

Series: Isaiah
Title: A Prayer of Faith
Text: Isaiah 63: 15-19
Date: November 22, 2015
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our subject is “A Prayer of Faith.” This text is the prayer of Isaiah for God’s presence. Where God has given faith, more than anything else, the urgent need of God’s child is God’s presence. Our text begins in Isaiah 63: 15 and goes to the end of chapter 64. But for now we will only look at the rest of this chapter.

GOD-GIVEN FAITH

First, note that this is the prayer of God-given faith—**Isaiah 63: 15: Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory:...**

Only a chosen, redeemed, regenerated child of God—gifted by God with faith—can acknowledge these things.

True faith acknowledges that God our Father and our Savior the Lord Jesus is far above us. God’s habitation is in “heaven.” God’s habitation is the “habitation of his holiness.” God’s habitation is the habitation of “his glory.”

True faith acknowledges that God alone is able to save us. “Look down” oh Lord. “Behold” us oh Lord. Brethren, this is our chief need—“Lord, look down and behold us.”

OUR NEED

True faith acknowledges our need for God’s strength and grace—**Isaiah 63: 15:...where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?**

Without God’s zeal toward us and in us, we have no true zeal for God. Without God’s strength, we have none! “Christ said, without me ye can do nothing.” Without Christ having compassion toward us and showing us mercy—we are totally helpless to help ourselves!

But remember, how Joseph’s bowels yearned for Benjamin? Christ’s zeal and strength and compassion and mercies toward each of his children is always constant. Yet Joseph went into his chamber and did not let his compassion be known to his brethren. Why? Because Joseph knew it was not the right time to make himself known to his brethren. So it is with God. God’s timing is best. He knows when to hide himself and when to reveal himself. God does it to bring us to the place where he brought Isaiah. He brought Isaiah to cry out for God’s presence and God’s mercy!

One day I watched a little boy walking along in the mall with his mother. The little boy kept running ahead of his mother. She told her son several times to stop running ahead yet he kept doing so. So the next time he ran ahead she stepped behind a column and hid herself from her son. The little fellow looked around and his mother was gone. He began to search for her. Just before he broke out into tears she stepped out so he could see her. He ran to her and hugged her. When they walked away the little boy was right by her side as close as he get to her. At times God works in the same way to cause his child to see our constant need of God’s presence.

Brethren, at all times, in every prayer—acknowledge our need for God’s presence—for his strength, his compassion, his mercy and grace. That is the chief need and prayer of faith.

GOD ALONE

True faith trusts only God—who God is and what God has done—**Isaiah 63: 16: Doubtless thou *art* our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer; thy name *is* from everlasting.**

After crying out for God to make his presence known, Isaiah straightaway acknowledged that God was, without a doubt, our Father and our Redeemer. Even when it seems to a believer that God has restrained his mercies from us, though our earthly fathers may be ignorant of us and acknowledge us not—though we have no evidence in ourselves—though we have no providential evidence whatsoever—though God has hidden his face from us—true faith knows and believes God is our Father.

It is because God-given faith rests in none of those things—only in who God is and what God has done for us. “Doubtless...thou, O LORD, art OUR father,”—you chose us therefore we are your people, you gave us life therefore thou, O LORD, thou art OUR father. Doubtless--“Thou art our Redeemer.”—all our hope is in the truth that God our Savior poured out his precious blood and effectually redeemed all his elect from all iniquity.

Romans 5: 6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly....8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Doubtless--“Thy name is from everlasting!”—true faith rests in the name of God. There is no change in God. God loves his people with an everlasting love. God’s everlasting covenant grace toward his people never changes.

Genesis 17:7: And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Deuteronomy 33:27: The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Psalms 100:5: For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalms 112:6: Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

Psalms 145:13: Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Isaiah 26:4: Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

Brethren, our hope is not built on our feelings, on our earthly father’s acknowledging us, nor on our outward circumstances. Our hope is built on God alone. Our hope rests in God’s word alone. Our hope is in who God is and what God has done for us! Thou art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting!

OUR SIN AND GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY

True faith confesses that our sin is our own and only the absolute sovereign God can save us from it—**Isaiah 63: 17: O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways and hardened our heart from thy fear?”**

Isaiah is not blaming God nor using God’s sovereignty as an excuse for our sins. Israel sinned and hardened their own hearts. Therefore, God took his restraining hand off Israel and the result was more sin and hardness of heart.

God never randomly turns men over to reprobation without a cause in the sinner. It is true God elected his people unto salvation in Christ not because of any merit in us. Grace is free and sovereign. God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. But wherever scripture speaks of God turning men over to reprobation it is because the sinner earned it. “The wages of sin is death.” We earn death. “But the gift of God is eternal life.” Eternal life is God’s gift by his free and sovereign grace. God does not punish sinners without a cause because God is just. Notice the words “for this cause” in the following verse:

2 Thessalonians 2:11: And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The sin and hardness of heart of the whole nation of Israel was all their own. And our sin is all our own. Isaiah is acknowledging that without the Lord our God sovereignly keeping his people from sin and hardness of heart—sin and hardness of heart is all we are capable of. He is confessing God is absolutely sovereign and we are absolutely sinful. We need God’s sovereign hand to keep us all the time! The only thing God has to do is leave us to ourselves and we will further err from his ways and harden our hearts from fearing him. True faith confesses this is so!

Isaiah 64: 6: But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. 7: And *there is* none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

This is why the Psalmist prayed this way. And may this be our prayer constantly:

Psalm 119: 10...O let me not wander from thy commandments...36: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Psalm 141:4: Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

GOD’S PRESENCE

True faith begs from a broken heart for God to manifest his presence again—**Isaiah 63: 17...Return for thy servants’ sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.**

This is our chief need. We need for God to return. Return Lord with your mighty saving presence. Do it for your servant’s sakes—for the sake of Christ your servant, for the sake of those you put in Christ from everlasting. Do it for “thine inheritance.” Return Lord because we cannot save ourselves. Can you say that of yourself! Is that your prayer?

FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE

True faith beseeches God to save us for his own holy name's sake—**Isaiah 63: 18: The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. 19: We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.**

Notice, he beseeches God for “his holiness” sake—for “the people of thy holiness.” He reminds God of that which God has done for his people. God, you sanctified us, you set us apart, you put us in possession of the gospel! Save us because we are the people of **THY HOLINESS**.

He beseeches God for the sake of his holy sanctuary—“our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” He reminds God that the Lord's church is his holy sanctuary, his holy habitation.

He beseeches God for the sake of his purchased possession—“we are thine.” Christ paid his precious blood therefore we are his “purchased possession, unto the praise of thy glory.” He reminds God, we are thine.

He beseeches God for the sake of his sovereign rule—“thou never barest rule over them.” God rules our enemies but he never ruled over them as a Father and a Redeemer for his holy name's sake. He reminds God that God is our sovereign Lord.

He beseeches God for the sake of his holy name—“they were not called by thy name.” God's people bear the holy name our holy Redeemer. He beseeche's God to save for “thy name's sake.”

All of these things are in Christ and due to Christ. God made us holy in Christ choosing us in Christ, redeeming us by Christ, regenerating us by forming Christ in us. God made his people his holy sanctuary in Christ and by Christ dwelling in us. We are his because Christ bought us with his precious blood. Christ our Head bears rule in our hearts and over his church. We wear Christ' name. So these are the things we beseech God for when we come to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, believer, knowing it was the Holy Spirit who moved Isaiah to make this intercession on behalf of Israel, just imagine the intercession Christ makes on our behalf in the presence of God right now! It is because Christ everlives to make intercession for us that God works all things together for our good on purpose.

Romans 8: 27: And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

So we can be sure, God shall hear us and God shall save his people for the sake of Christ his Son!

Amen!