

Sunday, November 23, 2025 – COMFORT OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE – Pastor John Henry Raskin

1. God's Invitation to True Comfort – Isaiah 55

- Isaiah 55 is a chapter from what is known as the “Book of Comfort,” in the Bible, offering hope to all who seek true satisfaction and spiritual abundance.
- Comfort is not found in material things, but in God's presence and promises.
- God invites everyone who thirsts to come and receive freely from Him:
 - Isaiah 55:1-2 - “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat... Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”

2. The Futility of Worldly Pursuits

- Pursuing wealth, pleasure, and material comfort cannot satisfy the soul.
- Only God's spiritual food brings lasting fulfillment.
 - Isaiah 55:2 - “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?”

3. God's Everlasting Covenant

- God promises an everlasting covenant—the “sure mercies of David”—fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
 - Isaiah 55:3,4 “Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—The sure mercies of David.”

4. Restoration and Forgiveness

- God calls all who have strayed to return and receive mercy and abundant pardon.
 - Isaiah 55:6-7 “Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way... And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”
- Repentance is required—acknowledging our sins and turning back to God.
 - 1 John 1:8-9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

5. God's Promises Are Sure

- God's word is effective and will accomplish His purpose.
 - Isaiah 55:10-11 “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please...”
- Assurance of eternal life and security in Christ.
 - John 10:28-30 > “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand...”

6. Three Comforts from God

- **First Comfort:** Peace with God and eternal life through Christ.
- **Second Comfort:** Access to abundant life now—joy, satisfaction, and spiritual blessings.
- **Third Comfort:** Restoration for those who have fallen away; God's mercy is always available.

Takeaway:

God's invitation in Isaiah 55 is for everyone—no matter your past or present. Seek Him, receive His comfort, and experience the abundant life He promises.

COMFORT OF THE ABUNDANT LIFE

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we talked about soul and spirit and how our personality is only whole in Christ when our spirit and our soul are correctly aligned and placed under the Holy Spirit's authority.

I alluded to the Abundant Life and how everything that Jesus did for us is so that we can attain it and enjoy it both in this life and the next.

Today we are going to dig into the 55th Chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 55 is at the heart of the section of Isaiah known as the "Book of Comfort".

I think it is safe to say that all human beings are looking for comfort in their lives.

That said, comfort looks different to different people in different circumstances and in different places in the world.

For the poorest people in the most impoverished countries comfort might just be a bit of rice eaten in a cardboard box at the end of a long hard day of scratching out a meager living.

It may be hard for many of us to relate to that because we live so comfortably.

For us here in the United States of America especially those of us who are among the most financially secure, we may think of comfort as having more money in the bank.

Most of us have everything we need at our fingertips and a warm place to come home to and to sleep at night.

We have an abundance of good food to eat whenever we want it.

We are happily connected to the Internet wherever we go, and our phones have more power to compute and receive and interpret information than even the most powerful computers 10 years ago.

But take away the power of your phone and your laptop, take away your money and your material possessions, take away your home or your health and you might find yourself extremely uncomfortable.

We who have these things tend to take them for granted, to rely on them and ultimately, to put our trust in them.

But the truth is that no matter how unwilling you may be to lose these comforts in this life, you cannot keep them in the next.

God tells us to go to Him for comfort today.

Isaiah 55 is a compassionate invitation from God to all people to receive His spiritual food and drink that truly satisfies rather than pursuing empty worldly things.

The prophet Isaiah was the prophet who most clearly delineated the coming of the Messiah, the eternal King from the line of David.

The scriptures that we are about to read were written toward the end of the Babylonian captivity and addresses the Judean exiles as they are preparing to return to Jerusalem.

For them it was not a time of hope but a time of trepidation as they were returning to their homeland that had been destroyed and had no idea what they would be returning to.

Obviously, this was a time of great discomfort for them.

Before we read this powerful scripture it is important to note that the dominant voice that is speaking in Isaiah 55 is Yahweh. God Himself.

The message is a direct call from God, pleading for His people to return to Him promising renewal and forgiveness.

Promising comfort in Him.

Hear the word of the Lord...

Isaiah 55 1-5

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,

Come to the waters;

And you who have no money,

Come, buy and eat.

Yes, come, buy wine and milk

Without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

And your wages for what does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,

And let your soul delight itself in abundance.

3 Incline your ear, and come to Me.

Hear, and your soul shall live;

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—

The sure mercies of David.

4 Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people,

A leader and commander for the people

5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,

And nations who do not know you shall run to you,

**Because of the Lord your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you.”**

Notice the first and dominant word in Verse One is **Ho!**

It is like the call of a merchant in the marketplace. It is intended to get our attention.

You can't miss it. It is a call to come, to walk towards, to draw near and pay attention.

Now notice who is called to come: **everyone who thirsts.**

It is an invitation from God to all who will listen and hear.

Jesus made the same invitation in John 7:37 when he said:

John 7:37

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He wasn't talking about physical thirst, but spiritual thirst.

When you thirst for something, you're saying that you need something desperately.

If you are thirsty enough, you feel like you are going to die.

The Bible uses the word thirst to describe a spiritual longing.

There is a sense of urgency in this invitation.

The people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah had been taken captive and exiled for their idolatry 70 years earlier.

It was almost the end of their captivity, and the people were not only confused and afraid for the future, but they were also thirsty for a God that they had abandoned years before.

In Verse Two, He asks them...

**Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
And your wages for what does not satisfy?**

This rhetorical question highlights the futility of seeking fulfillment in worldly pursuits, which in the historical context, included idolatry and relying on alliances with foreign nations instead of God.

For us today, these worldly pursuits might include chasing after wealth and influence, pursuing pleasure to excess, overspending on things and under-investing in people and a healthy relationship with Jesus.

These worldly pursuits are not bread, because they provide no genuine comfort or security, ultimately leading to dissatisfaction and leaving people “spiritually empty”.

Then God declares to them...

**Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance.**

Yahweh here is urging the people to listen to His word and follow His guidance, which provides the only true food for their souls.

The abundance of good food that the Lord is offering is a metaphor for the abundant spiritual blessings, comfort, joy and deep satisfaction that only comes from a right relationship with Him.

While the immediate audience here is the remnant of the Southern Kingdom of Judah these verses are universally an invitation to all people who are in desperate spiritual need.

Imagine that you are so hungry and thirsty that you think you are going to die, and here, the Lord God Himself is offering you free sustenance from His storehouse of blessings.

God Himself is telling these Judean captives who had abandoned Him to foreign Gods 70 years before, to return to Him and receive spiritual sustenance and all the blessings that come from a right relationship with Him.

Today I want you to realize that this invitation extends to all of you who feel far away from God.

He is saying to you today... Return to Him and live.

Draw close to Him and receive His comfort.

Verse Three begins...

Incline your ear, and come to Me.

Hear, and your soul shall live;

Can you hear Him pleading with you? Asking you to draw near to Him?

And then He makes it personal to anyone who will listen...

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—

The sure mercies of David.

Wow! Here God is declaring that He will make anyone who hears Him part of His Covenant with King David.

God promised to David an everlasting covenant. His sure mercies. That David could TRUST in Him and that Messiah would come from his bloodline.

Let's remember that David was not a man without faults and yet God called him a man "after His own heart" and bestowed on him His "sure mercies".

And then God continues in Verse Four...

**Indeed, I have given him as a witness to the people,
A leader and commander for the people**

The "him" mentioned in verse 4 is linked to the "sure mercies of David" that are promised in the preceding verse.

But while the historical David was a leader and a commander of Israel and Judah,

most biblical scholars agree that this prophecy points beyond him 700 years to his ultimate descendant the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, Leader of God's people and Commander of Angel Armies.

Now here in Verse 5 God speaks directly to us who are in Christ... God now says...

**Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
And nations who do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the Lord your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you."**

The Risen and glorified Jesus IS the Holy One of Israel.

This is God's proclamation of an everlasting covenant, to all peoples, nations and tribes, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

This is God speaking to future generations of Jewish believers, and to you and me,

foretelling of the conversion of gentiles to Christianity and the spreading of the gospel through the Great Commission.

This verse is referring to Christ and his church who will be glorified by God for this purpose.

Here then is the ultimate comfort.

The understanding by faith that we have peace with God in Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit here in this life, and the assurance that we will be with Jesus in eternity.

Listen. We don't deserve God's mercy. We don't deserve God's grace.

We certainly don't deserve God's generosity.

But God is so generous that He gave us His own begotten Son that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life.

This is His promise to the faithful.

That is the first comfort.

The second comfort is that we also have access to the abundant life here and now.

Through the Prophet, God challenges His people to seek comfort in Him rather than in temporary pursuits, promising that those who

listen and come to Him will experience life to the full and delight in His abundance.

The Third comfort is restoration for those who have fallen away.

Is this you today?

Have you allowed yourself to drift away from God so far that He is not in your daily thoughts

and you don't pray because you are afraid that He does not hear your prayers?

Is your compass face so cloudy with sin or shame that you can't tell True North? Then this next verse is for you.

In the next verses Isaiah calls God's people who have let their hearts fall into idolatry to return to Him.

This applies to anyone who will listen.

Isaiah 55:6-7

**Seek the Lord while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.**

This passage applies to us as much as it applied to apostate Israel. After all, in Christ, we are the Israel of God.

In Christ, our position is holy and righteous, however, John makes it clear to believers that we must still acknowledge our transgressions if we are going to experience the fullness of comfort that is only found in right relationship.

1 John 1:8-9

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah tells us to...

**Seek the Lord while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.**

How is this scripture comfort to you when you have strayed far from God?

Because He IS near and because YOU are still HERE.

Because it's not too LATE to change your FATE.

The Prophet now continues in Isaiah 55...

**Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.**

God's pardon is abundant because it flows from His infinite mercy.

But this pardon is not automatic. As John just told us, it requires repentance.

Repentance is more than saying “I’m sorry” to God.

It requires a change of heart and life.

It means turning from sin and seeking reconciliation with God by attempting to provide restoration to those against whom you have sinned.

If there is anything, any habit, any unforgiveness, any persistent wicked thought that is standing between you and God today know that you can turn it over to Jesus.

When we return to the Lord He will pardon abundantly and in that is our abundant comfort.

This Psalm of David tells us why...

Psalm 103:11-14

**11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
13 As a father pities his children,
So the Lord pities those who fear Him.
14 For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.**

When you come to God in faith, admitting that you are fragile, he will be your strength and your salvation.

His Word through the Prophet continues and assures us that His promises never fail:

Isaiah 55:10-11

**“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make 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 goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**

God’s Word is effective and trustworthy. Jesus Christ IS the Word of God. When we return to Him, He restores us completely.

John 10:28-30 assures us...

8 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. 30 I and My Father are one.”

If you recall a couple of weeks ago, we finished our message with this verse from Paul’s letter to the Philippians...

I am confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And in that is our greatest reward and comfort.

Let’s pray...