

Series: Isaiah
Title: The Everlasting Covenant
Text: Isaiah 55: 3
Date: May 11, 2014
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Isaiah 55: 3: Incline your ear,...

In order for any sinner to be saved, you must incline your ear. It is our responsibility to use the ears God has given us to hear God speak. God says, "Incline your ear."

Not just to anyone--**Isaiah 55: 3: Incline your ear, and come unto ME:** We must incline our ears to God, who alone can do the saving. We come to God through the ear—through the heart—through the hearing of the good news that salvation is of the LORD.

Then God says, **Isaiah 55: 3:...Hear. Don't just incline your ear,** don't simply come to where God's gospel is preached, God says, "Hear." Do so diligently!

Illustration: We are in a bad economy. How diligently do you keep your finances? How diligently do you keep watch over that which you deem most valuable? God says incline your ear to him with even greater diligence than that! Does not our Maker deserve to be heard! He is true life, not our money! Now, just look at these three simple, light and easy, precepts: Incline your ear, come unto me, and hear!

Next, God makes two promises, first he says, **Isaiah 55: 3:...and your soul shall live.** We are dead sinners. God gives spiritual life. God must draw us. God must make us: incline the ear, come to him and hear. God promises here that by coming and hearing the word of the Lord, we shall have something to live upon, good, solid, substantial food; and that we shall live comfortably and plentifully, forever.

Has God given you spiritual life through his gospel? How do I know preacher? Have you found lately that God has gotten your attention? Do you find yourself having an interest in what God has to say?

Then you will be vitally interested in this second promise of God. God says, **Isaiah 55: 3: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.** God promises to bind himself by everlasting unbreakable covenant, to helpless sinners like us.

Oh, what a proof of our totally inability in sin. After hearing God—God—God—who cannot lie—make these promises—everlasting life and everlasting covenant mercies—any man—were he in his right mind—would incline his ear, come to God and hear right away.

Title: This morning, I want to spend the first hour on the subject of: **God's Everlasting Covenant.** Then we will spend the second hour on the subject of: Sure Mercies

Is there anyone here interested in: **God's Everlasting Covenant.**

Proposition: There are two covenants: the everlasting covenant and the covenant of works. In the day of judgment, all men will be found under one of these two covenants and all shall be saved or dammed based on the works one of two federal heads under one of these two covenants.

I. FIRST, LET'S BEGIN WHERE GOD BEGAN—THE EVERLASTING COVENANT.

In the scriptures, the covenant of works is sometimes called "the first testament" but this covenant was really first. It is of Grace and is Eternal: everlasting means eternal: it is an unending, unchangeable, unbreakable covenant. It

is founded in the everlasting love of God: toward his Son and toward his people. It is ordered in all things according to the eternal purposes of God.

Illustration: If we set out to start a business, we first come up with a plan. So did God. God purposed from eternity: to bring glory and honor to the triune God, to give his Son all preeminence in all things and to do this by saving his people from our sins.

So God left no part of this everlasting covenant in the hands of his people. The contracting parties in this covenant are the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God the Father chose his Son to be the Christ. From eternity the Father said,

Isaiah 42: 1: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to [my people scattered all over the world.]...4: He shall not fail...

God the Father required his Son to accomplish this doing all things necessary: to glorify God: declare his righteousness, to magnify and honor God's holy law, to make God just and Justifier of his people, to purge the sin of his people and make us the righteousness of God in him. In short, God the Father required the Son to save the church in a way consist with the perfections of God and the honor of God's holy law.

God the Father promised his Son: his Spirit would be upon him when he became Man, to give Christ full protection, to raise Christ from the dead when the work was finished, to give Christ his glory, to give Christ the honor of revealing himself in his people, that he should *see His Seed*. Here is God giving his solemn everlasting covenant promise to Christ his Son.

Isaiah 42: 5: Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8: I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

This promise was made to Christ Jesus the Son of God before the foundation of the world. He is the Head of all whom he represented.

God the Son consented to the will and requirement of the Father.

Christ agreed to come at the time appointed to be made of a woman, to be made flesh—because those he came to save are flesh, to be made under the law, to be made sin for us—to take away our sins, to be made a curse for us—to redeem us from the curse of the law, to lay down his life unto death to satisfy divine justice—the wages of sin is death—to give life to all that the Father draws unto him, to lose none but raise them up again at the last day, to fulfill every stipulation of the Covenant of grace.

John 6:38: For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Hebrews 7: 20: And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21:...The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22: By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Hebrews 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

By virtue of Christ's perfect obedience, his finished work, every blessing of the covenant is sure to all them that are called by God's grace (Heb. 9:15).

Hebrews 9: 15: And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

How shall we be called and given this promise? God the Holy Spirit, entered covenant with the Father, and with Christ his Son.

The Holy Spirit agreed to glorify our the Lord Jesus, at the intercession of Christ to his Father, to come into each child, regenerate and sanctify each one to guide each believer into all truth, teaching Christ in our hearts, to abide in his people, to raise us from the dead, to give us glory with Christ

That is why this everlasting covenant is full of SURE mercies—this covenant is ordered in all things and sure because the triune God fulfills it all in Christ Jesus.

Who was this covenant made for? This Everlasting Covenant was made by the three in One on behalf of every sinner that God chose in Christ, which shall be called to faith in Christ.

In eternity, Christ was made the Head and Representative of every child which shall be born again of God, each child who shall believe on Christ, to whom God will reveal this everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure in Christ Jesus.

Oh, incline your ear, come unto God and hear: for perhaps, this covenant was made on your behalf. Wouldn't it be amazing if you came here this morning for some vain reason, yet you had no idea God was drawing you here to tell you the good news!

II. SECONDLY, THERE IS ANOTHER COVENANT CALLED THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

Covenant with Adam

In the beginning of time, in the garden, God made a covenant of works with Adam. In this covenant of works, God put a work in the hands of man. God gave one command in the garden.

Genesis 2: 16: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The covenant of works gave man one work, "This do—obey this one law. God promised "thou shalt live forever." But God said, "Disobey and thou shalt die."

Do you see the difference in these two covenants?: The everlasting covenant says, "Believe and thou shalt live and have all these promises freely given." The covenant of works says, "Do and thou shalt live." It was a conditional covenant—it required a work by man. That is the covenant of works.

But Adam failed to keep his part of the covenant of works and he died. Adam was a type of Christ in that Adam was the head and representative of every child that would be born from him. Therefore, when Adam failed, we all failed. When Adam died, we died in Adam. And dying we died—we came forth sinning as soon as we were born because we were conceived in sin: from Adam to his children, to their children, to their children, right on down to you and me.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Be sure to get this: Every man failed to keep the covenant of works when we sinned in Adam. In Adam all died. Still, sadly, most religious sinners do not understand this. Most are attempting to come to God by the covenant of works. If they need Christ at all, most think they only need Christ to make up where they fail; they only need some help. That is works salvation, not salvation by grace!

Covenant at Mt Sinai

Someone might ask, “What about the law God gave at Mt. Sinai?” That was a covenant of works, too. The rich young ruler wanted to come to God by that covenant of works, by the law of Moses, so he asked Christ

Matthew 19: 16: 16: what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Christ told him what is required of every sinner who would attempt to come to God by the covenant of works, by his own deeds,

Matthew 19: 17: And he said unto him,...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18: He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19: Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The covenant of works requires every sinner to keep the commandments—not only the moral law but the whole law of God: not try—keep the commandments, not be sincere though you fail now and then—keep the commandments, not merely outwardly—but in thought, word and deed—from a pure heart. There can be no sin in us by conception, o sin in our heart, no sin in our thoughts, no sin in our words, no sin in our deeds, not one deviation from the law ever

Be sure to get this: all men became sinners in Adam. Since all were already guilty of breaking God’s law in the garden, that means when God gave the law on Mt. Sinai, there would never be one sinner on this earth who could keep that covenant of works. Would God give a law man could not keep? Yes! Then there must some other reason why God gave the law at Mt. Sinai? God tells us plainly—so incline your ear, come unto God and hear...

Romans 3: 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

Romans 7: 7: What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet....12: Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13: Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

This is the reason the law of Sinai entered, that God might use the law to make his people see our sin. But if God made the everlasting covenant in eternity, made all these promises to Christ which Christ fulfilled, what happened when the law entered and we died? Here is good news: though God’s people sinned and died, it did not alter the everlasting covenant God made with himself in Christ before the foundation of the world. God made this promise first, with Christ, so Christ stood as the Surety of his people from everlasting. The covenant of works could not change that. God shows us this in that God made this same promise to Abraham in Christ 430 years before the law at Sinai was given. But the covenant of works, did not and could change God’s everlasting covenant.

Galatians 3: 15: Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17: And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18: For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19: Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [till Christ should come to whom the promise was made, till each child is born-again to whom the promise is made]...21: *Is the law then against the promises of God?* God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye [who believe] are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29: And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Be sure to get this: God never gave the law at Mt. Sinai for any sinner to come to God by the deeds of the law, not before conversion, not after conversion. We had already come under the curse by breaking God's covenant of works in the garden! God gave the law at Mt. Sinai to show his people our sins, to drive us to Christ, to bring us to cast our eternal care into Christ's hands that we might be saved through faith in Christ. Once brought to faith in Christ we are no longer under the law! Christ has redeemed us from the law. Believers are under the everlasting covenant of grace.

Here is the first question: Has God used his law to shut your mouth? To show you that you are guilty before God? To give you a knowledge of your sins? Has God used his law to show you there is no use in trying to pretend any longer, you cannot come to God by your law-keeping—you have never kept the law of God, only transgressed?

Here is the next question: Has God used his law to show you your need for Christ to justify you and make you righteous before God? Has he drawn you to cast all your care on Christ? God says,

Isaiah 55: 3: Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.

Amen!