- Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts.
- Let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on him. And to our God, for he will freely pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts.
- Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth.
- [2 : 1 3] It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace.
- The mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all of the trees of the field will clap their hands. Instead of the thorn bush, we'll grow the pine tree, and instead of briars, the myrtle will grow.
- This will be for the Lord's renown, for an everlasting sign which will not be destroyed. There's a church in Wales that every Sunday evening has been interviewing older pastors in their 70s and 80s, some of them already retired.
- And the series has been called Before They Leave the Stage. I found it enjoyable and edifying to watch. And one of the questions they always ask these older pastors is this, what is it that you know now that you wish you had known as a young pastor just starting out?
- It's a good question, and it's turned up some very helpful answers. And more than one of these older pastors has said, I wish someone had told me to preach the big texts.
- [3 : 3 9] I wish that I had preached more on the big texts, like Matthew 1.21, like Mark 10.45, like Luke 13.3, like John 3.16, like Acts 4.12, like Romans 8.28.

The big texts that just stand out on the pages of Scripture and call for our attention, like the Rock of Gibraltar that just juts up right out of the sea and dominates the landscape for miles around and directs all of our eyes upon it.

So there are Bible passages like that that are massive in importance, weighty in matter. And this does nothing to diminish the reality that all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable.

Nor does it deny the fact that we are to be preaching to you the whole counsel of God and not just favorite doctrines and texts, but to give you all that God has said.

But the fact remains that not all Scripture, though all Scripture is profitable, not all Scripture is equally profitable or equally important. Even our Lord Jesus spoke of the weightier matters of the law, the more important matters of the law.

[5 : 05] And so before we begin another series of sermons, I want to preach some single sermons on the big text. I don't want to go off the stage regretting that I didn't preach more on the big text.

So that's what we're doing, and I invite you to turn to Isaiah chapter 55. A huge gospel text calling for our utmost attention.

As you turn to Isaiah 55, you can plainly see that there are 54 chapters that come before it. And so we need to know, well, what has been said by the time we come to chapter 55?

Very briefly then, the prophet Isaiah was sent by God to call his people, a rebellious people, back to himself. Of all the nations of the world, the nation of Judah had been given many spiritual privileges.

They had the very word of God. They had his presence. They had his laws. They had his instructions on how he is to be worshipped. But they stubbornly refused to obey God's commandments.

[6 : 22] And they forsook the Lord and worshipped other gods and idols that men's hands had made. And yet all the while, they kept bringing their sacrifices to God.

They maintained the worship of Jehovah as if all was well between them and God. And through Isaiah, God comes to his nation and he says, all is not well.

I don't want your detestable sacrifices. I hate them. They're a burden to me. Shut the doors of the temple. Turn out the lights and leave it. I want your love and your obedience.

I want your trust and your faithfulness. I want your heart because you come near to me with your mouths and you honor me with your lips, but your hearts, they're far from me.

And all your supposed righteous acts, therefore, are nothing but filthy rags in my sight. And because Israel had stubbornly, Judah had stubbornly continued in their rebellion, Isaiah then is sent to them with a message of God's anger and judgment that is coming upon them for their sins.

[7 : 42] woe after woe, disaster after disaster will overtake you. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. O, the arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of man be humbled and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.

And yet for all of this judgment, his anger is not turned away. His hand is still upraised with more judgments to fall. So that's what's come before.

Chapter 1 to chapter 54. Now the real tragedy revealed by Isaiah is that we all are involved in this worldwide conspiracy and rebellion against our maker.

And Isaiah tells us that we've all chosen our own way over God's. And so his righteous anger burns against us and brings us all under the judgment of eternal fire.

[8 : 55] And there's nothing we can do to escape it. There's no sacrifices. There's no religious ceremonies. There's no good deeds that can even undo one of our sins or remove the infinite offensiveness of them against this holy God.

But wonder of wonders, though there is nothing that we could do to save ourselves, there is something that God could do and that God has done.

And in Isaiah's time that he said God will do. And he tells us that God has sent his eternal son born of a virgin.

This is what he's going to do. Send this son born of a virgin, a king and savior who is none other than God with us. And in chapter 53, just two pages two chapters before our text, he tells how God's anger is finally turned away from his sinful people.

It's because God's sinless son became the suffering servant of the Lord and suffered and died in the place of his people. Though we had each turned to our own way, the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all.

[10 : 14] and though men thought that he was suffering and dying for his own sins as they looked at him on Golgotha's cross and mocked him and said, if the Lord wants you, then come on down or let him save you.

Let him show us. No, you see, you're a sinner and you're getting what you deserve. Though men thought he was dying for his own offenses. In fact, he was the righteous one who had no sins of his own but was suffering for ours.

And so 53, 5, Isaiah says, he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. And the punishment that brought us peace with God was upon him.

And by his wounds, we are healed. Yes, it pleased the Lord to crush him and to cause him to suffer and die as a guilt offering for sin. And that's how the righteous servant will justify many because he will bear the sins of many.

And Isaiah was one of those many. And then just two chapters later, we have this glorious gospel invitation in Isaiah 55.

[11 : 31] And it's not here alone. Rather, what we find is that sprinkled throughout all 66 chapters of sin and judgment of God upon Israel's sin is the announcement of this wonderful gospel of what God will do to save his sinful, hell deserving people.

And invitation, a call goes out for salvation. And that's our text this morning, verses six and seven, if we could have it on the wall.

Here it is. Verses six and seven. And seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on him and to our God for he will freely or abundantly pardon. I have seven points about this gospel call and they move rather quickly.

The first is it's a universal call. We can see that in verse one as the chapter begins. It starts with a call from the Lord himself.

[12 : 44] Come all you who are thirsty. Your soul was made for me and so you will forever be thirsty without me. Come, come, come and be satisfied.

Come without money with nothing of your own to pay for this. It's a free gift. Listen to me. Give me your attention. Quit living for the things that cannot satisfy you.

They'll never meet your soul's greatest need. Come to me that your soul may live. You know, that's the same invitation that we hear 700 years later when Jesus walked the roads of Palestine.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. It's a universal call that the Son of God is making to you, to me.

And verse 6, we see this call is for wicked and evil men. So it doesn't matter how dark your sin, how long you've rejected the Lord, whoever you are, whatever you've done.

[13 : 53] Christ is inviting one and all. Come, come to me, that your soul may live. Now that's the first point about this call. It's a universal call.

But the second follows right upon it. It's a call to a person, isn't it? The Lord says, come to me, to me. He doesn't say go to church.

He doesn't say go there, go there. But come to me, come to me. And in verse 6, Isaiah chimes in saying go to him, seek the Lord, call on him.

person. So let's not miss the obvious. Our greatest need is a person. It's the Lord himself. For the Lord is our judge.

The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. It is he who will save us. Chapter 33 and verse 22. It's he, the Lord himself, who will save us.

[14 : 56] Not religion, not government, not gurus, not doctors, not science, not ourselves, most of all, but him. Him, the living son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the only savior of sinners.

Neither is there salvation in any other. So seek the Lord, call on him. It's he alone who can save us. And yet sadly, he remains the great unsought savior.

So that's point one and two, universal call. Call to a person, the Lord. And thirdly, it's a call to action. Seek the Lord.

Young people, it's the devil's lie that many lost people have bought into when they say, since salvation is of the Lord, since I can do nothing to save myself, then I will do nothing.

I'll just wait for the Lord to save me. That's not the call. That's not the invitation. Is it?

[16 : 12] You're called to seek the Lord. You're called to call on his name. Yet how many of you are just waiting for him to save you? Just waiting.

Just waiting. That's twisting the scriptures to your own destruction. And the devil couldn't be happier. No, if you would ever be saved, this is something you must do.

You must seek. The Lord. You must call upon the Lord. Well, what does it mean to seek them? What is it that I must do that every one of us must do in order to be saved?

Well, you know what seek means? It means to look for someone or something, doesn't it? If you've ever played hide and seek and you're the seeker, what do you do? You go looking.

You go looking for them. You hunt them. You go after them. You pursue them. And that's the meaning of seek.

[17 : 12] It's not you just sit there and wait. No, no, that doesn't fit the biblical use or the English use of the word seek. No, the reason you must seek the Lord is not because he's hiding from you.

It's because you're running from him. You're going this way and he's over here. So if you're ever going to be saved, you've got to you've got to turn and seek him. You're you're seeking yourself.

You're seeking the devil's way, sins way. You need to seek him because you're running from him. He has mercy. He has pardon. He has salvation from sin and hell, but you must seek him for it.

You see. And that's the call. That's the call. It's a universal call. It's a call to him, a person. And it's a call to action.

Yes, the action of seeking, but there's also another action word. It's call on him. Seek the Lord, but but also call on him. Indeed, what it means to seek the Lord is to call on him.

- [18 : 18] That's part of what it is to seek him. And these two always are found together. Have you ever lost a child in some busy place? Maybe on a busy beach, a busy airport, a busy, huge store.
- You seek them, don't you? But you also call them. Susie, Susie, where are you? Susie. To seek is to call.
- And that's never more true than the sinner seeking the Lord. He he's to call on him. Yes, he has mercy and forgiveness, but you must call on him for it.
- Not just sit and wait for him to save you. It's nowhere in the Bible. It's in the devil's Bible. There was that wicked tax collector in the temple.
- He wasn't just waiting. No, he wouldn't so much as look up to heaven, but smote his breast and he called on the Lord. And what did he say?
- [19 : 30] God, be merciful to me, a sinner, me, the sinner. And that's a prayer the Lord always delights to answer when it comes from the heart of any sinner.
- I am the sinner. I have been hearing about my sins in this book. I've been hearing about the people are sinners and that's me.
- I'm under your judgment. And rightly so. I'm the sinner. And so without anything good to say for myself, I can't even look at you. You're holy.
- I'm not. And so just he just throws himself upon the mercy of God. Have mercy upon me. That's it. That's the call. That's the call.
- The Lord delights to answer. That's seeking him. Have mercy on me because whoever calls on the name of the Lord.
- [20 : 34] Shall be saved. Romans 10, 13. You come seeking with your heart and calling on him to be saved. And he will save you.
- Now, many have told me I've called on the Lord many times. Some of you children, you say, every night before I go to sleep, I call on the Lord to save me.
- But nothing happens. Nothing happens. Now, we could say a lot of things concerning that. But I want to say this. Nothing is more common than calling on the Lord in a hypocritical way. In a heartless way.
- Like Judah was calling upon him. And the Lord must say, they call on me. But not in truth. They call on me, but not in sincerity.
- They call on me, but not with their whole heart. Oh, they come near to me with their mouths. They honor me with their lips. But their hearts are far from me. They don't want me.
- [21 : 32] They don't want a relationship with me. Deuteronomy 4, 29. If you seek the Lord your God, you will find him.
- If you seek him with all your heart. There it is. There's the promise. If you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. Jeremiah 29, 13.
- You will seek me and you will find me. When you seek me with all your heart. Then you'll call upon me and come and pray to me. And I will listen to you. But there must be no playing games with me.
- No cutting deals with me. No holding back of anything. It's the call to full surrender. Where are you coming and asking him to save you from your sins?
- Not just to be saved from hell. But your sins. That's why his name is Jesus. Because he will save his people from their sins. So.
- [22 : 27] It's a call to action. To seek the Lord. How do you seek the Lord? Well you seek him by repenting and believing.

And we see this in verse 7. The call to seek the Lord is then followed. With verse 7. That's a call to both repentance and faith. There's only ever been one way of salvation for all people of all times.

And it is by way of repentance and faith. Paul could say in Acts chapter 20 and verse 21. I have declared to both Jews and Gentiles. Doesn't matter who I'm preaching to.

A crowd of Jews. A crowd of Gentiles. That they must turn to God in repentance. And have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith.

Faith. So. This is the fourth point. About this call. It's a call to repent then. We'll look at that first. And then faith. It's a call to repent. It's what it means to seek the Lord.

[23 : 29] Let the wicked forsake his way. And the evil man forsake his thoughts. So how should you seek the Lord? Well you start by agreeing with God.

On what he has to say about you in his word. You accept the names he gives you. Just like that. Tax collector.

In the temple. I'm that sinner. Lord. That's me. So you accept. The names he gives you. The wicked. The evil man.

The evil woman. Not terms that we would use to describe ourselves. But they are his. We don't usually think of ourselves as wicked and evil.

But God does. And that shows us just how different his thoughts are. From our thoughts. And his ways. Than our ways. And why we must forsake our thoughts.

[24 : 28] Our thoughts about ourselves. More on that in a moment. That Isaiah. This man who was called. A man like you and me. Of like passions as we are.

Was called to pronounce judgments. Upon the nation of God. His fellow men. And fellow women.

But you know when God first called him. To the job of being a prophet. He says in chapter 6. He saw the Lord high and lifted up. And he saw.

Such a holiness. And other. Otherness. About. The Lord. That even sinless seraphs. Covered their faces. In his presence.

He's that holy. And they cry incessantly. Holy. Holy. Holy. Is the Lord God almighty. He's holy.

[25 : 23] The triple use. Of. Of. Of. Of. Of. Holy. Is the highest emphasis. That. That the Hebrew language. Could bear. It's often. We hear double.

Statements. But. But here's triple. He's not just holy. He's holy. Holy. Holy. And Isaiah's response. At the sight of God's holiness. Is what? Is to pronounce judgment.

On himself. And so before he ever pronounces judgment. On. His fellow men and women. He first pronounces it upon himself. When he sees the Lord's holiness.

Woe is me. I'm ruined. I'm undone. For I'm a man of unclean lips. And I live among a people of unclean lips. And my eyes. Have seen the king.

The Lord. Almighty. You see when a man sees the Lord. God. Almighty. For who he is. His holiness. His purity. His otherness. His majesty.

[26 : 25] His might. And power. Whatever he thought of himself before. He now cries. I am a sinful man. I am an unclean man.

I take those names. I am wicked. I am evil. And unclean lips. You know. Are only the overflow.

The flow of an unclean heart. That's what he's saying. Yeah. I'm a man of unclean lips. Because I got an unclean heart. And that's where my words come from. I'm ruined. I've got vile thoughts.

I've got vile desires down here. Out of the heart. Come sexual immoralities. Adulteries. Murder. Lust. Hatred.

Discord. Lord. All these things come out of my heart. I'm doomed. I'm ruined. For I am the wicked and evil man. He'd seen the Lord in his glory.

[27 : 24] His holiness. I've. I've got some white washcloths at home. At least I'd always thought of them as being white. Until one day after washing and drying them.

I returned them to the cupboard. And put them on top of some wash rags. That had never been used before. And instantly. I saw that my. My.

White wash rags were rather. More gray. Than white. We don't have a clue. How unclean we are. Until we see the clean Jesus.

That Isaiah saw. Until we've seen him in his holiness. Until we stop comparing ourselves with our fellow mortals. We've all got unclean lips.

All. We've all got unclean hearts. No, no. It's when we. We're put right beside the. The Lord. In the New Testament. Jesus says. It's him. The Lord Jesus.

[28 : 20] That Isaiah saw. And in seeing the holiness. We haven't seen our sin. Till we've seen the holiness of Jesus. And that's what he saw. I don't know white.

Until I've seen it in Jesus. John puts it this way. God is light. And in him. There is no darkness. No.

None. At all. Triple negative. He's holy. He's holy. I'm not. So. I begin by taking.

God's view of things. God's view of me. I begin. By acknowledging. What I am. And then. We see that. We see that repentance. Is not only a change of mind.

About ourselves. But. Let the wicked forsake his way. Our way. Must be. Renounced. Remember.

[29 : 17] The way we're going. It's. It's. God's ways that way. And. And this is our way. And so we must forsake. Our way. It's not just forsaking. A few sins. It's not just forsaking.

A few things that we need to tidy up a bit. No. Our whole way is wrong. If you're going to some destination. And you're. You're on a road that will never get there. What do you need. You need to get off that road.

You need to renounce and forsake that road. And get on the right road. And that's what repentance is. It's. It's to see that you're on the wrong. Well. The wrong way. Everything about your way is wrong.

You know why? Because it's all about me. It's all about you. It's all about. What does this get me? What does it mean for me? That's the wrong way. Forsake it. Renounce it. You've rejected God's way for your own way.

And God's way is the narrow way that leads to life. And you've chosen the broad way that leads to destruction. Even though you don't know it. So the whole way must be forsaken.

[30 : 18] Your whole self must be denied. Now that's what we've been doing to God in his way. Rejecting.

Renouncing. Forsaking God's way. Now we're told. No. You must renounce and forsake your way. And then. Another phrase of what it means to repent.

Not only. Let the wicked forsake his way. But let the evil man. Forsake his thoughts. His thoughts. You see. Repentance isn't just to.

To deal with our outward ways. It's to go right to the heart of the matter. What you're thinking in your heart. Your inner life. As well as your outer life.

Must be rejected. Why? Because your thoughts are all wrong. You're not thinking about me. Like you should think. You're not thinking about yourself. You're not thinking about sin. You're not thinking about your neighbor.

[31 : 14] The world. There's nothing right about your thoughts. When God is not on the throne of the heart. And so you must forsake your thoughts. You're belittling thoughts of God.

Of his holiness. His authority. His wrath. His justice. His worship. His glory. His love. His grace. His mercy. Belittling thoughts of your sin.

And your sinful hearts. Your arrogant thoughts of yourself. What you think is more important than what God thinks. That you know better than God.

You deserve to be pleased above God. That you don't need Jesus. That he's just not relevant to your life. You're doing fine without him. Your mind is depraved. It's bending on yourself. You must forsake your thoughts.

As verses 8 and 9 go on to say. The reasons you must forsake them. Is because my thoughts. Are not your thoughts. God says.

[32 : 09] Neither are your ways. My ways. In fact. My thoughts and ways. Are. As high as the heavens are above the earth. Higher. Than your ways and thoughts.

So if your thoughts aren't. Mine. Then you need to forsake them. And you need to think my thoughts. And you need to walk in my ways. Total rejection.

Of my way. My way of thinking. And embracing. Him. And his way of thinking. You know where we find out. What his way of thinking is. It's only in one book. And so this book becomes precious.

This is my thought. This is the way I start thinking. If I've repented of my thoughts. And turned to God's thoughts. What God says. About me.

About sin. About Jesus. About himself. About the world. It's a call to repentance. That was number four. Number five. It's a call to faith.

[33 : 08] It's a call to faith. Let him turn. To the Lord. Not only forsaking his way. But then. Turning to. The Lord. Let him turn. To our God.

You see the change in direction. Instead of your way. Now. You're turning to God. You're coming to me. Jesus says. And so true faith and repentance. Are always found together.

And that's a way you can know. If you're a real Christian. Have I really repented? Well. All repenting. All repentance. That is true. Is a believing repentance. It rests on Christ.

For life. And all true faith. Is a repenting faith. These two are always found together. Father. And so.

We turn. From our way. And our thoughts. To the Lord. And to our God. It's the. The from. And the to. Repentance.

[34 : 03] And faith. Paul says. Of the Thessalonian church. I've heard all over the world. How you have turned. To God. From.

Your idols. To serve the living and true God. And to wait for his son from heaven. Even Jesus. Christ. Who delivers us from the coming wrath. You've turned. To God.

That's faith. From idols. That's repentance. We've owned our uncleanness. And we come to him. To clean us.

We own our weakness. We turn to him. For strength. And help. And wisdom. And patience. And self-control. We turn to him. And. Receive his word.

And. Take him at his word. That's faith. That's faith. Have you turned? And are you turning. From your way. And are you trusting. Have you trusted.

- [35 : 01] And are you trusting. In the Lord Jesus. It's a call to repent. And a call to believe. And then. Sixthly. It's a call with a promise. Though this is so important.
- It's a call with a promise. Let the wicked forsake his way. And the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord. And he will have mercy on him. And let him turn to our God.
- And he will. Will freely. Abundantly. Pardon. Have you noticed. That the gospel call. Usually has a promise. Attached to it.
- That whoever. Believes in him. That's the call. You must believe. Shall not perish. But have eternal life. There's the promise. Whoever calls upon.
- The name of the Lord. That's the. That's what you must do. Shall be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And you shall be. We see the promises.
- [36 : 00] Is attached. To. To the call. And it's no different here. Coming from Isaiah's. Mouth. John Calvin says.
- Men cannot be. Cannot be led. To repentance. They can't be led. To. To turn around. And seek. The Lord. In any other way. Than by holding out.
- The assurance. Of pardon. The assurance. Of pardon. That's what God's holding out. That's what the Lord's. Holding out to people. Even as he calls them. It's a call. With a promise.
- Yes. Why is that so critical? Because remember. They're running from God. They've got their backs. Toward God. They know they're guilty.
- And God's the last person. They want to meet up with. Because they know. He'll judge them. And that's what they're trying. So hard to forget. That's what they're pushing down. In their conscience.
- [36 : 59] They fear. He's going to punish them. And not pardon them. And so as long as. That's what the sinner. Expects to receive from the Lord. He won't be seeking him. Any more than an outlaw.
- Seeks a policeman. He's on the run from him. What will make him turn. And run into the hands.
- Of the law giver. Well if he knows. That he's going to. Be received. With mercy. And with a full pardon.
- For all of his wrongs. That will stop a man. From running. And allure him. To come. And to surrender. To the law.
- To own what he is. And to confess it. And to say. I'm renouncing it. Rot. No me. Save me. Forgive me. And. And to know. That he will be received. With mercy.
- [37 : 54] And with pardon. So that's what God does. And in this gospel call. If you forsake your way. And turn. To me. That's. What's awaiting for you.
- Is my mercy. Not the justice you deserve. Your sins are great. But my mercy is more. You see. Jesus took the justice. That. That you might have mercy.
- Jesus took the punishment. That you might have pardon. And not a pardon. For just some of your sins. But as we saying. My sins. Not in part. But the whole. Were nailed to his cross.
- And I bear them. No more. Jesus took the punishment. That I. Might have the pardon. A pardon. Bought with Jesus blood. And so Jesus.
- Promises you. That if you turn. From your way. To come to me. Here's the welcome. You'll receive. Mercy. Pardon. And you walk free.
- [38 : 53] You walk free. But it's only. As you believe that. That you will venture. To turn. And come.

To him. And seek him. And call to him. You must believe. That his promise is true. That mercy will meet you.

A full pardon. Will meet you. Now why are we so slow. To believe it. Well I believe. Isaiah is putting. His finger on it. It's because of our wrong. Thoughts.

Our wrong ideas. About God. We think he's like we are. And we know how. How we struggle. To forgive others. Who have sinned against us. And hurt us deeply.

And. And. And how we. We can barely. Bring ourselves. To forgive them. So reluctant. We are. To forgive. Forgive. And we think. And we think that. That's the way God is. And. And God is meeting them.

[39 : 47] In Isaiah's words. No. No. No. My thoughts aren't like your thoughts. And my ways aren't like your ways. I'm not like you. In this regard. My thoughts toward you. Are mercy.

And pardon. I am happy. To forgive. I am delighted. To pardon. I'm always ready. To forgive. I'm far more willing.

To pardon you. Than you are to be pardoned. It's the voice of the one. Who suffered and died. For sinners. And it is that love. And it is that mercy. And it is that pardon.

That. Has broken down. Every barrier. And it brings us. Dear Lamb of God. I come. Just as I am. Because I know.

That with you. I'll find pardon. I'll find. Forgiveness. I'll find mercy. It's a call. With a promise. Of a gracious reception.

[40 : 47] Believe him. And run to him. But lastly. It's an urgent call. Seek the Lord. While. He may be found. Call upon him.

While. He is near. That. While. Is a temporary. A temporal. It's speaking of time. It's pointing to. To a time. There's a time. To seek.

There's a time. To call on him. In other words. This offer of salvation. This offer to seek. And to find the Lord.

And mercy in him. Does not go on forever. Forever. This time. To be saved. Is short. It's passing.

And it may end. At any. Moment. And it might do so. In three different ways. First of all. The Lord Jesus. Will return.

[41 : 40] He's coming. To judge the world. In righteousness. And to assign. To each. Their eternal. Destinies. Destinies. Our Lord said it. In Luke chapter 13. When someone asked him.

Lord. Are only a few people. Going to be saved. People are always. Asking the wrong. Questions. So Jesus. Just ignores it. That's. That's none of your business.

How many there will be. But you. Make sure you. Enter the kingdom. And so he says. Make every effort. You make every effort. To enter through the narrow door.

Why? Because I tell you. Many. Will try to enter. And not be able. Once the owner of the house. Gets up. And closes the door.

You will stand outside. Knocking and pleading. But it will all be. In vain. Because it will be. Too late then. Too late to seek him.

[42 : 34] Too late to find him. Too late to find. Mercy and pardon. Away from me. All you evil doers. To the place. Where there is weeping. And gnashing of teeth. You didn't seek him.

While he may be found. It's urgent. You see. Timing is everything. In this call. If you turn and seek him now. While the door of mercy is open.

You will find him. And you will find mercy. And pardon. But if you refuse to seek him. If you keep running from him. And he returns in judgment.

He will find you. And it will not be with mercy. And pardon. It will be with justice. And wrath. And punishment. As it was in the days of Noah.

So it will be in the days of the son of man. Remember how it was? Noah was building the ark. The door was open. And Noah was preaching righteousness to them.

[43 : 33] But nobody was entering. They didn't believe judgment was coming. The open door was the despised door. But then God shut the door.

And the rains came down. And the floods came up. And the closed door. Became the desired door. But it was too late. Too late.

They didn't seek him. While he may be found. There's a second reason.

Why your opportunity for salvation may end any moment. And it's because of your death. Your death. Not only Jesus returned. That ends it. But your death.

One day time will run out for you. For me. For all of us. There's a limit on your life set by God. A limit you cannot exceed. Death is coming from you.

[44 : 28] And you don't know when. And that's why we're not even to boast about tomorrow. Because you don't even know what a day will bring forth. We've had all kinds of examples of that all around us.

Are people preparing to die? You tell me. What do you see? No. They don't believe judgment's coming. 150,000 people die every day.

One day it will be you. And as you die. So you will be for all eternity. Your condition is set from that point on.

No second chance. So seek the Lord while they may be found. Call on him. While he is near. Because your death shuts the door forever.

On mercy. If you're outside of Christ. But there's a third way that your opportunity is passing. And may end at any time. And that's that God may give you over to your own sinful choice.

[45 : 31] Three times I read in Romans chapter 1. About God giving people over to their sin. Turning people over. To the sins.

As they. As his own deserved punishment and wrath. He is showing his wrath and his punishment. By giving people over to their sins that were their choice. He abandons them to their rebellious choice.

Like those garrisoned people. They said Jesus. We don't want you here. Leave us. Leave us. And he left them. He got in the boat and left them. So seek the Lord.

Call on him while he's near. He's near today. He's near right now. In the preaching of the gospel. He is offering to you. He's saying come to me. He's very near. The Lord Jesus said of one lost man.

You're not far from the kingdom. You're not far from the kingdom. Maybe that's you.

[46 : 33] You're not far, far off. You know. You know a lot about what. What's wrong with you. And. How Christ alone can save you. That you can't save yourself. You're. You're thinking about these things.

You're studying them. Maybe it could be said by Jesus of you. That you're not far from the kingdom. You're near. Oh.

Don't rest in that. To be near is to be outside. To be near is not to be in Christ. It's still outside. To be forever lost.

Have you been putting him off. Not seeking him. Not calling on him. Not repenting. Not trusting. Like Augustus. Or Augustine. When. When living in sexual immorality. As a lost man.

Said Lord save me. But just not yet. Just not yet. After high school. After college. After marriage.

[47 : 35] After. After my job. After. You know what you're doing. You're putting God on the back burner. God. And seeking salvation in Christ.

Is no back burner issue. It's urgent. It's an urgent call. Timing is everything. Now is the time. Now is the day of salvation. Get into Christ now.

Friend. He could never. He may never be nearer to you. Than he is right now. As he's inviting you. To come to him. Now.

While you're still alive. Now. While you're still concerned. About your never dying soul. Now. While you. While your conscience. Is still sensitive. Now. Before that conscience. Becomes hardened. Now.

Before. Satan. And your sin. Enslaves you. Further. And further. So that you are not even. To be found. Near the gospel preaching. Seek him now. Call on him now.

[48 : 34] That's the gospel. That Isaiah preached. Twenty seven hundred years ago. And it's the gospel. I set before you. This morning. In the name of our Lord. Jesus Christ. It's an interesting thing.

That in chapter one. Of Isaiah. As Isaiah. Appears before the people. Pointing out their sins. And the coming of God. His judgment. He doesn't get to the end. Of that chapter. Before giving a gracious.

Gospel promise. And we're going to sing it. It's Isaiah 118. Come now. Let us reason together.

Says the Lord. Let's have a talk about this. Though your sins. Are like scarlet. They shall be as white as snow. And though they be red like crimson.

And they shall be as wool. Come now. Come now. It's number 465. Let's turn to it. And stand together. As we sing this.

[49 : 32] Wonderful. Invitation. We've heard it from our Lord. And we see. This promise. Couched in these. Words of the hymn. 465. You can cry out to the Lord.

To save you. Even as we sing. And we pray.