

Scripture Text

Isaiah 54:1 - 55:13

Context

This section of scripture comes after the fourth and last "Servant Song" found in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. The preceding 2 chapters was a poignant description of the Messiah who dies on behalf of Israel's iniquities so that she can be reconciled to her God. Isaiah 54-55 instead marks a hopeful, reconciliatory and celebratory tone as God graciously invites his adulterous children back to a life giving relationship with him.

Observation and Meaning

- 54:1-3: Identify the two commands in these verses and the reasons for them. What is supernatural in v1? How does this remind us of Abraham and God's promise to him (Gen 12)?
- 54:4-8: In what way is God depicted in these verses? How would this encourage Israel?
- 54:11-17: What are all the marks of this new city that God is establishing for His people?
- 55:1-2: What is the connection between this great invitation and preceding verses? Why is this such a great picture of gospel grace?
- 55:3-5: These verses refer to the Davidic covenant. How has the Servant fulfilled this covenant and what are the blessings that come to us from it?
- 55:6-7: What is the correct response to God's grace as seen in these verses?
- 55:8-11: What do these verses show us about how God works? How do these verses give you great confidence in God's Word?
- 55:12-13: How does this joyful vision move your heart to long for the day of Christ's return?

Big Idea

Only God is faithful to his promises, fulfilling them in as he reverses his people's fortunes, inviting us all to rejoice as we find satisfying life in him.

Connecting to Bible Storyline

This passage underlines God's commitment to his own promises which are for the benefit of his people. He redeems his people and invites them into a life of joy and gladness with him.

Sermon Outline

1. The grace of surprising reversals (Chapter 54)
 - a. A barren woman rejoicing over her growing family
 - b. A lonely woman comforted by her loving husband
 - c. A poor city beautified with costly jewels
2. The grace of glorious invitations (Chapter 55)
 - a. Come, be satisfied!
 - b. Return, be changed!

Applications

- The barren woman (present tense) is commanded to sing now (in the present tense) because of what she will be in the future. How do God's promises to you affect you disposition and emotions now in the present tense? How should they?
- How does God's 'great compassion' and 'everlasting love' (v8) encourage you to not be afraid or ashamed (v4)? How do your feelings of fear or shame reveal a lack of faith in God's everlasting faithfulness and love for you (v8)?
- What are all the promises of Chapter 54? Which one are particularly meaningful to you? Why?
- What does it practically look like for you to 'come' to God, and to 'seek the Lord' now? How does the certainty of God's Word (55:11) give you faith to take up God on his offer?
- When God saves us he puts us into a family, his church. How this week can you help you fellow brothers and sisters at RHC believe these promises?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.