

Abundant Pardon

“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**. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

Isaiah 55:7-8

Preparatory Reading: Nehemiah 9:1-25; Isaiah 40:1-11; Acts 13:14-39; Romans 15:5-21.

Introduction:

1. We have visited Isaiah 55 many times before ... for repentance, forgiveness, its space of time, etc.
2. We want to consider the forensic and legal facet of salvation called pardon in the Bible. Though it may simply mean forgiveness, it was chosen by the Holy Spirit for its legal implications and sense.
3. We could emphasize the *need* for pardon, the *phases* of pardon, or other aspects – but let us apply ourselves to fully grasp the significance of *abundant* pardon, and how that should affect our lives.
4. We seek to glorify God and glory in God as our Saviour and show more Christ-likeness to others.
5. There is no occurrence of *pardon* in the New Testament, yet the concept is glorified there by virtue of unblameable and unreprouvable (Col 1:22), without charge (Rom 8:33), faultless (Jude 1:24), etc.
6. We have an opportunity in our church for worship of God, delight in Him, and pleasure in mercy.
7. This sermon is not to correct any problem in showing mercy, for this church is the most merciful!
8. This sermon is to take advantage of an opportunity and exploit it for the glory of God and our souls!
9. To aim for God’s higher ground, you must seek and wait for opportunities for mercy and seize them!
10. Offences by others, private and public, which occur frequently, are opportunities for great godliness!

The Text

- A. The verses in this chapter we want to focus on and absorb deep in our souls are verses 6-9.
- B. Though the point is valuable, we are not emphasizing the *space of time to repent* in verse 6.
- C. Though the point is valuable, we are not emphasizing the nature of *godly repentance* in 7.
- D. Though the point is valuable, we are not emphasizing the implied *forgiveness* of verse 7.
- E. We want to emphasize God our Father’s *abundant pardon* and *delight in mercy* for sinners.
- F. We want to emphasize *His thoughts and ways* in abundantly pardoning are infinitely better than our thoughts and ways in forgiving – He forgives infinitely better and quicker than we!
- G. Appreciate our text for its position right in the middle of a glorious prophecy of gospel blessings upon the church, as our brother Paul quoted Isaiah 55:3 in Acts 13:34.

The Context

- A. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers free wine and milk to thirsty and hungry souls (**55:1**).
 1. “Ho” is an exclamation to attract attention. Does the Holy Spirit have your attention?
 2. Are you thirsty in your soul? Do you feel bored, confused, discontented, dried up, empty, frustrated, lonely, missing out, perplexed, sad, unfulfilled, and wasted?
 3. The God of heaven offers sweet refreshment and nourishment for you at no cost at all.
 4. The waters here are to be understood spiritually of the Spirit of God (John 7:37-39).
 5. If you cannot appreciate this water, it is called the oil of gladness elsewhere (Heb 1:9).
 6. Wine and milk are the nutritious and luxurious pleasures of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- B. Why would anyone ignore satisfying delights for frustrating fare that does not satisfy (**55:2**)?
 1. You put great expense and effort into finding happiness in foolish delusions of this world, but those things have already been proven by Solomon to be vanity and vexation of spirit.
 2. The most stupid choice you can make tonight is to go home looking for joy in this world.

3. If you will hear God calling, there is goodness and a delightful life of fatness available.
 4. But this listening cannot be casual, lazy, or partial – it must be very diligent (Luke 8:18).
- C. If you hear God's offer, believe Him, and seek Him; He will show you His covenant (**55:3**).
1. The satisfying life of walking with God depends on hearing and believing the gospel.
 2. Our Lord Jesus, the true shepherd of the sheep, came to bring abundant life (John 10:10).
 3. The everlasting covenant and sure mercies of David are Jesus Christ – the seed of David.
 4. God does not make this covenant because of faith, but reveals it to faith (Rom 1:15-16).
- D. The person of Jesus Christ is the greatest gift and consolation a man could ever want (**55:4**).
1. Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness of God and glory of His people (Rev 3:14; 19:11).
 2. Do you love authority, glory, leaders, and power? He is King of kings and Lord of lords!
 3. This glorious Son that God gave to the Gentiles has a name called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6)!
 4. Some Greeks had the right attitude about Jesus Christ at a feast in Israel (John 12:20-21).
 5. And Mary chose the right thing to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear Him (Luke 10:38-42).
- E. The Lord Christ would call Gentiles among the nations to Himself by God's blessing (**55:5**).
1. Here is the seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, with blessings for all nations (Gen 22:17-18).
 2. He is no longer in a manger or hanging on a cross; He is sitting at the right hand of God.
 3. Jesus Christ is the glorious gift of God to the Gentiles (Rom 15:8-13, 18-21; 16:25-27).
 4. God highly exalted Jesus for the church (Eph 1:19-23; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:5-9; 2:9-13).
 5. Paul appealed to Gentiles to exchange carnal things for Israel's spiritual (Rom 15:27).
- F. God has ordained the water cycle to provide nourishment that results in our food (**55:10**).
1. This is the first half of a simile, where God's blessing on His word is compared to nature.
 2. While rain and snow do return to heaven eventually, they accomplish a purpose on earth.
 3. Without a water cycle, we could not eat; water causes things to happen resulting in food.
 4. Water is the certain ingredient to bring about buds, seeds, and eventually bread for food.
- G. God's promise of spiritual blessings, including mercy and abundant pardon, are sure (**55:11**).
1. The gospel tidings of good news have already been referred to in the context (55:3-7).
 2. Everything promised in the context about Messiah and His kingdom will come to pass.
 3. The point is this: God's words are not empty words; they shall be fulfilled (Lu 21:33).
 4. God makes no empty or vain promises when He declares His intentions and blessings.
 5. The following verses indicate that it is His kingdom blessing that is the idea at this point.
 6. The intent of the prophet is not to describe the converting effect of proper preaching.
 7. This is not a soteriological text about the effectual call by Spirit-sanctified preaching.
- H. The prophet described the joyful blessing of the New Testament by O.T. symbols (**55:12**).
1. The peaceful prosperity and happy situation of God's people had been indicated (55:4-5).
 2. By glorious metaphorical language describing blessedness, the gospel era is prophesied.
 3. Though Judah surely needed national and political deliverance, this is spiritual (55:4-5).
 4. Though they were recovered from Babylon, yet there was a greater fulfillment in Christ.
- I. The prophet described the happy situation of the church as a perpetual kingdom (**55:13**).
1. Using plant metaphors, He promised peaceful prosperity rather than painful difficulties.
 2. The church of Jesus Christ is for His name ... a kingdom never to be moved (Heb 12:28).
 3. The church is the body of Jesus Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Ep 1:23).

What is a pardon?

- A. **Pardon.** To remit the penalty of (an offence); to pass over (an offence or offender) without punishment or blame; to forgive. *Pardon* is a more formal term than *forgive*, being that used in legal language; also often in theology. (OED).
- B. A pardon is the *forensic and legal* act of declaring a guilty party free from their crimes and innocent before the law by an executive decree or order by a sovereign with such authority.
- C. Presidential or gubernatorial pardons are decrees that free convicted criminals from charges.
- D. In spite of horrible offences, failed court attempts, or legal problems, a pardon erases crimes.
- E. President Bill Clinton pardoned 456 persons, 140 of them in his last hours on Jan 20, 2001.
- F. President Bush pardoned 191 who served full sentences, and he commuted 9 other sentences.
- G. A case going back to court is no sure relief or pleasant prospect ... but a pardon certainly is!
- H. Whether a pardon is actively received or not, it is a pardon, lifting charges and freeing you.
- I. There are pardons given in our nation after a person is dead, as in the case of Robert E. Lee, who was pardoned for his crime of treason by President Gerald R. Ford on June 13, 1975.
- J. A pardon is free, full, complete, final, clearing, acquitting, remitting, and freeing. Glory!
- K. We say, "Pardon me," when we are asking to be forgiven or excused for improper actions.

What is our pardon?

- A. It is God's complete and free forgiveness of our sins and declaration that we are freed from all charges and are now without blame in His sight by the satisfaction of Jesus Christ's death.
- B. Our God cannot simply pardon, acquit, or clear without satisfaction (Exodus 34:7; Nah 1:3).
- C. It is based in God's faithfulness to His justice through Christ's death (I Jn 1:9; Rom 3:24-26).
- D. There is none in heaven or earth that can charge or condemn us with anything (Ro 8:31-34).
- E. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance – Jesus pardons sinners (I Tim 1:15)!
- F. Men may pay for pardons on earth; our sovereign God Himself paid for our pardon! Glory!
- G. And what price did He pay to grant a pardon to His enemies? The life of His beloved Son!
- H. We cannot pardon ourselves or pay a ransom for pardon (Job 9:30-31; Jer 2:22; Ps 49:7-9).

What is abundant pardon?

- A. Do not casually read the following verses. Devour them, meditate on them, and then rejoice!
- B. To illustrate God's thoughts and ways of pardon and forgiveness being higher than ours, consider gross and repeated infidelity in marriage by a whorish woman (Jer 3:1; Ezek 16:60).
- C. God *comforted* Israel through John with great news of pardon by Jesus, through whom she received *double for her sins*; and all flesh, us Gentiles, saw this glorious thing (Is 40:1-11).
- D. There is no God like our God, who pardons the iniquities of His people through His *delight in mercy*, among other glorious expressions of His forgiveness of sins (Micah 7:18-20).
- E. Our God is *ready to pardon* and of *great kindness*, among other wonderful expressions of forgiveness, like the father running to meet his returning prodigal son (Neh 9:17; Luk 15:20).
- F. Our God has *manifold mercies* (many and varied), in spite of great offences (Neh 9:18-25).
- G. When God pardons, there are no sins remaining, and *no sins can be found* (Jeremiah 50:20).
- H. When God pardons, He *rejoices with joy, rests in His love, and joys with singing* (Zep 3:17).
- I. Our God is of *great kindness*, when we go to Him for pardon and blessing (Joel 2:12-14).
- J. God pardons in order to *get Himself a name* for his great mercy and goodness (Jer 33:8-9).
- K. God proves rightness by *freely loving* the repentant; wise men will grasp it (Hosea 14:1-11).
- L. He rejoices over pardoned people like a *bridegroom with his bride* (Is 62:1-5). Beulah land!
- M. It is important to know that God calls chastening and judgment His *strange work* (Is 28:21)!

- N. It is helpful to know God takes *no pleasure in the death* of sinning children (Ezekiel 18:32)!
- O. He would rather pardon and bless His children; He does *not afflict willingly* (Lam 3:31-33).
- P. God is able to forgive and pardon our black sins to make us *whiter than snow* (Psalm 51:7-9).
- Q. It is so good that God calls us to come and reason with Him about His virtues (Isaiah 1:18).
- R. It is mercy and truth meeting, righteousness and peace kissing (Psalm 85:10; John 1:14-17).
- S. It is publicly rebuking a religious Pharisee while pardoning a sinful woman (Luke 7:36-51)!
- T. See a condemned thief! He was gloriously pardoned just before execution (Luke 23:42-43)!
- U. How much did David argue and suffer to be pardoned for his great crimes (II Sam 12:13)?!
- V. Our great God even pardoned the wicked King Ahab for his many sins (I Kings 21:27-29).
- W. Our great God even pardoned the wicked King Manasseh for his sins (II Chron 33:11-13).
- X. God is full of compassion and does not stir all His anger against sinning children (Ps 78:38).
- Y. God pardons sins by plentiful mercy and infinite distance in two directions (Psalm 103:8-12).

How should it affect us toward God?

- A. Do not casually read the following verses. Devour them, muse on them, and then do them!
- B. How can you not run in guilt to such a forgiving Father and loving Saviour (Matt 11:28-30)!
- C. God's abundant pardon should lead us to boldly, confidently confess our sins for forgiveness.
- D. It should give us confidence with God for holy reasons, as it did Hezekiah (II Chr 30:18-20).
- E. It should give us confidence with God for holy reasons, as it did Naaman (II Kings 5:18-19).
- F. When Moses asked to see Jehovah's glory, God declared His mercy, grace, and forgiveness, which Moses later used in holy reasoning with God (Ex 33:12-23; 34:5-9; Num 14:17-19).
- G. We should pray for God to pardon us practically, and we should believe that He does with faithfulness, in justice, and joyfully (Ex 34:9; Num 14:19-21; Ps 25:11; Isaiah 55:7; Jer 5:1)!
- H. Disbelief is the greatest culprit, because we believe God must be like us, not very forgiving.
- I. Disbelief is the greatest culprit, but He told us that His thoughts of pardon are far above ours.
- J. Your thoughts, which can destroy you, by doubting God's pardon of sins, will torment – so take up the shield of faith by believing what is written above and quench Satan's fiery darts!
- K. Jesus said those who are forgiven the most and understand it will love most (Luke 7:36-50).

How should it affect us toward others?

- A. Do not casually read the following verses. Devour them, muse on them, and then do them!
- B. First, it should cause us to love the gospel of grace! Second, it should cause us to love mercy!
- C. What should a group of pardoned criminals act like? To the One pardoning? To offenders?
- D. God's abundant pardon of us should lead us to cheerfully, fully, and quickly forgive others.
- E. What is the good thing our God requires of us? He wants us to love mercy (Micah 6:6-8)!
- F. If men rejoice over one sheep and women a coin, how much more one sinner (Luke 15:3-10)!
- G. If angels, who have not been pardoned, rejoice in heaven, how much more we (Luk 15:7,10)?
- H. God pardoned you 10,000 talents! How can you possibly seek 100 pence (Matt 18:21-35)!
- I. Mercy rejoices against judgment, and so we should be much more excited by it (James 2:13).
- J. We must hate the spirit of the prodigal's brother, which was in the Pharisees, and which is in us, and which gave cause for the story of the prodigal (Lu 15:1-2,25-32). Let us make merry!
- K. Forgiving one another is our light duty, as we have been forgiven (Ep 4:31-32; Col 3:12-13).
- L. We should show mercy with cheerfulness – no begrudging at all (Romans 12:8; II Cor 9:7).
- M. If you want God's mercy to you, then choose to show it when possible (Ps 18:25; Matt 5:7).
- N. We love quick and thorough forgiveness; but God is quickest, and we should be quicker!
- O. Pardon is passing over transgressions, which is a glory to the man able to do it (Prov 19:11).

- P. It is a terrible shame that many live in anger, bitterness, envy, strife, and revenge, when abundantly pardoning others as they have been pardoned would bring them peace and joy.
- Q. Jesus said to a man with palsy, “Sons, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mat 9:2).
- R. Pride and revenge want to get a pound of flesh, but mercy and pardon want to pamper flesh!
- S. Like the prodigal’s brother, some begrudge a foolish brother’s forgiveness and/or reception.
- T. You do not have to wait for a person to beg you ... just rejoice in mercy and pardon them!
- U. A great enemy of forgiving others is self-righteousness, which is an assumption of arrogance.
- V. A great enemy of forgiving others is pride, for it will not restore others to be equal in value.

Conclusion:

1. The happiest people, families, and churches are those who fully pardon (forgive) each other like God!
2. Do not protect yourself by holding forgiveness or looking for suffering! God protects! God punishes!
3. We have an opportunity in our church for the worship of God, delight in Him, and pleasure in mercy.
4. What a glorious obligation in Israel to feast for seven days with everyone rejoicing (Deut 16:10-15)!
5. We must teach such things to our children and grandchildren for God’s glory and their spiritual profit.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “Facets of Salvation,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/facets-of-salvation.pdf>.
2. The sermon, “10,000 Talents!” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/ten-thousand-talents.pdf>.
3. The sermon, “Forgiveness of Sins,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/forgiveness-of-sins-2.pdf>.
4. The sermon, “Jesus Came for Sinners,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/jesus-came-for-sinners.pdf>.
5. The sermon, “Jesus Loves Losers,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/jesus-loves-losers.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, “Repentance,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/repentance.pdf>.
7. The sermon outline, “Starting Over,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/starting-over.pdf>.
8. The sermon, “While He May Be Found,” ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/while-he-may-be-found.pdf>.