

ISAIAH, PART 2 (COMFORT FOR HIS PEOPLE)
PROGRAM 27 (#911142)
WEEK 6 (#911329) (Guest Teacher David Arthur)
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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 2 (Comfort For His People)
TITLE: Program 27 – Come To Him
(Guest Teacher David Arthur)

TUESDAY

INTRO

Kay: Do you know what Precepts for Life is all about and Precept Ministries International? It's three D's. It's discover truth for yourself, go deeper and disciple others. Today you're going to hear from David Arthur, Precept Ministries Vice President of Teaching and Training, a disciple of the inductive study method and an advocate of it. You're gonna be so blessed as you listen to his lesson. Thank you for going deeper with us.

OPEN

David: What does it mean to seek the Lord? And if I'm seeking the Lord, how do I know that I'm doing it right? Today in our text, Isaiah chapter 55, we will see the instruction "**Seek the LORD....**" (Isaiah 55:6) What does it mean? Who is to seek the Lord? And how do we know if we're actually doing it the way God would intend us to do it if we're to seek the Lord His way? Today we'll discover for ourselves what the text will teach us about what it means to seek the Lord.

PART ONE

David: Hello there. My name is David Arthur and I'm so glad you've joined me today to study God's Word for yourself. I grew up with two big brothers; big brothers. One of them and I got in a fight when we were young, you know, I was ten years younger than him. We got in this fight and he kind of felt bad afterwards. And so he told me, "Listen David, don't tell mom and dad what happened," cause you know how the fight went, I lost severely. He said "We'll go to the mall." And so we jumped in his car and we went to the mall and we walked through the mall and he says "Here's the deal. You can buy anything you want; anything in the whole mall that you want you can have if you don't tell mom and dad about me beating you up. Deal?" Ah, what a deal! We walked from store to store. I would pick up things. I ended up buying a big ole machete. Of course that was weird, 'cause when I got home mom and dad said you know, "Hey, what's up with the machete?" Of course, you know, I couldn't tell them about Mark beating me up. And so there I was stuck. What do I say? They knew I didn't have any money. How could I buy something without money? Interesting enough that is how the text starts off in Isaiah 55. Let's look at it together. He writes, **"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."** (Isaiah 55:1) There is the invitation given. He's saying, "I want you to come, you who are thirsty, you who need water, you who are struggling, you who are desperate, come to Me and I will open up the flood gates. I will open up the mall for you and you can have a free-for-all. You can shop till your hearts delight. Come and buy without money." He says, "I want you to come, those who are thirsty, to the waters." I want to take you to Revelation chapter 21 and show you a little bit about this "waters" that is described here. In Revelation 21 we have for us a scene that was given to John. Now he was on the Isle of Patmos. He was exiled, and this is future, so this is yet to come. And he's describing the heavens and the new earth. He says in verse 1, **"Then I saw a new heaven and new earth; for the first heaven**

and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”

(Revelation 21:1) And then it says this in verse 5, **“And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ And He said, ‘Write, for these words are faithful and true.’” (Revelation 21:5)** And **“Then He said to me, ‘It is done....”** And here, speaking of Jesus, **“...I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. [And] I will give to...one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life...,”** and then the next two words are beautiful: **“...without cost.” (Revelation 21:6)** That is what is in store for us if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. If you are one who says, “I’m willing to line up my life with the way God has described for me in His Scriptures. If you’re one who says that: “My only hope is found in and through the blood of forgiveness and the righteousness of Jesus Christ,” then this description is for you. Again he says, [Those who are thirsty I will give you the spring of the water of life without cost]. (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 21:6) Now it’s not without cost. It’s just without cost to you. The spring of the water of life comes with a great cost. And we find out in the gospels that it’s at the expense of Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ gave Himself. We saw it earlier in our study in Isaiah in chapter 53 when we saw that [we were like sheep who had gone astray, each going our own way,] which means going away from the way God has designed for us. And He says, and [I have laid upon Jesus, I laid upon the Lamb, laid upon the Messiah the iniquity of us all.] (PARAPHRASE Isaiah 53:6) It came at a great cost. It was for our transgressions. It was for our sins that Jesus died. But here we have the water of life. We see it again in Revelation. Look at chapter 22, verse 17. He says it again. **“The Spirit and the bride say...,”** an invitation, **““...Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come [and] let the one who wishes [to] take the water of life...,”** and again, **“...without cost.” (Revelation 22:17)** That’s the invitation, at the beginning of our text in Isaiah 55. He says I want to unpack this offer for you here. I want you to see just how beautiful it is. There is no cost. Come and eat. Look what He says in verse 2. **“[And] why**

do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me...eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.” (Isaiah 55:2) I love this offer here. It’s not an offer that sometimes I feel like we Christians present with God, which is a God who’s minimalistic, a God who is a joy-kill, a God who says, “Listen, you’ve got enough, now stop asking for more.” This is a God who says, “Listen, I want you to come to Me and I will give you abundance. I will give you food.” Now this is not a prosperity theology where God wants us to be, you know, healthy, wealthy, and wise here on earth, and have, you know, extravagant things at the expense of poverty of others. But this is a God who’s saying in the long run, “If you come to Me I will give those things that really satisfy.” I wonder, are you satisfied with what you have? Is there discontent down at the core of your soul? Perhaps you’re looking at your inventory, your assets, you’re looking at things that you have accumulated around you, and you’re saying, I don’t feel it. I feel this incessant need to buy more or to upgrade or to update the things that I have. The offer here in Isaiah 55 is come and buy those things that do satisfy. And that of course it’s buying it without cost. It’s buying it without money. But He says, **“...Listen...to Me [carefully], eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.” (Isaiah 55:2)** I wonder what are they buying here? What does He, what is He addressing? Is this a, “Be a good steward of your money” conversation or is there something much deeper here? Well he says, **“...Listen carefully...eat what is good...delight yourself in abundance.” (Isaiah 55:2)** All three of these things point to verse 3. What does verse 3 tell us? **“Incline your ear and come to Me. [And] listen, that you may live....”** Listen to what? **“...I will make an everlasting covenant with you [I will make an everlasting covenant with you], according to the faithful mercies shown to David.” (Isaiah 55:3)** Now you remember David is the one of whom the covenant was made where God had said “I will never remove your throne from before you. I will never let you go.” And we’ll look at that eventually in our studies together. But I want you to see first and

foremost all these things, this delight, this abundance, this satisfaction that He is offering to His people—and an invitation is one that is built upon an everlasting covenant. It's one that comes in a package that says, "Listen, it's not really based upon who you are; what your lineage is. It's not one that's just based upon how much money you have or what place in society you have." This is an offer that God makes out of His pure goodness. That means that it's stability. That means its validity is wrapped up in His character, in who He is and not in who I am. It's not an invitation where God is saying, "Let's make a deal. You give Me your best and I'll give you something back." I wonder is that what we think of God sometimes? It's that God is standing there in some kind of judgmental posture. And He's saying "Listen, today you need to accomplish agenda items, one, two and three and if you don't there's gonna be hell to pay." Is that the way He describes us? Is that the way He describes Himself to us? Is He a God who keeps a record and adds it up and tallies it up at the end of the day and then decides, will He show us compassion and favor? Or is He a God who gives us an offer, a generous offer and He says to those who are thirsty, "Listen My friend, I have water?" He says "I have water that is life itself. I have water that quenches your thirst that you'll never be thirsty again. I have rivers of it. I have abundance of it and I'm willing to offer it to you. Come to Me you who are thirsty, and to you who are poor, come to Me and I will give you what is good. I will bring you what is satisfaction. I will bring you what will make you complete and whole and you can find content." There's a sense in which this offer is completely one hundred percent grace. It doesn't become because we have reached a measurement. It doesn't come because we have accomplished our goals and therefore this is a reward. Did you see how He described the offer? "Come to Me, who are thirsty." That describes one who is desperate. One who is thirsty is looking death in the eye. One who is thirsty is miserable and doesn't have a substantial thing to bring in return, cannot purchase what he needs. One who is thirsty is desperate to be filled by something outside of himself or herself. God is making an offer to His

people, an offer He says I will give you what is good, and I will give you what is abundance, and you will delight in it. It's an invitation, an offer that we must explore together.

PART TWO

David: Welcome back. We're studying Isaiah 55 together and we have just seen a great invitation from the Lord. "Every one who's thirsty come to Me and I will give you the waters of life. I will give you waters without costs. Come to Me who have no money and buy wine and milk," He says. (See Isaiah 55:1) Well He goes on to continue this offer in verse 6. But here He kind of turns it and brings in some instruction. Look what He says in verse 6. **"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near."** (Isaiah 55:6) Now we've started off thinking about: What does it mean to seek the Lord? This is something that we hear a lot in Christianity, "seeking the Lord". I'm seeking His face or I'm seeking His will. What does it really mean to "seek the Lord"? Well what is the opportunity that He presents in this seeking of it? Let's look at verse 6. He says seek and call, but why? **"...While He may be found...."** Or He says, **"...Call...Him while He is near."** Now wait a minute. I thought God was everywhere. I thought, there's no where that God is not. So what does it mean **"...Seek [Him] while He may be found; [or] call upon Him while He is near."** (Isaiah 55:6) Is it somehow contradicting our understanding of God's omnipresence, which is a theological term? Which means that God is everywhere. It's a great assurance to know that He's everywhere. What does it mean though, **"...while He may be found; [or] while He [may be] near"**? We have here, not that God is saying that I'm only in this role, I'm only in Babylon. I'm only in, you know, the United States at a certain time. He is everywhere. But when He says, **"...while He may be found...."** (Isaiah 55:6) He's addressing His favor. What we have is God is saying "I'm opening the door for you. I'm opening the door so that you can come in." It's part of His invitation. I'm opening the door, but there's a sense in

which there's an opportunity there. There's a sense in which when that door is open that we need to call. And God is saying in a sense, "I'm bringing My favor, I'm bringing My offer to you and I want you to seek Me while this offer is available and while this offer is open". Now I want to be careful, but implied in that is there may come a time for the people of God that God would shut His door. Now that doesn't mean because you sin so many times there's a threshold. But there's a sense in which God is saying "I've opened the door for you, now accept this offer." That, not an offer that's willy nilly. It's not an offer you say, you know, "Listen, I'm young. I'm in the prime of my life, and when I get old and tired and bored then I'll go to religion, then I'll go to church, then I'll go to God and His offer. So I'm just gonna put that offer aside. I'm gonna go live my life and I'll come back. You'd end up just like the prodigal son in Luke. The prodigal son said I want my inheritance now, and he went out and squandered his inheritance, and then he was left empty and hungry. (See Luke 15:11-16) Here the invitation comes back. **"Seek the LORD while He may be found; [and] call upon [the LORD] while He is near."** (Isaiah 55:6) Now look at verse 7. Verse 7 identifies for us what does "seeking the Lord" involve. I don't know about you, but sometimes when I think about seeking the Lord, I come up with the rules that Christianity seems to love. You know, for example, I get a hair cut, go to church, pay your tithe, you know be on a committee, you know, serve the church in some form or fashion. Is that what it means to seek the Lord? Well all those things may be acceptable and may be pleasing, but is that what the call of the Scripture here is— here? I don't think so. Look at verse 7. **"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and our God, for He will abundantly pardon."** (Isaiah 55:7) Oh, what a great offer. He says "I want you to return to Me." What does it mean to return to the Lord? This is one of the favorite messages of the prophets all throughout the Old Testament. The prophets would use the Hebrew word "shuv." "Shuv," It means "to turn around". It involves repentance. It involves a

change of direction, a change of attitude. It simply means you're running away from God and His agenda. You're running away from God and His plan, and you need to stop in your tracks and you need to turn around and come back to Him. Return to Me. What does it mean to return to the Lord according to verse 7? Well He says in the first two things, **"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts...."** (Isaiah 55:7) Now I want you to compare that to what He says later on in verse 8. God says, and this is probably a very familiar text for you. And He says, **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.'** (Isaiah 55:8-9) Now what He's doing here if you were to go up in verse 7 and circle the word "way" and circle the word "thoughts" and then drop down to verse 8 and find the parallels, for example, "thoughts" is mentioned there in verse 8 in the first phrase and "ways" in the second phrase. And then draw a line between "ways" and draw a line between "thoughts". You'll see what He's doing here is saying, "If you're going to seek the Lord first it involves forsaking". That's right. Seeking involves forsaking. If you're going to seek the Lord He says then you have to say no to the other way. That might not feel right to you. You might say, you know, "I want to play all my cards. I want to play the best. I want to kind of put together my own buffet of religion. I want a little bit of what Jesus has to say. I want a little bit of what Dr. Phil has to say. I want a little bit about what the world has to offer—what I think is good—and blend all that together and form my way." God is saying, "If you're gonna seek Me you need to forsake your ways. Because if your ways are not My ways they're the wrong way." God is unashamedly bold about that statement. And here's the reason. It's not because He likes His way better than He likes your way. It's not because He has an image problem or an issue of you doing your own thing. He wants you to know His ways are much better than your ways. His thoughts, He says, are much higher than your thoughts." (See Isaiah 55:8) I

don't know about you, but if you really do a self-evaluation of your thoughts, just go back and look at your decisions over the past couple years. Were they good decisions? Were they decisions that really turned out well for you? I don't know about you, but sometimes if I think about myself I think you know I should have more doubt about my own decisions. I tend to hit dead ends. I tend to fall into holes and traps. I tend to create blunders and such. And God is saying, "Listen, My ways are better. My ways are higher. He says they're higher than the earth, they're up in the heavens. They're where creation comes from. They're where perfection resides." (See Isaiah 55:9) And if He says, "If you're going to seek Me and call on Me while the opportunity is there, while I'm near, it begins with first forsaking your way. But not just your way, the things that you do." But also He says in verse 7, **"...And the unrighteous man [must forsake] his thoughts...."** (Isaiah 55:7) You see when we fell into sin as mankind in the Garden of Eden we were, in a sense, tarnished from there on out. We were marred. Our image was affected. Our thought patterns were damaged. Romans 1 tells us beginning in 18 through the end of the chapter of Romans 1. Go look at it. It says that we have turned away from God and God has given us over to our own desires. (See Romans 1:18-32) Well how's that work for us? Well it's brought us into misery and pain and loss and suffering. And the invitation here is "Seek Me while I may be found, but start by forsaking your own ways. Start by changing your thoughts." And as Paul says in Romans 12, he says, **"...[Don't] be conformed to [the patterns of] this world, but [rather] be transformed by the renewing of your mind...."** (Romans 12:2) The call is clear. If we are to seek the Lord while He may be found, it must begin with us forsaking our ways and forsaking our thoughts and taking on His. His ways are higher than ours and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. (See Isaiah 55:9) It's a generous call.