

A Free Gift at a Great Price

Isa 55:1-3 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ²Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³Incline your ear, and come to Me.

Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you — The sure mercies of David.

There is an old adage; nothing in this life is free. If ever you have responded to a "free offer" on TV, or by way of a telephone solicitation or maybe in your e-mail, you no doubt soon came to the conclusion it was not really a "free gift" there was money or payment involved.

Here in Isaiah 55 we have a free offer, come without money buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money and without price. I can assure you this morning, it is free to those who come, but it was not provided without great price. It can rightly be called; a free gift at a great price, the greatest price ever paid. For without question for that one who comes, the cost has been paid in full. Some Sundays back we read of the great price paid when we looked at Isaiah 53:4-8 where we read, *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. For He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."* And then in verses 7 and 8 we read, *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken."*

He was cut off from the land of the living, dear ones; that simply means He paid the greatest price ever paid. He died upon the cross at Calvary in order to redeem sinners from the wrath of Almighty God. As God's children we have been purchased, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of our Redeemer. Truly the greatest price that could be paid has been paid for a debt which we could not pay. You see, the wages of sin is death and that debt had to be paid, and because of God's great love and our Lord's great sacrifice; to all who come to God in faith, trusting in Him alone for redemption it can be said of the debt that was owed; "PAID IN FULL". And because of what our Savior did, we have here in this passage the greatest invitation ever given, *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*

There are three questions that need to be answered. 1. To whom is that invitation given? 2. What is offered? 3. And what must one do in order to receive this glorious offer?

A. To whom is the invitation given?

1. The general offer of salvation is given to all men.

a. To be understood here as to Jew and Gentile alike lest the Jews would think that it was only given to them.

Acts 10:45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

b. All men, rich or poor, great or small, powerful or weak, slave or free.

c. That the gospel is to be preached to all men is a proper teaching of sound doctrine.

Canons of Dort - "Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations and people, to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel" (Section 11-5).

John Calvin - "Paul makes grace common to all men, **not because it in fact extends to all**, but because it is **offered to all**." (Comment on Romans 5:18)

“There is an universal call, by which God, through the external preaching of the word, invites all men alike, even those for whom he designs the call to be a savour of death, and the ground of a severer condemnation.” (Institutes 3:24:8)

- d. This is the same command which our Lord gave in Matt. 11:28

Matt 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- e. We may understand then that it is given to all who thirst, and all men lack the satisfying water of salvation.

(1) However, not only is the one addressed thirsty, but he is also unable to satisfy that thirst.

(2) In theological language we may say that he is totally depraved and totally unable to remove that depravity.

- f. This is why it is in the imperative, it is given as a command.
- g. This is why the church must proclaim the offer of the gospel to all men

For there is no other name, under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

- h. One other thing I would have us note, those who are invited are those who are thirsty and broke.

2. Then there is the “effectual call” of the gospel

- a. This is the one who because of grace they do thirst is for the things of God.

Matt 5:3 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

- b. These are the ones whose heart God has opened.

*Acts 2:39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God **will call.***

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

*Acts 13:48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as **many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.***

CONCLUSION: Jesus told us that many are called but few are chosen.

What have we learned?

The church is to go into all the world and preached (proclaim) the gospel to all men.

We can proclaim to all men, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

We can proclaim as Paul did on Mars hill to the men of Athens that God “. . . now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. (Acts 17:30-31)

The church must proclaim a coming day of judgment

And further proclaim the only means of escape from God’s wrath against the ungodly on that great day.

Let everyone of us be ready to proclaim this great offer of God’s saving grace. - *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*