

The Gospel According to Isaiah

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of coming to Jesus without money or price, and receiving the sure mercies of David through redemption, justification, and forgiveness.

Duration: 34:36

Scripture: Genesis 15:6, Psalm 96:12, Isaiah 55:1, Habakkuk 2:4, John 7:37, 1 Corinthians 1:21, 1 Corinthians 1:25

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a couple who lived empty lives, focused on material pleasures and entertainment. He emphasizes the tragedy of people living their lives like hamsters on a wheel, going around in circles and getting nowhere. The preacher then discusses the transformation that occurs when Jesus comes into a person's heart, comparing it to a briar bush becoming a cypress tree. He concludes by inviting the congregation to accept Jesus into their hearts and seek forgiveness for their sins, emphasizing the urgency of seeking the Lord while he may be found.

Transcript

Please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 55. You already heard it read. I think it's quite important for us to have the word in our hands.

If you don't have a Bible, I hope you have access to one. Maybe you have a kind neighbor who will share the Bible with you. Thank you.

Isaiah chapter 55. I call this the gospel according to Isaiah. You say, what? The gospel is pretty clear.

In the Old Testament, it's the same gospel we have in the New Testament. There's only one gospel. Salvation by faith in the Lord.

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Habakkuk said, the just shall live by faith. It's the same story all through the Old Testament.

We're saved by looking to the Lord, believing whatever revelation he has given to us. This begins, ho everyone that thirsteth. You know, every word of God is pure.

Even that little two-letter word, ho. What does that mean? It means, pay attention to what I'm going to say to you. God is speaking.

We hear God speaking when we read the Bible. We don't hear an audible voice. I'm glad we don't.

Because Satan could imitate a voice, couldn't he? Pretend to be God. Much better to have it in the infallible word of God. And God is here saying, listen.

Or in today's language, listen up. Pay attention to what I'm going to say to you. Or if you were ever in the Navy, now hear this.

God is speaking. Ho everyone that thirsteth. I like that word everyone.

You know, the gospel is for whosoever will. Isn't that a wonderful thing? If you're here today, and you do not know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you're eligible. Ho everyone that thirsteth.

What's that all about, that thirsteth? Well, it means everyone that has some great felt need in his or her life. I think that's very good to remember that. For instance, here's a person, more than anything else, he wants to know that his sins have been forgiven.

He's thirsting. He wants to be able to die unafraid. He's thirsting.

You know, John MacArthur was on a broadcast with Larry King not too long ago, and privately, Larry King said to him, John, are you afraid to die? And John said, no, I'm not afraid to die. And Larry King repeated the question. He said, John, now, really, are you afraid to die? And John said, I'm not afraid to die.

I don't look forward to suffering, to pain, but I'm not afraid to die. Larry King said, I wish I had your faith. Ho everyone that thirsteth.

Afraid to die, to be able to, the desire to be able to meet God unafraid, which really happens when we do die, are thirsting to have a better life. Not a life of emptiness, but a life of fulfillment, a life that means something for eternity. Or thirsty to have the chains of sin broken in your life.

Not to live under the mastery of sin. Sometimes you'll hear us Christians talking about conviction of sin. What is that all about? Well, it's when the Spirit of God awakens us to the fact that we are lost in sin and heading for hell.

Here's a person and all his life, he's never had much thought about God. He lived okay without God. Didn't feel any need of a God.

But then something happens in his life. Maybe it's a crisis and God begins to speak very loudly to him. He's aware of his lost condition.

He puts his head down on his pillow at night, and he can't sleep. He knows if he died, it would be without God. Without Christ.

Without hope forever. And he feeds, he senses the Holy Spirit tugging at his heart and saying, come to the water. Come to Jesus.

The water here stands for the Lord Jesus, doesn't it? A lot of this chapter is figurative language. But it's very clear, very clear on the face of it. Come to the waters.

Oh, I notice it's plural waters. Why is that? Well, just let me say probably there's plenty for everyone. There's plenty for everyone.

When you come to the Lord Jesus has already saved millions in the history of this old world. And he's saving them every day. And he'll save you too, if you'll come to him.

Says come to the waters. It doesn't say clean up your life first before you come. It doesn't say that.

If you wait until you're better, you'll never come at all. Just come as you are. Come with all your sins.

And say, Lord Jesus, here I am a guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinner. But I want to be saved. I want to know the forgiveness of sins.

Will he do it? Of course he'll do it. He has never failed. Come to the waters.

Whoever drinks of the water that I give him, Jesus said, shall never thirst. Shall never thirst. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.

Wonderful, wonderful promise. It says, you that have no money. This is great.

It's going to sound contradictory in these first verses. Say, it doesn't make sense. Yes, it makes good sense.

You that have no money, come you buy and eat. What does that mean to have no money? When you come to the Lord, don't come pleading your own goodness. Don't come telling him about all the charity you've given to, you know.

Come just as you are. Say, in my hand no price I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling.

Naked come to thee for dress helpless. Come to look for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly.

Wash me, Savior, or I die. That's what it means to come without money. Not pleading any of your own goodness, of any way you could ever earn or deserve salvation.

Just come as that guilty sinner and say, God save me. God save me. It says, come buy and eat.

Well, how can you buy without money? Says, yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Well, when you buy something, you make it your own, don't you? You appropriate it for yourself. And that's what you do with salvation.

Salvation is there and you come and you appropriate it for yourself. But you say without money, without cost. Well, that's true.

As far as you're concerned, it's without cost. As far as you're concerned, it's without price. That didn't, doesn't mean that somebody else didn't pay for it.

That's exactly what happened. 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ paid the price on Calvary's cross. He endured the wrath of God against all your sins, past, present, and future.

He paid the price for our redemption there by giving his life, by shedding his blood. And who was it? It was the second person of the Trinity, the incarnate Son of God. I wish I could shout this from the housetops.

Dear friends, somebody died for you. And his name was Jesus. He was the creator of the universe, the one who hurled the planets into space, the one who designed the DNA, the one who built your body, as it

were.

And he died for you. It's a wonderful truth when it comes home to your heart that I've been died for, and not by just a mere man, but by the creator of the world. Isn't that amazing? I think if you could realize that, you'd be in a hurry to come to Jesus.

So, it's a costly gift. Somebody paid for it, and it was our Savior, the Lord Jesus. Dear friends, if you can buy it without money and without price, it must be a gift, huh? And it is.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And if it's a gift, it must be by grace, by undeserved faith. It is.

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, and not of works, lest any man should boast. Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Here, we have water, we have wine, and we have milk. Water, you can't live without water. It speaks of refreshment.

The milk speaks of nourishment, and the wine speaks of exhilaration. And you find all of those things when you come to Jesus. You find refreshment in Him.

Weary and worn in the struggle with sin, you come to Him, and drink of Him, and you're refreshed. Nourishment, that begins a life of growth. The things of God, that wine, the joy of knowing your sins forgiven.

Let me say this very strongly this morning. Any church that pretends to sell salvation by money has to be a false church. Because the Bible says, come without money and without price.

And I want to tell you, there are false churches in San Leandro today. That's why, did you ever notice that there's no collection taken here in Fairhaven in the mornings? Why is that? Because some people might come, unsaved people, might even be skeptics. And we pass the collection plate, and they'll say, I'm not good enough for your heaven, but my money is good enough for your coffers.

That's what they would say. So no collection is taken. Because we love you, and God loves you.

God wants to see your soul saved. Come without money and without price. I like the next question.

Why do you spend money on that which is not bread? That's one of the great questions in life. Why do you spend money on that which is not bread? The bread the world offers provides only temporary satisfaction, doesn't it? Even Wonder Bread. It's only for a short period.

You can eat and soon be hungry again. Why do you spend your wages for what does not satisfy? What does that mean? Well, better clothing, gourmet food, status cars, bigger homes, alcohol, drugs, lottery. You know, anyone who plays the lottery is really mathematically impaired because because the chances of winning that lottery are miniscule, absolutely miniscule.

And no Scott in his right mind would play. But if you think that's ridiculous, what about spending \$2,000 to get into the Super Bowl? \$2,000 for a ticket to get into the Super Bowl. Why do you spend money on that which is not bread? Imagine people doing that.

To watch a game that a hundred years from now will have no significance at all, maybe ten years from now. Most people will have forgotten the score ten years by now, from now, right? The Bible is a wonderful book, puts its finger right. Why do you spend money on that which is not bread? Cruises.

I'll never forget East Stanley Jones telling about two corpulent people who went on a cruise once and life on the cruise was pretty much going to the dining room and surfeiting with food and then going to the lounge and just sitting there until the next meal, you know. And this gentleman was there with his wife and they had just finished, I don't know, many courses of the meal and incidentally in the cruise you can ask for anything and they'll bring it to you and they'll bring it as often as you ask for it. I don't know that from experience.

Anyway, the man is sitting there with his wife and he sees on the shelf there two vases or vases and with an enormous struggle he picks himself up from the lounge and he walks over and he holds the vase and he looks into it and he calls back to his wife and says, it's empty. I want to tell you it wasn't just the vases that were empty. There were two lives that were empty.

Living for food, living for gourmet food with an eternity ahead of them. Entertainment, sensual pleasure. And isn't that the tragedy of life today with so many dear people? I speak of them lovingly like hamsters on their little wheel going around and round and getting nowhere.

That's sad, isn't it? Is that where you are today dear friend? I hope if it is that you'll make a quick change today, a quick change. The poet said, if I gained the world and lost the Savior would my gain be worth living for a day? Could my yearning heart find rest and comfort in the things that soon must pass away? If I gained the world but lost the Savior would my gain be worth the lifelong strife? Are all earthly pleasures worth comparing for a moment with a Christ-filled life? The answer is no, they're not. The word says, the Lord says to us, listen diligently to me.

Listen diligently to me. The marvelous thing is that the emptiness that the world feels is found in the Lord. Augustine said, Lord, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are empty until we find rest in you.

Pasteur said, there's a God-shaped vacuum in the human heart. Eat what is good and let your soul delight in abundance. Look at that word abundance.

Sinners are abundant, their sins are abundant, but God's salvation is abundant too. The blessings that are ours in Christ are abundant. In fact, Paul in Ephesians 1 speaks about every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Our Lord came to give life and to give it abundantly. It says, incline your ear and come to me. Those words are synonyms for believing.

To come to him is to believe on him, to commit my soul to him. Give my eternity to him for his care and keeping. And so we must come with our ears ready to hear his word as it is found in the Bible.

We have it again in Matthew 11, come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart. You shall find rest unto your souls.

Here and your soul shall live. Another synonym for believe. Here and your soul shall live.

Isn't it marvelous that the Word of God is filled with synonyms for the word believe. Enter the door, drink of water, eat of bread. Synonyms for the belief in the Savior.

Here in your soul shall live. Our souls were dead in trespasses and in sins. We trust in Christ and we're made alive in him.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you. God made an everlasting covenant with David. He told him that he would have a kingdom forever and seed to sit upon that throne forever.

That wonderful promise is fulfilled in the Lord Jesus, a descendant of David. A kingdom forever, he has a kingdom forever and he's going to reign on the throne forever and ever. But the Lord makes an everlasting covenant with us, too.

What is that? What covenant does he make with us? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ thou shalt be saved. Have eternal life. Have everlasting life.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life. Eternal life. They shall never perish.

Neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all and no one is able to pluck them out of my father's hand. The sure mercies of David.

I will give you the sure mercies of David. Well, we changed David there to David's greater son, Jesus. What are the sure mercies of Jesus? Well, redemption.

When you're saved, you're redeemed by the blood of Christ. Justified. You're reckoned absolutely righteous before God.

The case is acquitted. You are acquitted before the law of God. You're saved from going to hell.

You're forgiven of all your sins. Isn't that wonderful? Right now there are places in the world you wouldn't want to visit. There are people you wouldn't want to see.

There are memories you don't want to bring back to your mind. Terrible things that have occurred in your life, your friends, I know how they can be washed away. You can become quieter than snow through the blood of Jesus.

What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. And I tell you, it's wonderful to think that the father can look upon us and find no sin with which to punish us with eternal death. Isn't that wonderful? I think it's marvelous.

Pardoned. We're pardoned. Regenerated, given a new life.

We're accepted in the beloved. I was at a home this last week in El Cajon. And there was a dog there, and there was a sign on the gate, beware of the dog.

And I got close to the gate, but that's as far as I got. But you know, then the owner of the house came up and opened the gate, and we walked through together. And the dog was just as gentle as a lamb.

I got through in the person of my friend. I didn't get through because of my own merit. I got through because I was with Rupert.

You know, that's the way it is. We have no right to stand before God. But if I could just come in the person of Jesus, he has full acceptance with God.

God accepts me in his beloved son. We're complete in Christ. If you have Christ, you have all you need for heaven.

Isn't that wonderful? It is wonderful. Christ is my fitness for heaven. And I have Christ, I'm complete in him, Paul tells the Colossians.

I'm made nigh by the blood of Christ. Near, so very near to God. Nearer I could not be, for in the person of his son I'm as near as he.

Dear, so very dear to God. Dearer I could not be, the love with which he loves his son such as his love to me. It's just too marvelous to tell.

Indwelt by the Spirit of God, given eternal life, everlasting life, members of God's family. His blessings are abundant. Adopted as sons, sanctified, glorified, and made citizens of heaven.

Says in verse 4, indeed, I have given him a witness to the people. Him there should be capitalized. It refers to the Lord.

God has spoken to his people through Jesus. I like that saying, I don't know who said it. God may have other words for other planets, but his word for this planet is Jesus.

Isn't that good? A leader and commander of the people. This looks forward to the millennium, of course, when Christ will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but it applies today. We have a wonderful leader.

We have a wonderful commander. What a thrill to belong to him and to have him and walk in his pathway. We can choose him to reign on the altar of our hearts.

Surely you shall call a nation you do not know. You know, there's a sense in which that's true of God and people today. God can look down and say, you know, I don't know you if you're unsaved.

You don't open the Bible. You never speak to me in prayer. You don't come to the meetings of God's people on a regular basis.

But listen to the gospel story, a people I do not know. And there are people like that in the world today. God is not in all their thoughts and the only times when they're happier when they can forget God.

And the only time they're miserable is when they remember him. And a people who do not know shall come to you. Gentiles will come to Israel in a coming day.

And you know, when you get saved, people start coming to you. That's a funny thing. They come to you when they're in a crisis in life.

They come to you when they want somebody to pray for them. It's a marvelous thing. I've seen that over again in the Christian life.

People, unsaved people, realize that God is in a Christian and wants to, wants help from them. Nations who do not know you shall run to you. You know, it's happening all over the world today that I think in

China more people are turning to the Lord in China than any other part of the world.

The greatest work for God today is going on in China. People crowding to Christ. It's going on in Africa, too.

Poor Africa, where probably a quarter of the million, a quarter of the population is dying of AIDS. People are crowding to Christ. It says, because of the Lord your God, the Lord is the true source of every blessing in the Christian life.

It's all because of him and all because of Calvary. Notice verse 6, seek the Lord while he may be found. Oh, that means that there's a time when he may not be found.

Exactly right. Everyone hears the gospel for the last time. There is such a thing as redemption point.

When you pass redemption point, that's it, dear friends. God will not always strive with men. There's an acceptable time with God, a day of salvation.

You know what day that is? It's today. It's today. I had a cousin named Donny McDonald, a cousin of mine when we moved, I think, Donny McDonald.

One day he was walking down the main street of the city where he lived and a dear old Christian lady came to him and said, Donny, don't you think it's time you turn to the Lord? Don't you think it's time you sought the Lord? And he said, what's he ever done for me? That weekend, Donny and his nine-year-old boy got on a ship to cross to the mainland and coming off the ship, they drove the wrong way on the ramp. They perished. Donny heard the gospel for the last time.

Donny heard the voice of God speaking to him for the last time. Hmm. I had an uncle by marriage.

He was an uncle by marriage, married my aunt, and my dear father used to witness to him, tell him the way of salvation and urge him to trust the Savior. And he just turned it off like you'd turn off the faucet. And one summer my father was in Scotland on a visit and that uncle was dying in the hospital.

And he was saying, Where is William? Where is William? That was my father's name. William wasn't there. William had already been faithful to him, but he wasn't there.

Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Not too long ago a young fellow named Jesus here in San Leandro stopped at the Chinese restaurant, bought a meal to bring home, got in his car, crossed the railroad track, was crossing the railroad tracks, Washington Avenue, you know, the Amtrak came along.

He was ushered into eternity. Little did he know that morning that he would be in eternity before sundown. Dear friends, it's serious, isn't it? Seek the Lord while he may be found.

Call upon him while he is near. When is he near? He's near when he speaks to you. He's near when you sense the Spirit of God working in your heart.

Maybe your heart is beating just a little faster. You know, God is speaking to you. That's when he's near.

He's near when he knocks at the door of your heart. Someday you say, I will seek the Lord. Someday I will make my choice.

Someday, someday I will heed his word and answer the Spirit's voice. Choose now, just now, for the Lord is here and angels your answer wait. Choose now, just now, while the call is clear.

Tomorrow may be too late. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thought. That's interesting.

Let him forsake his lifestyle and let him forsake a filthy thought life. That's what it means. Let him return to the Lord like the prodigal son coming back to his father who's waiting to be gracious.

He will have mercy. I love that expression, to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Notice it's abundant pardon and full pardon.

Who is a pardoning God like our God who has grace so rich and free. Goes on seemingly a change in thought. For my thoughts are not your thoughts.

Neither are my ways your ways. Seems he's switched the subject. He hasn't.

What he's saying here is that man would never have devised the gospel. He never would have thought of the gospel. God's thoughts are way up above ours.

His thoughts are. He's talking about that. The wisdom of God.

In fact, John Paul says in first Corinthians one, the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Man calls the gospel foolishness. It's wiser than men.

When in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of the message preached to save them that believe. The last part of the chapter and just go quickly Tells of how When you get saved, it's like being released from captivity And all the trees are shouting and clapping their hands with joy And the mountains are singing, you know Beautiful language, isn't it? Beautiful language and then the last verses tell the transformed life Your life before you were saved was like a briar bush like a thorn bush and now you're saved.

It's like a cypress Like a cypress tree the wonderful change that comes when Jesus comes into your heart It's really isn't the gospel according to isaiah I just ask you to bow your head in prayer now and while our heads about i'd like to Extend the invitation. Is there somebody here? And you're tired of your sins You want to know your sins forgiven you want to have peace with god And be sure of heaven right there as you're sitting there this morning You can say lord jesus come into my heart will he of course he will him that cometh unto me. I will in no wise cast out Come to him now I wouldn't mind you coming down forward if you want to I don't mind that I wouldn't mind you raising your hand.

You don't have to But if you do trust christ, why don't you come down afterwards and let us talk to you Perhaps help you along in your new life Father, we just thank you for the wonderful word of god We hear your voice speaking In every line and we want to make each faithful saying our own we pray for any here who are Still in their sins another way to hell Pray that by a definite act of faith. They may say jesus. I will trust you Trust you with my soul guilty lost and helpless You can make me whole there's none lord jesus none like thee for the broken-hearted there's none like thee We ask it in jesus name and for his sake amen

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