

Without Money and Without Price
Isaiah 55:1 ff

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Jim, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!
I am ashamed of myself, but I am not ashamed of my Lord!

Last Sunday I told you that I uncovered a stack of my sermon notes from thirty to forty years ago. Well I have been studying them to see if there was anything among them worth repeating. After preaching my first sermon of forty years ago for the second time last Sunday I thought this message preached on December 6, 1970 might be worth another try. In the case of preaching my first sermon for a second time I tried to preach it just as I did in 1969. In this case I have used the original outline but enhanced it with what I believe I have learned since 1970. That said; I have not revised any doctrinal statements.

Also, I have not abandoned my series on the Minor Prophets, I just did not have the time to prepare a message on Zephaniah in time for this Sunday.

Something that struck me as interesting is that while I have been stressing for the past several years the importance of seeing the Gospel in the Old Testament that is not a new emphasis for me. My first sermon was in Numbers 21 where God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it upon a pole and anyone who was bitten by the fiery serpents who looked at the serpent would live. The bronze serpent was a symbol of sin. Our Lord Jesus Christ told Nicodemus that the serpent lifted up on a pole was a type of the lifting up of the Son of Man as the Substitute for sin. The sinless Man made to be sin and put upon a tree. That is the Gospel in the OT: Objective faith in our Substitute; there is life in a look at the crucified One!

My OT gospel message today is from Isaiah 55:1,
“Without Money and Without Price.”

Isaiah is, I believe, the most quoted OT book in the NT, at least by the Apostle Paul. Isaiah prophesied about a “voice crying in the wilderness” [40:3] a voice fulfilled in John the Baptist.

Jesus quotes Isaiah in Luke 4:16-20, "...As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from prison...." [42:7], to show that He is Messiah.

Everyone is familiar with Isaiah 53 which is a detailed prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. And we could go on for the rest of our time showing the importance of Isaiah to the Gospel of Christ.

This message on Isaiah 55 was preached in a home in Nashville to a little group of believers, who, in 1970, could not find a Baptist Church that preached the doctrines of grace in Nashville, the "Vatican" of the Southern Baptists.

Every Baptist church that we visited in 1970 preached "decisionism."

A telling thing to me was when we visited one Baptist church and I was carrying my Bible that someone recognized me as a visitor and asked me if I was going to be the preacher that day. No, I answered, why do you ask? Well, you have a Bible so I thought you were a preacher. No one brought a Bible to that church because they did not preach from it!

This little group of believers was providentially brought together by their meeting with a Presbyterian Reformed church in a classroom at Vanderbilt University. None the families knew each other before then. It is quite common for Baptists who cannot find a Baptist church that preaches grace to seek out a reformed Presbyterian church. While we Baptists cannot accept the "baptizing" of unbelievers, at least they preach the gospel of free and sovereign grace.

One Sunday when we were meeting at Vanderbilt and I had some reel tapes of sermons by Henry Mahan and a man asked me if I knew Mahan. I told him that Cora and I had attended a Bible Conference in Ashland, KY and that I had met Brother Mahan. During that "chance" encounter at Vanderbilt with Brother Norbert Ward [deceased], he told me that his family and some other people were going to meet next Sunday in his home and that we were invited to come. The short version of a long story is that Norbert and I were used by God to plant a sovereign grace Baptist church Nashville. The church later bought an old church building and then moved to Franklin, and that church is still there today after 38 years.

In that beginning Norbert and I shared the preaching until we were able to call a pastor in 1972. This message is one that I preached in Norbert's home in 1970.

Back in those early days for me I preached topical sermons. It was not long before I became convinced of the value of preaching expositional. Expository preaching simply takes a passage or a book of the bible and explains what it said to the original hearers or readers and makes application to the present day audience. In expository preaching you range over the entire Bible to compare Scripture with Scripture and show how the NT interprets the OT.

By systematically preaching through the entire Bible the preacher will encounter every doctrinal issue and if he is honest he will not avoid any subject as it comes up in the text being expounded.

The common ground of the OT and the NT is Christ; the Scriptures are about Christ and what He has done for sinners and if you find any other emphasis you have missed the message of the Bible.

Isaiah's name means, "Salvation is of Jehovah."

Psalm 72:12

¹² For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. KJV

It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; if I could only preach Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8

⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ ... KJV

What does it mean to preach Christ?

It means to preach the necessity and sufficiency of Christ alone; faith alone, without the "deeds of the law."

Men need to hear it.

Men need to preach it.

That's all we have to preach!

Young and old alike: If my words are not understood by the young; if they are not understood by the grownups too, then I must be preaching myself and not Christ.

Leading up to Isaiah 55:

Isaiah Chapter One begins with a condemnation of the people of Israel who have forsaken the LORD.

In Chapter 6, Isaiah has a vision of the Lord sitting on His throne and the Apostle John tells us that Isaiah saw Jesus Christ [John 12:41].

Chapter 7 is the promise of the sign: “Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” [Isaiah 7:14] Matthew says it was Jesus.

Chapter 9 is the prophecy of the birth of the Man who is Himself God: “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” [Isaiah 9:6]

And so we could go through Isaiah, pointing out how Christ is the message of Isaiah, a suffering Substitute, the Savior of sinners.

In the more immediate context of Isaiah 55:1:

Isaiah 35 is a picture of wilderness and desert; a picture of the world then and now.

Isaiah 35

35 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

² It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

³ Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

⁶ Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

⁷ And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

⁸ And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

⁹ No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. KJV

Isaiah 40 is a startling announcement of the Gospel.

Isaiah 40:1-9

40 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

² Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

⁶ The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

⁷ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

⁸ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

⁹ O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! KJV

Isaiah 53 prophecies of the suffering and the humiliation of the Christ.

Isaiah 53

53 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

² For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

⁹ And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

KJV

Isaiah has prepared us, His coming is announced; all things are ready, the atonement for sin has been made; now come to the feast! HO!

Isaiah 55

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

³ Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

⁴ Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

⁵ Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

⁶ Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

¹⁰ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

¹¹ So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

¹² For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

KJV

Have you ever really wanted something that money cannot buy?

Of course we think of our health that money has precious little to do with.

But what about something that lasts beyond death?

Does God desire that you seek His salvation?

Did you listen to the text?

Come; buy; hearken; eat; incline your ear; behold; seek; call upon Him.

That sounds like we are invited to respond to something.

There are at least 18 commands in Isaiah 55 addressed to the needy.

What are the terms?

Without money and without price; that is a double emphasis that the mercy of God cannot be bought or earned.

How can you qualify?

Do you have a need that cannot be satisfied by your best efforts?

Where are you invited to come?

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Come to Jesus; “Come unto Me....”

John 7:37

³⁷ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

God’s invitations are to the thirsty and to the heavy laden.

You have no need?

Then you won’t come.

What are you to do?

Come and buy. When you buy something, you own it.

Come and eat.

When you eat something it becomes you; you make it all the more your own.

Why water; why wine; why milk?

Water is for the thirsty; wine revives the spirit; milk is for nourishment.
As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word...

And yet it must be bought and ate “without money and without price.”

Look at three aspects of this fact of the Gospel: It is surprising, it is necessarily free, and it is good news.

A. First the Gospel is surprising! Astonishing! Amazing!

Many have heard the Gospel invitation but they have been told that they have a part to play. They have never been told that it is free! What is it that makes that fact surprising?

It is surprising because of:

1. The condition of man after the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”
Everything must be earned.

It is surprising because of:

2. Man’s relation to God.

Sinful man judges the LORD by our standards, we would never freely forgive!

It is surprising because of:

3. The general rule of men.

What can be obtained for nothing is worth nothing, or stated another way; you don’t get something for nothing. That is generally true in dealing with men.

It is surprising because of:

4. Man’s natural pride.

Man doesn’t like to be a beggar before God.

Man wants to be better than someone else. That is the essence of racism.

Man doesn't like the idea that everyone is saved in the same way.
It is the blood of Christ that takes away the stain and guilt of sin.
The rich man is the same as the thief.
The virtuous woman is the same as the harlot.
The gentleman is the same as the drunk.

Can you take your place with the thief?
Can you take your place with the harlot?
Can you take your place with the drunk?

If you can't you are still full of pride.

It is surprising because:

5. All other religions teach that "grace" is purchased, earned, or merited by deeds.

Make a pilgrimage to Mecca; do penance; count beads; do works of the flesh.

But the surprising thing is the Bible says that Christ is to be obtained without money and without price.

Surprising? Yes, but think of the greatest blessings in life.

What did you pay to be born?

What does sunlight cost you?

What does air to breath cost you?

Did you buy your eyesight?

Did you purchase your hearing?

Can you buy a good night's sleep?

All of the true blessings of life are without money and without price.

B. The Gospel is not only surprising but the second fact that the Gospel must be without money and without price is because the Gospel is necessarily free!

The Gospel is necessarily free:

1. Because of the character of the Giver.

How could God sell His pardons? Simon Magus in Acts 8 offered money for the gift of the Holy Spirit. “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”
Cf. Acts 8:9-25

Can you imagine Jesus asking the lame to give Him of his alms before He healed him? Or an even more crude illustration: “Mary and Martha, how much will you give Me to raise Lazarus, your brother, from the dead?”

Blind man, what will you give Me for your sight?

The blind man who was healed by spit and clay didn't even provide the spittle!

As crude as these examples may seem to you they are exactly what is preached by the preachers who tell you that God will save you IF you do something!

How weary the Lord must be of our self-righteousness.

Do you see why Isaiah said?

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ But we are all like an unclean *thing*,
And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags;

Clearly the gift of God is “without money and without price.”

2. The gift of God is necessarily free because of the **value** of the gift.

Imagine a jewel worth more than all of the wealth in the world. None could afford it; it would have to be given away if the ownership was to change.

God's gift of eternal life was purchased with the blood of Christ.
What is the value of the blood of Christ?

That is why, if you buy it, it must be bought “without money and without price.”

C. The Gospel is surprising and necessarily free and now the **reason** it is Good News.

1. The Gospel is Good News because it enables us to preach it to every creature.

The command of Jesus is to preach the Gospel to every creature “without money and without price.”

No one but God knows who the elect are. Only the elect will hear and believe but that is none of my business and none of yours either. Just preach the Gospel and leave the calling and the results up to God the Holy Spirit.

2. The Gospel is Good News because it excludes all pride.

But there must be some distinction between the saved and the lost.

Yes, there is:

John 3:16

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes [is believing] in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

There is the distinction: Are you believing in Him?

It all comes down to “without money and without price.”

3. The Gospel is Good News because it forbids despair.

You don't need any redeeming traits; indeed you must not claim any. Don't wait until you are “good enough” because no one is good enough.

It is impossible to be too low down or too vile because the Gospel is “without money and without price.”

4. The Gospel is Good News because it inspires gratitude.

What can I do to show my gratitude for so great a salvation?

If Jesus Christ hasn't done anything for you then just sit there and become more and more hardened.

But if Jesus has redeemed you from the power of sin then show Him some fruit.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” Now the context of that statement was how to know false prophets, but it is also how you can know true disciples.

5. The Gospel is Good News because it brings out generous virtues.

Has God forgiven me? Then surely I will be forgiving.

6. The Gospel is Good News because it makes devout worshipers in heaven.

1 Peter 1:12

¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.

The angels and saints in heaven praise God for sinners saved “without money and without price.”

Revelation 5:8-10

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth."

The Gospel is “without money and without price.”

The Gospel is surprising because it is “without money and without price.”

The Gospel is necessarily free because it is “without money and without price.”

The Gospel is Good News because it is “without money and without price.”

Isaiah 55

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

How about you and your sin?

Are you still carrying the guilt of your sin?

Do you want to be free from the burden of sin?

Then come to Christ in faith alone and He will surely save you on His terms “without money and without price.”