



Sermon – December 24, 2017
Isaiah 55

Well good morning. What an exciting weekend around town with College Station High School and Coach Huff, it's Christmas Eve and it actually feels like Christmas Eve outside. That was in doubt earlier in this week. So it's an exciting time. It's an exciting time to celebrate with family and ultimately for us as believers it's an exciting time that we get to celebrate God stepping down out of heaven into a broken and battered world coming after us. So it's a joyful weekend and I'm excited to be able to open the word with you this morning. Chris wanted me to make sure you know tonight, 6:00, Christmas Even service. He will be here bringing the word; bringing the word for us for Christmas. So make sure you are here tonight with your family.

A couple years ago um back in 2009 there was a 60 Minutes interview with Tom Brady. Now if you're not a football fan, you may not know Tom Brady. But Tom Brady is the quarterback for the New England Patriots. At the time of the interview he was a three-time Super Bowl champion. Now he's a five-time. Some consider him the greatest of all time. That's a debate I leave for the sports broadcasters, not for myself. But in an interview with 60 minutes, he, he made this statement. After all of his success, after everything he had achieved, he had a contract, at this point he's made hundreds of millions of dollars, this is what he says. He says:

“Why do I still have, I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there is something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, “Hey man, this is what it is.” I've reached my goal, my dream, my life. But me, I think it's got to be more than this.”

And he says it very much in a searching and a questioning tone and it's really, if you look up the clip, it's a very brief clip, the clip just ends there. The text we're going to look at today is the answer to the question that ultimately is driving that interview with Tom Brady. It's a question that we all deal with. A question that we all look at. What do we do with the ultimate longing in our hearts?

So if you've got your Bible, we're going to go to Isaiah 55. Isaiah 55. As you turn there, there's two things contextually that are important for us to understand as we come to Isaiah. Obviously Isaiah was a prophet. Had one of the longest periods of being a prophet for the nation of Israel. Prophesied in the southern kingdom at a time when Israel was split in two. But two specific things that are important. One, as you go through the book, this chapter of prophecy is actually part of a

larger section; chapters 49 through 55. In this section God is speaking through Isaiah and He's talking about the servant that He is going to send and through this servant, a servant who will be rejected by his people, a servant who will ultimately proclaim salvation to the whole world, a servant who will be crushed and battered, a servant who people will not pay attention to. Through this servant God is going to bring salvation, both to the nation of Israel, but to the entire world. Now we'll come back to why that's important here in a second. The second thing we need to understand is who he's writing to. And there's two primary groups of people who are going to receive Isaiah's prophecy here. One are going to be the men and women of Judah living in Isaiah's day. The people that are there, at that time that Isaiah's prophesying, the nation of Judah, most of that time, is wealthy, they're prosperous. Most people have what they need. They partake at least casually in that which God has called them to in the old covenant. But in their hearts they live out a deep seated rebellion; sin they ignore. The cries of the helpless, they crush their brethren, they engage regularly in idolatry. That's the main group. But because it's prophecy, he's also writing this, everything in Isaiah after chapter 40 is actually written prophetically to the nation of Israel 150 years later when it will be in captivity and exile in Babylon.

Because of the sin of the people of Isaiah's ultimately God is going to move and use Babylon to bring discipline onto the nation of Israel. He sends them into exile and here's what they're going to be left with, the Jews of that day. They're going to be left with the same battle; do I turn from my sin, do I trust in the Lord, a God who has either rejected me or really is not as powerful as I think He is. Because I just watched another nation come in, march into the holy of holies where we dared not tread, and destroy it all. So these are the two groups that are going to be the primary receivers of this message. So here's what Isaiah says. Come! Attention! Some of your Bibles, if you have an older translation, will say "Ho!" This is, if it were a group of Aggies he were speaking to, he would say, "Howdy!" He's getting everyone's attention.

¹"Attention! Everyone who is thirsty, come to the water; you without silver come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without silver and without cost. ²"Why do you spend silver on what is not food, and your wages on what does not satisfy? Listen carefully, listen persistently, diligently to me and eat what is good, and you will enjoy the choicest of foods. ³"Pay attention to me, come to me. Listen, so that you will live;

What you have initially in this passage is you have a God through Isaiah, he issues a summons to anyone who will listen. To anyone who will listen; the verbs all through out there, they're all plural. They go out to everybody. Come! You who has thirst. What thirst? What does thirst and hunger? They're the most basics needs you and I have in life. The most basic longings you and I have in life. If I don't drink water, you will die of dehydration in 10 days. That's max. For many it's shorter. It's the most basic need we have in life is to drink, to thirst, thirst is our body crying out for that which it needs to live. And he says, "You who are thirsty, come. You who doesn't have money to buy the water." Apparently back in that day, water was not free like it is at Six Flags or restaurants. You had to pay for it. You who has no ability to buy that which you need to satisfy. You, you who is in poverty come. And what I am offering to give you is not, is not just a cheap, free good, but it is, come buy wine and milk. It is rich, it is extravagant. And so it is a callout to anyone who will listen. Come. And ultimately coming is not simply coming to the heavenly water hole. But what does he say? He says, "Listen, pay attention, come to me. God is calling people unto Himself. Calling the nation unto Himself." Here's what's key here. I told

you the verbs are all plural here. And they're all imperatives. None of these are suggestions. God is commanding people come unto me. But the objects are all singular. Which means as the Jews would hear this cry from Isaiah, the understanding is the call goes out to everyone, but each must respond on their own. No one can respond for someone else. I can only respond for me. I can't respond for my wife. I can't respond for my parents. I must respond for myself. This summons go out and this summons is not just simply a call. But there's a guarantee to it; a promise to it. Look with me, verse 3:

³“Pay attention, come to me, listen so that you will live life;

Where does this life come from?

I am going to make a permanent covenant with you, according to the faithful kindness shown to David. ⁴Since I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the people for the peoples. ⁵So you will summon a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you will run to you, for the Lord your God, even the Holy One of Israel; has glorified you.”

There's a guarantee here. He makes a statement. He's going to give life. A permanent covenant. A covenant is far greater than just a promise. I used to joke with my students as a youth minister that a covenant, a simple way to put a covenant is a kindergarten pinky promise, right. If you break a pinky promise, at least when I was in kindergarten, I learned it's not quite so harsh anymore. But when I was in kindergarten if you made a pinky promise, it was don't you go back on the promise or you get your pinky pulled off. This is a covenant. It is an agreement, a legally binding agreement entered in by two parties symbolized by an animal cut in half and the party would walk through that animal to basically say, “If I go back on my word, what's been done to this animal will be done to me.” It's far greater than just a promise. It is a guarantee. And so God promises, “You come to Me, I'm going to give you life through an everlasting covenant.” And he mentions the covenant of David, the covenant of David you find in 2 Samuel and God comes to David and David wants to build God a house and God makes this covenant with David, specifically David, now it impacts all of Israel, but the covenant was just with David. And it's that God would take a descendant from David and the descendant of David would be always the king over Israel. And his throne would be an everlasting throne. No one would take them off. This ruler that would come from David's lineage would be supreme in power and no one would conquer Him or His kingdom. This was the guarantee made to David. And so he extends this now to the people of Israel. He says, you come unto me, here's what's going to happen. I will enter into this covenant and time doesn't allow us to elaborate in depth on all that is here in these verses, but basically he says I'm going to give you life through this everlasting covenant. And in this covenant, what I am guaranteeing you, is an everlasting kingdom where you are safe. Where you're in power, you're protected.

Now remember there's two audiences. The audience of Isaiah's day might have scoffed at this because they had a kingdom and they were wealthy and they were well. But the audience that he writes to that's coming a 150 years later, they would hear this and think, “There's no way. We lost our kingdom. We lost our land. The line of David has been broken.” But yet God promises if you come, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to make you, catch what he says, I'm going

to make you a witness. A witness to the nations. So you will summon a nation you do not know and nations will come to you. I'm going to make you a witness. Why? Because I am the Lord your God and I am the One who will glorify Israel. He says, "Come. And this is what I promise." Right now in this room, it's Christmas Eve, you've chosen to be here this morning. The reality is right now in this room there's not a one of us in this room that God is not calling, "Come." Now there's two groups in this room. Just like there were two groups that Isaiah would be writing to; one of his day, one that was to come. There's two groups in this room. There's two groups of people in this room. Most of us, I pray and I hope, we are the group of God's people. We have been saved by grace through faith and we have come to God in salvation and inside of that salvation God never ceases calling us, "Come. Come to Me. Come to Me for life." Go back and look at verse 1. Come! Everyone who is thirsty. The reality is each and every one of us, there is a longing that cannot be quenched by anything other than God. Or I should, let me rephrase properly. By anyone other than God. There is a longing and a hungering. C. S. Lewis writes this:

"Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists."

A baby feels hunger. Well there's such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well there's such a thing as water. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. There is inside each and every one of us in this room today a longing, a stirring, a hungering, there is a thirst, it is a life-threatening, all of our life depends on the satisfaction of this longing. And to every one of us God says, "Come." He says, "Come. I have the water. I have what will satisfy." He says, "I can't, how can I receive this, God, what do I have to pay? What do I have give in?" Well he says, "You who doesn't have the ability, you who does not have the money, you come and buy." And it's an interesting phrase. If I have no money, how do I buy? I buy because I receive what someone else has bought for me. Right? I told you this falls in this line of the suffering servant. We see in Isaiah 53, the suffering servant, the servant is going to suffer and the servant is going to receive the wrath of God. He is going to take on all of the sin of the world, my sin and your sin. He's going to take it all on and He is going to receive the just punishment. He is going to make the payment for our sin. It's on the basis of the suffering servant who has purchased for us. So I come and I take what He has bought on my behalf. And what He bought on my behalf is not something that is cheap, it's a free absolutely. But it is rich. It's delightful. He says, "Come, you enjoy the choicest of foods." There is a satisfaction in each and every one of us in this room that cannot be found outside of Jesus Christ. The call to come, Jesus echoes the same thing in the New Testament, what does He say? I am the bread of life. Anyone who eats of Me will be satisfied. He said, "All who are thirsty come to Me." He says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied." There is a satisfaction in my life that cannot be found anywhere else from Jesus Christ. Yet what did he say? I love the irony of the text. The irony of the text says, you don't have any money, here's the satisfaction, but it says, why do you spend the money that you have on things that don't satisfy? The irony is you and I have money. Now maybe it's physical money, maybe it's other things. We have the ability to seek satisfaction, but what we can seek satisfaction in, what I possess the ability to purchase for satisfaction, can never satisfy me. And the only One who can satisfy me, I lack the ability to be able to earn it or to buy it. So there's two groups in here today. There are those of us who are believers and we need to understand as followers of Christ who've been saved by grace, you and I will never find satisfaction in anything else other than Christ. I will not find satisfaction in my job. I will not find satisfaction in climbing

the ladder of success. I will not find satisfaction in how many gifts I can give my family at Christmas. I will not find satisfaction in “fill in the blank”. Parents, your kids will not find satisfaction in going to the college of their dreams. They will not find satisfaction on playing on one more team that, in adding one more activity that’s so busy is their lives that there is no time to develop holistically a love for Christ and what He has called and purposed them for. There is satisfaction, and we need to understand as a believer that satisfaction can only be found in Christ and hear the call of Christ today to return to Him for that satisfaction.

There’s a second group. It’s likely that there is at least someone in here who you have never met the Lord by grace through faith. It’s maybe the first time you have ever heard the gospel message. Maybe the first time you’ve ever walked in a church. You may have gone to church every day of your life. What you need to understand is there is a longing and a hunger that exists inside of you that there is no amount of anything you can do. You can’t buy it and you can’t earn it. Showing up at church, that’s what the Israelites of Isaiah’s day were doing. They showed up at church every week. They did the right things. They jumped in. But they were not satisfied because they were living apart from God. Your only hope if you’re that person today, your only hope for satisfaction is to take the transaction Jesus Christ has already purchased on your behalf. But you’re going to have to come and you’re going to have to make that transaction with God on Christ’s way. So there is a longing and here’s, here’s and that longing produces a promise, and again, time doesn’t permit to dive in, but when you and I come, the fact is God does satisfy us. He gives us life. He enters into a covenant with us and all of scripture unfolds what this is. And our text will do this in a moment. But the question we are left with is how do I come? How do I come? Look with me, verse 6:

⁶Seek the Lord while He may be found; call to Him while He is near. ⁷Let the wicked one abandon, forsake, completely leave behind His way and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, so that God may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

How do you and I come? How do we respond to God’s calls? God calls out today and says, “Come to Me.” How do we respond? We come to Him on His terms. What are His terms? One: seek. That verb seek is not the idea, it is not the idea of looking for that which is lost. The verb seek means I know where something is, and I go to where it is. God is not hidden. The message of the Gospel is clear and what’s amazing is God comes to us. He issues the call to us. But God will not lower His holy standard. We will have to go to the holy mountain. We will have to seek where He is at. We seek what is known. We call. That word call is to cry out urgently. So if I’m going to go where God is, I’m going to come to God on God’s terms. I’m going to need to understand the desperation of my situation. Seek Him while He may be found; call to Him while He is near. If you are truly hungry and thirsty and if you understand your life depends on it, there is an urgency for those needs being met. There’s an urgency. Here’s the crazy thing about thirst and hunger. When you’re thirsty or you’re hungry your body is craving water and food. But you can ignore it. You can push it. You can stuff it. The longer you ignore it, your body shuts off your awareness that you are thirsty and you’re hungry. And that’s the real danger because you are no longer aware of the fact that your body is starving and desperate for that which it needs to survive. There is an urgency to the appeal, the call of God, that is today we’ve got to come in His timing. It is not, God’s offer is not an eternal offer. Meaning there is a time when His offer is

good. There is a time to come and there will be a day where coming is no longer possible for those who are outside of Christ. It's urgent because His time, the day, as he says in Psalms, the day of salvation is now. But it's also urgent because the longer that you and I stuff the desire to find satisfaction in Him, the more we become unaware of how desperately we are in need. What else? How do we come to Him on His terms? Let the wicked one abandon his way, the sinful one his thoughts, let him return. This is the language of repentance. How do you seek the Lord? How are you going to call out to the Lord? You and I are going to do so in repentance. Repentance literally means, this is a perfect example, return for the Lord. There's two sides to repentance. There is a forsaking, a turning away from that which I understand is wrong and a turning to that which I understand is right. And you have both. This is what repentance is. Repentance is not simply saying, "Yeah, I'm kind of sorry for that." Repentance is when the Holy Spirit convicts my heart of the wrongness and the error, the wickedness of this way of sin. And I say, "You're right, Lord." And I turn to embrace God for who He is. I turn and I come. I seek Him where He is at. I seek, I make transaction on His behalf so this is repentance. And repentance is not a drudgery. Look what it says. Return. Why? So that He may have compassion on him and to our God. For He will freely forgive. Repentance is not a drudgery. If, as a believer, in my life, Martin Luther said the Christian life is one, is a life lived of repentance. I repent certainly from my sin and God saves me in salvation but then I continually live out a posture of repentance in my life. Of forsaking that which is sin and of turning and of looking and of being committed to the Lord. And it's not a drudgery, it's not a beat down, it's not something if we as a believer walk out of this place and sense a conviction in our hearts of an area where we have sought satisfaction and that which is sin and we sense God convicting us and there is a need for repentance. This is not a drudgery. This is a good thing. It is a relieving thing. Because when I do this, when I turn from this, when I come here, what is found is not scorn and mockery from God who says, "You foolhardy child, what are you thinking?" But compassion, mercy, abundant forgiveness. Scripture says He forgives as far as the East is from the West. Well it's crucial that it's East to West and not North to South. Because at some point if you go North long enough, eventually you start going South. But if you set out today walking East, you are never going to stop walking East. East and West are eternally far apart. The abundance, the lavishness, of His pardon, of His forgiveness, there is nothing so great that He cannot forgive. And that He does not desire to forgive. And forgiveness means to cease holding that in opposition over us. We come to the Lord on His terms. You say, "Well I'm not very wicked. I might do some things, but I'm not very wicked." Scripture says, Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I think it's easy sometimes in the church to think, "Well some sins seem very wicked, but some sin not so much."

It's ten years ago earlier this month that my grandmother was murdered at her front door by a hitman who went to the wrong house. Now inevitably I say that, I don't know how to process it ten years later, you don't know how to process it as my audience, there's some who would say, "What? That's too much to lay on everyone in the congregation." Here's the reality of what happened to my grandmother. I don't know of many people in this world who if I told that to who would not say that is the most heinous, wicked thing. It is vile, it is horrible, it is wretched, and we want justice. I don't know many people who wouldn't feel that way. Because murder is wicked. Jesus said that if I hold hatred in my heart for another person, I've not done something like murder, but I have committed murder. Hatred in my heart is every bit as wicked and ugly and heinous and vile as what that man did to my grandmother ten years ago. We are all wicked. We are all sinful. And it's magnified by this; if we've got to turn to repent from wickedness, that this

is how we've got to seek the Lord while He may be found, call to Him while He is near. There is an urgency to this response. The response is to seek. It is to go to where the Lord is at. It is to cry out, realize the desperate, our desperation. I cannot escape my own wickedness. It involves repentance coming knowing what will be found. Why is this necessary? Look what it says in verse 8.

⁸“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways.” ⁹“For as high as the heaven is higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts your thoughts.

What does He say that I have to repent from? My ways and my thoughts. What does He say is higher than my ways or my thoughts? His ways and His thoughts. The reason my sin, the reason my wickedness must be turned from is because He is infinite in His holiness above me. Isaiah chapter 6, Isaiah's already gone through this personally. Isaiah 6; he goes into the temple and he sees the Lord exalted in all His glory and he cries out, “Woe is me.” The literal understanding of that is he wishes the curse of Hell upon himself and his body totally ripped asunder. “Woe is me, I'm a man undone because I'm a man of unclean lips.” God is infinite in His holiness compared to you and I. This is why we must come to Him on His terms because our terms are not holy. Our ways are not holy. As a believer when I come to faith in Christ, when I repent and place my faith in what Christ has done, when I purchase that which, when I receive that which He has purchased, He gives me His holiness. For those that are without Christ, who have never, who are dependent on their own work and their own effort for salvation, what separates them is an infinite chasm between unholy and holy. We've got to repent. We've got to be saved out of our wickedness. It's why no amount of good work can ever make the difference. Because I, in and of myself, I am not holy. I am broken. I'm a sinner. Does it mean worth nothing? Absolutely not. I'm worth something. Jesus saw fit to die on my behalf. And He didn't die to save the trees and the whales. There's an infinite indifference.

So we've got to respond to God on God's terms. Once we respond to God on God's terms, we're going to have to embrace Him for who He is. Now those things go hand in hand. If I'm going to respond to Him on His terms, then naturally I'm going to, in that response, embrace Him for who He is and this text tells us a lot about who He is. One, we've already seen. He is infinitely holier than I. He is infinitely holier than I. And His holiness means He doesn't fail. It's a popular theme in movies today to take heroes that you love and make them old and when they're old all of a sudden have them be grouchy and have them fail when you once thought they wouldn't fail. This is not the case with God. He is infinite in His holiness. He does not fail. He does not change. He is entirely other, His holiness. It is a moral purity. It is a righteousness. It is beautiful. It is terrifying. It is awe-wondering. He is infinite in His holiness. Because He is infinite in His holiness, He's infinite in His goodness. My ways and my thoughts; they can be good sometimes. But they can be not good a lot of times. His ways and His thoughts are not mine. Their infinite goodness; how to you see this in the text? The fact that when I turn, when I turn from my wickedness, what am I met with? Compassion and abundant pardon. And look down. We're going to jump down a little bit further. Look at verse 12. The result of what He gives me says:

¹²“I will go out with joy and I will be led forth in peace;”

God is infinite in His goodness. He gives that which is good. He shows us compassion. God's heart is one of compassion. That word compassion, it is to look upon someone who is suffering and broken and living in squalor and to be so filled with sympathy, that I am moved to act on their behalf and to alleviate their pain and suffering. It's part of the word mercy. God abundantly forgives. He delights to forgive. God is a God who delights to save and if you and I are in this room and you and I are a son and daughter of God by His grace, may we never forget, no matter when we walk through times that are great with the Lord or times where we are struggling and we are wrestling, it delights God because He is infinite in His goodness. It delights Him to work out His salvation in our lives. He is infinite in His goodness and this may sound too good to be true. A few years ago right before I actually, it was the week that Chris called me to pray about coming here to Central. We were at High School camp in Glorietta and I had a student with us who did not know the Lord. He was a non-believer. He came to camp and obviously was praying that God would move in his life and word came to me that he brought, he brought drugs to camp. Obviously that is a and I have a pretty strict, there are certain things if you bust the rules, we're going to send you home. Never had to do that, but that's what the deal was. And so I confronted Him. I said, I said, we'll call him Bob. We'll follow Chris' example. We'll call him Bob. I said, "Bob, this is what I've heard. This is, I've got people telling me this. Here's the deal. You know what the rules are. You know what the consequences are. But if you will respond now in this moment of call, here's what I'm going to do. There's going to be some consequences this week. There's going to be some things that are put on you because of that, but I will not send you home." And he says, "No, Wes." He goes, "All those people are lying. I don't have any of that." "OK." Well whatever you sow, you also reap. And ultimately we caught him. He lied to my face. So I came back and I said, I said, "Bob, I don't understand." I said, "I have to send you home now. I have no other choice. I gave you the opportunity to respond to grace. Why would you reject this?" Here's what he said. "Because I've got to be really honest with you, Wes." He said, "Because what you offered me sounded way too good to actually be true." I think sometimes we can take that same attitude with God. We put our ways and our thoughts on God rather than understanding His ways and His thoughts are infinitely above ours. They're infinite in holiness and also they're infinite in goodness; God is not too good to be true. And what He offers and what He calls every one of us today to come to is not too good to be true. Even when, in responding to His call, it's going to bring in some suffering, some sorrow, God is still not too good to be true. He is satisfying. So He's infinite in His holiness, His ways and thoughts are infinite in their goodness above ours. They're also infinite in their wisdom above ours. Perhaps the hardest thing you and I will have as a believer is the fact that God will not always act how we expect Him to act. Why? Because His ways and His thoughts are above ours. Because both literally and spiritually His perspective is infinitely above what I can see. He sees the whole tapestry of my life, the whole tapestry of history, the whole tapestry of eternity. He is a God who created time and is not bound by time. The past, He is there presently. The future, He is there presently. But He is with us present in this moment. And how He acts will not always line up. There will be times in following Him if you respond to His summons, you come to Him in salvation and then as a believer you daily, continually respond to His call, "Follow Me." He's going to lead you through times that do not make sense. He's going to deny opportunities that you once thought, "Man that would be so good. That would be so great." And then the door slams in you and I's face. And it causes us to think, "Well maybe this God." I mean can you imagine if you're the children of Israel in exile. Maybe my God's really not powerful. What are we doing over here? But God had to bring the people of Israel back to at least a stable point in their relationship with Him to bring a Savior. I can look at my life. I

can see examples where God shut doors that if I had taken that door and everything about this door there was nothing blatantly sinful about this door, but if I had walked through that door, I would not be standing here today and standing here today is exactly where God wants me. But it demands that I trust Him and trust that His ways are higher ways. That His ways are above mine. Everything we celebrate about Christmas backs this up. God did not send a king. He did not send a warrior. He sent a servant who was born in a little side cave of a little tiny house in Bethlehem who when He comes out of the womb is placed in a feeding bin for barnyard animals. He doesn't send a king who everybody loves and adores. But He sends someone who Isaiah 53 says is so average in His appearance that everybody looked past Him. All of God's ways are above ours. Sometimes they make sense to us. Sometimes we don't see it. But if we're going to come to Him on His terms, we've got to embrace Him for who He is. And He is infinite in His holiness. His ways are infinite in their goodness, and they are infinite in their peace.

Two last things real quick as we finish up the text. Look what he says, though. It's not just that His ways are infinitely above, but His ways are infinitely more powerful and they always accomplish. Verse 10:

¹⁰“For the rain and snow fall from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, providing seed to sow and food to eat; ¹¹So My word that comes from My mouth; will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will prosper in what I send it to do.

God's word, when God speaks, what God desires, God has a heart, He has desires, they are holy, good desires, they are wise desires, and He speaks and there is no time when what He says does not happen. The example is the rain. The rain comes down, there is no time when the rain or snow hits the ground where the ground's not wet afterwards. You don't walk outside after a rainstorm and go, “Wow! Look at how dry the ground is.” It's wet. And what happens is the water hits that ground. The water seeps into the ground. The roots of the plants drink up that water and they produce life. So it is with God's word. God's word will never fail. His word is powerful. His word spoke all of creation into being. The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord stands forever. His word is powerful and it will accomplish what He has sent it out to accomplish. So you and I in coming to Him on His terms and embracing Him for who He is, you and I can completely and totally depend upon His word. Even when it doesn't seem to make sense. Because man doesn't live by bread alone. But by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. His word is infinite in its power and it cannot be stopped. And what His word has decreed is that He is victorious and He will set all things right. Look at verse 12.

¹²“For you will indeed go out with joy and be peacefully guided; the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you, and all the trees of the fields will clap their hands. ¹³“Instead of the thorn bush, a cypress will come up, instead of the briar, a myrtle will come up, and this will stand as a monument, a testament for the Lord, an everlasting sign that will not be destroyed.”

Here is the reality. We taste part of His victory today as followers of Christ. We are led out with joy and with peace, with harmony, with wellness. God doesn't lead us in the sickness of sin, but in the wellness of holiness. There's also coming a day where my joy and my peace will never be

touched by sin. He says, "There's coming a day where I will go out, where all of creation will respond to the joy of Christ that lives within me. Instead of the thorn bush and the briar." What's that a picture of? Genesis 3; the ground is cursed and it produces thorns and briars. Instead of the thorns and briars, those things will be vanquished and instead what will come up are beautiful and wonderful trees. There is coming a day where God will set all things right. Guaranteed. It does not matter how much it looks like we're not headed there right now. It is going to happen. There is coming a day where my eyes will behold the Lord and all of His glory and the eternal Jerusalem and the new Jerusalem, the new heaven, the new earth, this is what is coming. His victory is there. His victory is infinite and for all of eternity, I will look around at the new creation that is around me and I will recognize God is exactly who He says He is. And He is supremely satisfying. So today, brothers and sisters, hear His call, hear His call and find satisfaction in Him alone. By coming to Him on His terms by embracing who He is and by resting and feeding solely on His word. We're about to move into a time of invitation. There are some of you in this room who may truly not know the Lord personally. Please do not miss what this text says. You will never be able to buy the satisfaction of eternity by going to church, by doing good deeds, it will never happen. You have a longing in your heart and your being that is only found and satisfied in Jesus Christ. And you can't purchase what He's purchased. But you can come to Him in repentance today and find compassion and abundant pardon. And satisfaction for the thirst and hunger that exists within you. Do not miss this appeal. Today is the day of salvation. So I don't say this to manipulate you, to move you down and aisle, but if the Holy Spirit is convicting your heart that you do not know the Lord, you have never responded to His offer of grace through faith. Today is your day to respond. Not tomorrow. Not tonight. You're not guaranteed either. Today is the day. Now is the time. Hear His call and respond. Pray with me.

Father, thank You so much that You are who You say You are. You are infinite in Your holiness. You are infinitely above us in Your goodness. You are infinitely above us in Your wisdom. Your power is completely and totally supreme. And Lord Your victory will not be stopped. So God I don't know where each and every one in this room is, You do. Holy Spirit may people be obedient today to respond to what You are doing on their hearts.