

Glad Recipients of His Victory

Isaiah 54

Dan Turner

Topic: *Salvation is a celebration when viewed as a gift*

Target: *To create & stimulate glad recipients of His Victory*

Introduction

This week I saw a face I will never forget. The tear-producing, heart-warming sight came Monday, June 6 around 9pm. It happened at the Dayton Christian 2011 Graduation Celebration. The evening was wonderful as Lisa, our family and I listened to teachers honoring students and students honoring teachers. We were moved to worship as graduates led in music. We were reminded of why DC exists and how to pray for the school. Everything was moving along, at least for me, in a pleasingly predictable fashion. That is, until the time came when the graduates each took out a white rose with a personalized card attached and came down into the audience to find those who faithfully poured out their lives in order for the graduates to succeed (parents, grandparents, guardians, and so forth).

I watched as our daughter came down from the platform to us with her glowing smile to honor Lisa and me. As I stood behind Lisa with my arm around her I witnessed something that will never leave my mind. Brittany burrowed deep into her mother's hug. Her face cradled between Lisa's right cheek and shoulder. My eyes rested upon my daughter's face as I watched her demonstrate love and appreciation for our 18 years of life-giving sacrifice. Her parents were honored as her joy in them was expressed.

The point of retelling this experience is simple. Brittany's face of deep joy and appreciation spoke this to me. *Graduation is a celebration when viewed as a gift.*

Allow me to interrupt the moment just for a minute. Suppose my daughter had an entitlement mentality... What would the experience look like? Because it was her right to graduate, because it was her parents duty to provide her with this education... would she have demonstrated such joy in her parents? Or would there have been just the courteous duty of thanks?

Or suppose Brittany carried guilt around her neck like a millstone telling her that now she owes her parents big time like a small child who opened a Christmas gift and turned to say to her parents, "this is so nice...how much do I owe you"?

Transition

Here's my question for this morning: When we receive a sacrificial gift how do we respond?

"thanks, but you did owe me" , "thanks but I now owe you" or what we are about to experience in Isaiah 54.

Today we will look at salvation. Here's the big idea. When you are driving out from the Chapel and your mom asks you, "so what was the message about today, you can say: ***Salvation is a celebration when viewed as a gift.***

What does this mean? How does this pertain to my life and the life of Clearcreek Chapel? Let's ask God to grace us with His word today. <pray>

The LORD; the Lord God almighty, the King of the universe, the Maker and sustainer of all creation (both visible and invisible), the eternal One – self-sustaining, never-changing, all-sufficient glorious One is doing a work at (and in) Clearcreek Chapel. The Lord is moving among us at the Chapel to stir up a heart for each other and for people who do not know Jesus Christ.

We have witnessed fresh initiatives to love one another, serve one another, disciple each other. New ventures in evangelism have set out to reach unconverted people. Fresh power and new confidence are bringing lasting change to members teaching them to take risks and reach people with the gospel.

In response to and desire for more of what God is doing the Elders went away mid-April of '10 to Tennessee to talk about, pray over and plan for the future of the Chapel. This led to refocus and a change of format in Sunday ministries. The Lord blessed the faithful efforts. New ministries and people have brought the Chapel attendance up to 300 or so.

One year later, mid-April of this year the Elders went away for 48 hrs. to talk about, pray over and plan for the future of the Chapel. We are seeing much of God and His grace at the Chapel. We are overwhelmed at His gracious work among us. We desire never to store His goodness and to keep it away from others. We long to be used of the Lord to spread the gospel of the glory of the Blessed Savior to places and people void of grace and truth.

We, as Elders, continue praying over each of you. We, as Elders, continue to challenge each other to become more commissional and intentional in our shepherding of you. We are working on a series that will assist us as a church in creating and casting a vision of the Christian life that reaches more and more people; both locally and globally. This series will be delivered Lord willing the first part of September.

For today and next week the Elders asked me to preach a two part series that talks about growth; both qualitative and quantitative; you know, growing up and going out.

My mind scanned the Bible for days; actually weeks of wondering what to preach. I tried on many passages. Some fit but were tight. Some hung loose on the topic of growth/expansion. I then landed on two chapters that were to my heart like a fertile garden pushing out constant fruit; or like a city whose streets were clean of drugs and thugs, whose walls were high and protective, whose citizens weren't judged by the color of their skin or the bank account they possessed, who were unified and happy and helpful and loving and considerate and countless.

Oh, beloved, these two chapters out of Isaiah that we will hear (one today and one next week) are fuel to our flame of love and a compass for our journey of faith together. I'm happy to preach Isaiah 54 today and Isaiah 55 next week.

My aim in this message is to see the creation (conversion of unbelievers) and stimulation (transformation of believers) of glad recipients of His victory.

So the first part of this message we will look at "glad recipients" – what do they look like? What commands are they to obey? How are Christ's accomplishments changing their lives? The second part of

the message we will look at “His Victory” – what is it? What are the promises? What does salvation look like?

So let’s begin by looking at what Glad Recipients of His Victory do – how they respond.

Glad Recipients

Glad recipients of His accomplishments respond in a certain way according to Isaiah 54. With Bibles open to Isaiah 54 we will pick up Isaiah’s prophecy in verse one and read down to verse 4.

[54:1] “**Sing**, O barren one, who did not bear;

break forth into singing and cry aloud,
you who have not been in labor!

For the children of the desolate one will be more

than the children of her who is married,” says the LORD.

[2] “Enlarge the place of your tent,

and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;

do not hold back; lengthen your cords

and strengthen your stakes.

[3] For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left,

and your offspring will possess the nations

and will people the desolate cities.

[4] “**Fear not**, for you will not be ashamed;

be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;

for you will forget the shame of your youth,

and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

(Isaiah 54:1-4 ESV)

To help locate us in Isaiah’s prophecy, we need to understand how we got here.

This book we know as *Isaiah* is a vision from God to a man named Isaiah back in 740bc. We see in 1:4 the nation of Israel as “a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, children who deal corruptly. They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel” (1:4)

The Lord’s judgment falls hard on sin. In terrifying words we read, “rebels and sinners shall be broken together and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed”. (1:28).

And so, in 722bc the northern kingdom known as Israel was crushed by the armies of Assyria. The promise was if the southern kingdom known as Judah would not repent and learn from their kinsman in the north they too would experience the same fate.

This happened in 586bc when the nation of Babylon swept in and destroyed Jerusalem and led the majority of Jews off to a foreign land.

Did all this judgment mean that there is no hope for God's people? A question for us would be the same. Is there any hope for each of us as we think about our lives and notice unfaithfulness?

In one sense this whole book of Isaiah can be summed up by noticing 1:21-26 and how the unfaithful city becomes the faithful city. How does God change His people from unrighteous to righteous and provide them with much joy, peace and promising future? And who is this mysterious Servant introduced in chapter 42 and reappears in later chapters, one who serves God faithfully and changes the rebellious into happy obedient children? Flip on over to chapter 54 and notice verse one.

Glad recipients of His victory according to verse one...

1. **Sing** over what Jesus has accomplished (1).

First thing we notice from God's people who have received God's gift of salvation is that they sing. Here in verse one we come to the first commandment: SING. In v1 the writer so wants to highlight this response that he says it 3x in different ways. "Sing", "break forth into singing" "cry aloud". These words piled up upon each other stress the energy of this joy = shouts of gladness is the idea. They are happy as they enjoy something for which they have done nothing. Summary word for this response is JOY.

Glad recipients of His victory according to verses 2-3...

1. **Share** with others what Jesus has accomplished (2-3).

The second command God's people are to obey as a result of something he has done is found in v2-3. With the completion of the Servant's work, a miracle family is created. Children are being born in a way that can only be explained as a miracle. And this miracle family is expanding so rapidly that accommodations are needed. Making space, room lodging are ideas seen in these verses. These people were not to keep to themselves. God was up to something spectacular. They were to share with others what God gave them. These verses are hinting at more than just the restoration of the Jews in 536bc. Something unimaginable is insinuated in these verses. Do not hold back in your outgoing, ingathering of others. Summary word for this response is GENEROSITY

Glad recipients of His victory according to verse 4...

2. **Fear not** the future because of what Jesus has accomplished (4).

The last command God's people are to obey in this chapter is found in verse 4. As a result of God's victory His people were to "fear not the future". Somehow, the Lord's provision took away sin and shame and disgrace to the extent that glad recipients of his gift were to respond in the opposite of fear. No dread, no anxiety, no distress, no panic. Something happened for which His people did nothing that took away shame. Summary word for this response can be ASSURANCE

So there we have it. Glad recipients of His victory respond in three ways (according to this chapter). They make music. They make room. They fear not the future. This summary is to be the summary of Clearcreek Chapel. We are to be known as this type of people. But if you are like me you lose joy, are stingy and fret over whether or not God accepts you.

To experience these 3 obedient responses we need to be (re)awakened by the wonder of salvation. We need to see how Isaiah communicates what the suffering servant accomplished in chapter 53. The

breathhtaking salvation purchased for us by the servant (53) can be seen as we look at two pictures; the miracle family (1-10) and the majestic city (11-17).

To see Clearcreek Chapel respond to such a great salvation in joy, generosity and assurance first look with me at the miracle family.

The Miracle Family

v1-10

Jerusalem addressed as a woman who cannot have children and who is separated from her husband is given hope. She is assured that she will have children and that she will reunite with her husband.

A sprawling family whose possession becomes the world

v 1-3

In verses 1-3 we see this union between the former barren woman and the faithful husband will called her back and now produces a sprawling family whose possession become the entire world. Oh my, where does one begin with this?

Barrenness is a picture in the Bible of hopelessness and lifelessness; a place in which God's blessings are absent. The image here of a barren wife is one of desolation and rejection. Examples include Sarah (Abraham's wife Gen.11:30), Rebekah (Isaac's wife Gen.25:21), and Rachel (Jacob's wife Gen.29:31). Here in v.1-3 we get one of the most sweeping scenes of God's plan for mankind. We notice in Gen.1:28 that God intends to glorify Himself in His people who reflect His image and who spread out throughout the world. We see this grand theme in Gen.12 and how God chose Abraham to continue that commission; namely to be blessed by God and be a blessing to world. Over and over again we see this theme/promise. How will it be fulfilled so that God's people will look like a sprawling family whose possession becomes the entire world?

Look back and listen to chapter 53 as I read v4-6, 10 and a prophecy of the Suffering Servant who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4] Surely he has borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,

smitten by God, and afflicted.

[5] But he was wounded for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

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 has laid on him

the iniquity of us all.

[10] Yet it was the [pleasure] of the LORD to crush him;

he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

(Isaiah 53:4-6, 10 ESV)

(Preach the gospel tying 53:10 to 54:1 = offspring and children)

The only explanation for such population is the gospel. There are countless churches who try to grow by way of human strategies – marketing, moralizing, psychologizing – different programs and steps and tactics to see change and growth.

Beloved, when we can explain growth and change in any other way but miraculous we are in danger of striving against God. We must see that His victory in Christ at the cross is our victory. As we believe this we behave like this. We are joyful. We are upward looking and outward reaching. We are happy with news from the missionaries of the furthering of the gospel and the conversion of the lost. We participate through prayer. We participate through serving people the gospel. How can any congregation claim to enjoy the gospel and have the Spirit without having the Spirit of this mission?

A restored marriage whose covenant delivers peace

v 4-10

The second facet of the picture of this miracle family is seen in v4-10. Here we witness Israel as a rejected and faithless wife restored now to her unrivaled Husband whose covenant delivers peace. This word picture is another snapshot of salvation we see throughout the Bible. It depicts God's people as an adulteress seeking pleasure outside the covenant vows of marriage.

Why is the church to be shameless and unafraid and confident and assured? Listen as I read v4-10.

“Fear not, for you will not be ashamed;

be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced;

for you will forget the shame of your youth,

and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

[5] For your Maker is your husband,

the LORD of hosts is his name;

and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,

the God of the whole earth he is called.

[6] For the LORD has called you

like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit,

like a wife of youth when she is cast off,

says your God.

[7] For a brief moment I deserted you,

but with great compassion I will gather you.

[8] In overflowing anger for a moment

I hid my face from you,

but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,”

says the LORD, your Redeemer.

[9] “This is like the days of Noah to me:

as I swore that the waters of Noah

should no more go over the earth,

so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you,

and will not rebuke you.

[10] For the mountains may depart

and the hills be removed,

but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,

and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,”

says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

(Isaiah 54:4-10 ESV)

Your maker (of all your salvation, of all your forgiveness, of all your future days of joy that will never end) – your maker is your husband. He is the LORD of everything. He is the God of all the earth. He is your redeemer who rescued you from your sin, from Satan, from God’s own righteous anger. He saved you from hell. To doubt this is to distrust the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth.

In this passage explanation after explanation & promise after promise are stacked up to give us strength and hope and assurance of salvation. What God did in the suffering servant Jesus Christ on the cross is like the days of Noah. He rescued us from judgment, reconciled us through Jesus and promises us unending peace.

Oh, guilt clips the wings of worship. And the LORD is to be worshipped. Shame-free living for His glory is the picture here.

For the Chapel to enjoy the spontaneous and supernatural response to salvation in joy, generosity and assurance we not only need to see this salvation as a miracle family. We need to view salvation as The Majestic City. And this is found in v11-17.

Picking up in v.11 we read:

[11] “O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted,
 behold, I will set your stones in antimony,
 and lay your foundations with sapphires.

[12] I will make your pinnacles of agate,
 your gates of carbuncles,
 and all your wall of precious stones.

[13] All your children shall be taught by the LORD,
 and great shall be the peace of your children.

[14] In righteousness you shall be established;
 you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;
 and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

[15] If anyone stirs up strife,
 it is not from me;
whoever stirs up strife with you
 shall fall because of you.

[16] Behold, I have created the smith
 who blows the fire of coals
 and produces a weapon for its purpose.

I have also created the ravager to destroy;

[17] no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed,
 and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD
 and their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”

(Isaiah 54:11-17 ESV)

The Majestic City

v11-17

Isaiah changes his word picture starting in v.11. He now calls God’s people an afflicted and storm-tossed place. He holds out to them the promise of restoration that looks like a majestic city. This afflicted and storm-tossed status was not primarily due to the armies of Assyria or Babylonia or Medes and Persians or Roman army. Rather, it was due to God’s covenant punishment and discipline. This promised salvation due to the suffering servant of chapter 53 created a beautiful and secure city. God’s wrath is taken away. God’s righteousness is here to stay. This is where the dwelling place of God is found. This is the majestic city!

A beautiful city whose foundation is righteousness

v11-14

The place and people of v.11-13 are breathtaking. The imagery here is none other than God's glorious temple-city – a place of perfect peace, a place of no more threat, a place of budding beauty that never fades or fails – a place of love. In this perfect place there are perfected people living together – people who sin no longer, who want to be around each other, people without tears of sorrow, people with unaffected joy forever – people for whom Christ died. God's people in God's place under God's rule gladly living forevermore!

A secure city whose status is righteousness

v15-17

Isaiah wants his readers to see one last quality of the majestic city. This is found in v.15-17. Notice how secure this city is. No more strife. No more threats. God's sovereignty over all evil will say to wickedness, "this far and no more". Safety is found in the majestic city. And the inheritance of the servants of the Lord is righteousness. Oh, to know without a doubt that our righteousness is given to us by faith and not worked for as a merit. Peace, danger-free; the ceasefire has happened because Jesus took the fire on our behalf.

Conclusion

So my concluding remarks circle back around to the starting point of this message.

Is salvation a celebration for you? Do you find your responses to the gospel like the ones we have seen today?

1. **Sing** over what Jesus has accomplished (1).
 - Are you joyful? Do you make music over your salvation? Does the sunrise of the gospel awaken song from your heart?
2. **Share** with others what Jesus has accomplished (2-3).
 - Are you generous? Do you make room for new people in your heart, home, in the Chapel?
3. **Fear not** the future because of what Jesus has accomplished (4-17).
 - Are you assured? Do you have the peace of the gospel that calms your heart when accused ASSURANCE

May the Chapel be known as a place and a people who are joyful, generous and not afraid of the future. Salvation is a celebration when viewed as a gift. Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, was raised from the dead for our justification and will come again for our glorification. This, beloved is our salvation. This, beloved, is our celebration.