

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“Whose Thoughts Guide My Ways?”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Isaiah 55:6-13; Is. 53:5, 11; Is. 48:20-22; Is. 30:15-21; Jer. 17:9-11; Prov. 3:5-6; Eccl. 5:9-19; Ex. 34:6-7; 2 Pet. 3:9

Isaiah 55 is one of those passages that feels like a well we return to again and again, because the invitation is so rich and so necessary. In the wake of the Servant's suffering in Isaiah 53, and after the breathtaking pictures of restoration in Isaiah 54—a barren bride rejoicing, an afflicted city made radiant—Isaiah 55 opens the door and says, in effect, “Come in. What has been accomplished is now being offered.” The Lord calls out to the thirsty, the hungry, the broke, and the weary. He offers not mere survival, but abundance: water, bread, wine, and milk, “*without money and without cost*” (Is. 55:1). What He offers is priceless, and yet He freely gives it.

That invitation becomes more direct in Isaiah 55:6-13. The question beneath the passage is deeply personal: whose thoughts are guiding my ways? The Lord is not merely asking whether we believe in Him, but whether we are willing to let go of the ways and thought-patterns that have shaped us apart from Him. We long for peace, wholeness, rest, and security, yet so often we pursue them through self-reliance, accumulation, control, and our own calculations. But the Lord, in mercy, calls us away from the paths that cannot satisfy and invites us into His thoughts, His ways, His Word, and His peace.

1. SEEK HIM NOW, AND FORSAKE THE WAYS THAT CANNOT SAVE

Isaiah begins with urgency: “*Seek ADONAI while He may be found, call on Him while He is near*” (Is. 55:6). This is not the language of hunting for a hidden God, but of responding to a God who has made Himself available. He has drawn near. He has called out. He has opened the way through the work of the Servant. The invitation is immediate and personal: seek Him now, while the opportunity stands before you. There is tenderness in this call, but there is also seriousness. The Lord is not playing games with us. He is summoning us to Himself because He knows that apart from Him, we remain thirsty, restless, and unsatisfied.

Verse 7 tells us what seeking Him looks like: “*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous one his thoughts; let him return to ADONAI, so He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*” True repentance has two sides. We do not merely turn toward the Lord in sentiment while clinging to the same old ways and thoughts. We forsake, and we return. We abandon the path that has led us away from Him, and we turn toward the One whose compassion is overflowing. The beauty of this call is that the Lord is not reluctant to receive the returning sinner. He is abundant in forgiveness. He is not stingy with mercy. He is exactly who He revealed Himself to be: “compassionate and gracious... abundant in lovingkindness and truth” (Ex. 34:6).

2. HIS THOUGHTS ARE HIGHER THAN OURS, SO WE MUST STOP TRUSTING OURSELVES

The Lord explains why repentance is necessary: “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways*” (Is. 55:8). That is the heart of the issue. Human ways and human thoughts are not simply a little off. They are not merely incomplete or in need of slight adjustment. The

Lord says there is a vast chasm between His ways and ours: *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts”* (Is. 55:9). We tend to trust our instincts, defend our opinions, and assume our internal sense of rightness is enough. But Scripture repeatedly warns us that our hearts are not reliable guides apart from the Lord. *“The heart is deceitful above all things”* (Jer. 17:9). That is why our own ways, when followed unchecked, leave us empty.

So much of what passes for peace in this world is really just self-protection dressed up as wisdom. Bigger walls, faster horses, more money, more weapons, more control—these things promise peace of mind, but they cannot give true shalom. Isaiah 30 exposes that illusion. The Lord said, *“By repentance and rest you are saved, in quietness and trust is your strength—but you were not willing”* (Is. 30:15). Ecclesiastes says the lover of money is never satisfied, and the abundance people chase often robs them even of sleep (Eccl. 5:9–11). Our ways promise much and deliver little. The Lord’s ways, though often humbling to our pride, are the only ways that lead to life. That is why Proverbs tells us, *“Trust in ADONAI with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Prov. 3:5–6).

3. HIS WORD ACCOMPLISHES WHAT OUR WAYS NEVER COULD

After showing us the distance between His thoughts and ours, the Lord gives us hope by showing how that gap is bridged. *“For as the rain and snow come down from heaven... making it bring forth and sprout... so My word will be that goes out from My mouth. It will not return to Me in vain, but will accomplish what I intend”* (Is. 55:10–11). What God commands, He also empowers. His Word is not empty speech. It comes from heaven with life in it. Just as rain waters the earth and produces seed and bread, the Word of God carries His purpose and brings forth what He desires. In this passage, that means His Word not only calls sinners to repentance, but also carries the power to produce that repentance and all the blessed fruit that follows.

That is why the end of the chapter overflows with joy and peace: *“Yes, you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace”* (Is. 55:12). The result of responding to God’s Word is not mere moral improvement, but deep transformation. Joy replaces captivity. Peace replaces striving. Thorns and briars give way to cypress and myrtle (Is. 55:13). What sin brought into the world—curse, pain, toil, and disorder—the Lord begins to reverse by His redeeming power. His ways do not produce the thornbushes our ways do. His ways bring life, beauty, and rightness. And all of it becomes a memorial to His name, a testimony not merely to His power, but to His character. He is the God who brings sinners home, restores what was ruined, and makes all things new.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 55:6–13 places a loving but searching question before us: whose thoughts are guiding my ways? It is possible to admire God’s promises while still being governed by our own reasoning, our own fears, and our own definitions of peace. But the Lord does not invite us to add Him onto our way of life. He calls us to forsake our way and return to His. He calls us to leave behind the path that cannot satisfy and enter the feast He has already provided through the Servant. The peace we crave does not come from self-protection, self-reliance, or self-direction. It comes from surrender.

And yet this call is full of hope. The Lord does not say, “Fix yourself and then come.” He says, “Seek Me. Return to Me. Listen to My Word.” The same Word that summons us is the Word that accomplishes His purpose in us. He is abundant to forgive. He is near to receive. He is powerful to transform. The one who turns to Him will not be met with rejection, but with compassion. The one who abandons the old way will find joy, peace, and life in His presence. This is what the Servant has accomplished. This is what the Father still offers.

Seek ADONAI while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. And if you feel weary, dry, stuck, or restless, hear His voice again: come to the waters. Come without money. Come without pretending. Come with your need, your hunger, and your emptiness. Let Him compassionately receive you. Let Him abundantly forgive you. Let His Word do in you what your own striving never could.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are some ways people try to find peace and security apart from the Lord?
2. In your own life, what “ways” or “thoughts” do you need to forsake?
3. Why is it important that repentance involves both turning away from sin and turning toward God?
4. How does Isaiah 55:8–9 challenge the way you normally trust your own instincts?
5. What encourages you most about the promise that God’s Word will accomplish what He intends?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, Father, thank You for calling us to Yourself with such mercy, patience, and generosity. Thank You that what You offer is priceless, and yet freely given because of what the Servant has accomplished for us. Shine Your light on the thoughts we have embraced that are not from You. Expose the ways we have trusted in ourselves, leaned on our own understanding, and sought peace in places that cannot satisfy.

Teach us to seek You while You may be found and to call on You while You are near. Give us grace to forsake our own ways and thoughts and to return to You wholeheartedly. Let Your Word accomplish in us what You desire. Bring forth repentance, renewal, joy, and true shalom in our lives. Transform us into a people who reflect Your name, Your character, and Your goodness.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.