



Sermon Notes 4/14/24

## “Mega Changes”

**What mega changes does God offer to us?**

1. We can be God’s growing \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 54:1-3

1 Peter 2:9-10

Luke 24:46-48

2. We can be God’s beloved \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 54:5-8

Ephesians 5:25-27

3. We can be God’s glorious \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 54:11-14

Revelation 21:2-4

4. We can be God’s victorious \_\_\_\_\_.

Isaiah 54:17

Romans 8:37-39

Romans 16:19-20



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 49: April 14-21

Isaiah 54

After the painful prophecies of the suffering Servant in chapter 53, Isaiah predicts wonderful changes for God's people in chapter 54. Because God's Servant "bore the sin of many" (Is. 53:12), God's people would be richly blessed. Isaiah paints three pictures of incredible transformations to illustrate the changes God wanted for His people. In verses 1-3, he describes an infertile woman who desperately wants a child, suddenly blessed with many children. In verses 4-10, he describes an unfaithful wife, rejected, and abandoned, suddenly redeemed, forgiven, and brought back into a loving relationship with her husband. Then, in verses 11-17, Isaiah describes an old city ravaged by storms and falling apart, suddenly rebuilt with precious stones, and made invincible to the attacks of her enemies.

This passage is an example of a dual fulfillment prophecy. First, Isaiah was giving hope to those Jews who would see the fall of Jerusalem and be taken into captivity by the Babylonians. They needed to know that this was God's plan to transform them. After their captivity, the Jews would return and rebuild Jerusalem free from the idolatry of their past. Second, and more important for us, Isaiah was predicting the new covenant of Christianity and the eternal blessings we can have in Christ. Paul makes this clear when he quotes Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27.

## Read Isaiah 54

1. What did God command the barren woman to do in verse 1? Why?

Ray Ortlund writes,

Isaiah looks at the sin-bearing servant of the Lord and has one thing to say to us: "Break forth into singing and cry aloud" (54:1). In other words, "Let joyful song explode out of you!" We resist that. Isaiah 54:1 may be one of the most disobeyed commands in the Bible. Our exaggerated sense of decorum is the last bastion of pride holding out against the gospel. Some churches make it a virtue. But God doesn't. In his exuberance he's creating a new world of boisterous happiness through Christ. (Ortlund, 363)

2. How did Paul use this verse when he quoted it in Galatians 4:27?

3. What did God command the barren woman to do in verse 2? Why?
4. How did God describe the growth of His people in verse 3? (See also Is. 49:19-22)

Terry Briley notes,

Isaiah personifies Zion the ruined city as a “bereaved and barren” woman who suddenly finds herself surrounded by a multitude of children (49:14ff.). God has routinely worked through barren women and reversed their circumstances to reveal his power (cf. Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah). (Briley, 229)

5. What human relationship did Isaiah use to illustrate the redemption of God’s people? (54:4-7)

Ortlund observes,

A wife reconciled to her husband is Isaiah’s second image of miraculous grace. The striking thing is what the text doesn’t say. The faithful city had sunk to the level of a whore (Isaiah 1:21). But now God looks beyond his people’s guilt. He doesn’t even talk about it. With deep sympathy, he emphasizes not his offended honor but their wounded feelings... God is saying, “Yes, I was angry. And I had a right to be. But my servant has taken your guilt away. Believe me that I have cleaned your slate so entirely, you will forget all your heartache under a deluge of my felt love forever.” (Ortlund, 366)

6. How is God described in verse 5?
7. Why would God call His people back into a loving relationship with Him? (54:6-8)

God calls His people back to Him not because of anything they have done but because of who He is. Isaiah reminds us that God is our Redeemer (גאל, *gaal*) in verses 5 and 8. He tells us about the deep compassion (רחם, *rakham*) of God in verses 7, 8, and 10. And in verses 8 and 10, he also describes the lovingkindness (חסד, *khesed*) of God as everlasting.

8. What event in history did God use to describe the promise He made not to be angry with His people? (54:9-10)

This does not mean that God will never again be angry at sin or hold His people accountable. He was not trying to correct an anger problem or a lack of self-control in His perfect character. John Oswalt writes,

Whatever was necessary to satisfy the righteous anger of God at human sin has been done, and God can proclaim that there is no longer any barrier to persons experiencing that reconciliation. Humans need never be separated from him again. Clearly, what was described in 52:13—53:12 is the means to this end. (Oswalt, 595)

9. What would God use to rebuild the afflicted city of His people? (54:11-12; see also Rev. 21:18-21)

10. How would the children of God's people be blessed? (54:13)

11. How would God establish His people? (54:14)

12. What did God say about the enemies of His people? (54:15-17)

Briley notes,

The focus of God's building efforts is not physical, however, but personal. In numerous ways he will make them like the servant. They will be taught by the Lord (50:4-5); they will experience God's vindication when opposed by their enemies (50:7-9); and as they are built by God, they will be called his servants. Because they are "taught by the Lord," they will experience peace. (Briley, 231)

13. What should we remember about God's character when we are going through times of discipline?

14. How can we encourage Christians who are worried about the future?

15. What promise from God do you want to remember and meditate on this week? Why?

**Sources cited:**

Briley, Terry R. *Isaiah: Volume 2*. College Press, 2004.

Ortlund, Ray. *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*. Crossway, 2005.

Oswalt, John. *The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah*. Zondervan, 2003.