

Series: Isaiah

Title: God's Successful Word

Text: Isaiah 55: 10-13

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In Isaiah 55, God calls thirsty sinners to come to Christ, the fountain of living waters, v3, "and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." What assurance do we have that God is able to make the soul of dead sinners live? How can I be sure that God is able to make a covenant with me that is everlasting and give me "sure" mercies? Those are reasonable questions. Do you want to know the answer to those questions? Our text today answers those questions.

God declares something else in verse 5. Speaking of Christ and to Christ, God declares that when Christ calls his people out of every nation, this will be the result: "nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee." This interests me as a preacher preaching to lifeless sinners. How can I, as God's preacher, be assured that when Christ speaks through the preaching of the gospel his people will come to Christ? I want to know the answer to those questions, don't you? Our text gives us the answer.

Isaiah 55: 10: For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh 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 goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Proposition: The way we can be sure that God shall make good on every promise is because God's word never returns to him void but always accomplishes that which God is pleased to accomplish and prospers in the thing whereto God sends it.

Title: God's Successful Word

To illustrate this truth, God made the rain and the snow. I have told you, the things of God's creation do not accidentally illustrate the things of God. Scripture declares everything God created by Christ Jesus, he created "for him.... And he is before all things, and by him all things consist...that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col 1: 16-18) So God made the rain and the snow to illustrate God's work by his Word.

I. FIRST, AS THE RAIN AND SNOW COME DOWN FROM ABOVE SO GOD'S WORD COMES DOWN FROM ABOVE—Isaiah 55: 10: For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven,...11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:

Rain and Snow from Above

The rain and snow come from God above.

Psalm 104:13: He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

Job 37:6: For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

God's Written Word from Above

Likewise, God's word comes from God above to his people. The written word is the message from God to his people—"My Word, out of My mouth."—

2 Peter 1: 21: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The written word of God declares who God is—things that never would entered the heart of man. It declares the truth of our depravity and utter nothingness in sin—no man would have written such things about himself and the whole human race!

God's Preached Word from Above

Likewise, it is God who sends his gospel to his child and speaks his word into the heart of his child.

Deuteronomy 31: 32: 1: Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2: My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

The new man is like the tender herb. God, by speaking his word to our hearts, nourishes the inner man quietly like the dew falls softly upon the tender herb. Our old man of flesh is grass. Grass falls down flat in a heavy shower. To our flesh, God's gospel is like a heavy shower upon the grass. So while the gospel nourishes our inward man, it mortifies the flesh.

Christ the Word from Above

Likewise, Christ the Word, came down from above from God and was made flesh.

John 1: 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... 14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

II. SECONDLY, AS THE RAIN AND SNOW ALWAYS ACCOMPLISHES GOD'S PURPOSE SO DOES GOD'S WORD—Isaiah 55: 10: For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,... 11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please,...

Rain and Snow Accomplish God's Purpose

Rain and snow falls. Men murmur. Rain and snow evaporates. Men murmur—as if the rain and snow did not accomplish God's purpose. But God says every drop of rain and every snow flake accomplish God's purpose in the earth. They water the earth; they make it bring forth and bud.

Christ the Word Accomplished God's Purpose

The same is true of Christ the Word. He came and now is returned unto God. But not before accomplishing the purpose for which God sent him. Christ came to accomplish these things:

Daniel 9:24: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city: Christ came to accomplish this work for God's elect—God's people—who make up God's holy city, New Jerusalem. He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."

To finish the transgression: Christ finished the transgression of his people so that God never again sees transgressions in us.

To make an end of sins: Christ made an end of sins for his people, purging our sins by his own blood, so that God never again remembers our sins

To make reconciliation for iniquity: Christ made reconciliation to God for the iniquity of his people: he purged our sin, made atonement for our sin; satisfied the law and justice of God for us, and made full restitution to God for all our iniquity toward God—Ro 5:10: 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.

To bring in everlasting righteousness: Christ brought in everlasting righteousness for his people—by his obedience throughout his life, even to the death of the cross—the one and only righteousness of the believer is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by Christ making us the righteousness of God in him.

To seal up the vision and prophecy: Christ fulfilled all that was written of him by the prophets and all the ceremonies.

To anoint the most holy: Christ is anointed the most Holy with the Holy Ghost as Man and he is now entered into the most holy place, the holiest of holies, at God's right hand to make intercession for us.

When Christ said, John 17: 4: I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Then again on the cross, he cried, “It is finished.” (Jn 19: 30) **THIS WHOLE WORK WAS COMPLETE!**

Sinner, Christ is Way God can say in v7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. So you and I can be certain that “All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God” because Christ the Word did not fail but finished the work of redemption for God and his people. (2 Cor 1: 20)

The Preached Word Accomplishes God's Purpose

Same is true as the gospel goes forth. God said that as Christ calls his people through the gospel, v5...”nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.”

God has raised Christ and glorified Christ as the GodMan with all power over all, the Head over all things to the church. So when Christ calls through the gospel, the sure and certain result is—

The Word Waters

Like the rain, the word “watereth” his child. We are born dry, barren earth after our father Adam, dead in trespasses and in sins. The dry ground without rain is useless. The dead sinner is useless without the word of God's grace, without Christ the Word formed in the heart. But the Lord promises his people

Isaiah 58:11: the LORD shall...satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Illustration: A farmer can plow and work the hard dry ground and it just becomes dryer and dryer, harder and harder. But when the slow rain falls, that same dry, hard ground is softened and full of moisture. So it is with the sinner. Men can work the dead sinner: he's dryer and more hardened. But the word of God's grace melts the hard heart and gives a broken and contrite spirit.

Listen to how God describes the coming of Christ the Word into the heart of his child through the preaching of his word.

Hosea 6:3: Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning;...

Christ the Word comes into the heart and light begins to dawn as morning light after the long night of darkness, as irresistibly as morning light, growing and increasing as morning light.

Hosea 6: 4:...and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Israel had two rains each year: one in autumn quickly after the seed was sown which made the seed germinate. The other in the spring, when the corn was ripe and it was time for harvest. Christ came the first time after John was sent sowing the seed of the gospel. And Christ comes into the heart after the seed of the gospel is sown. Christ is the Water of Life, the Life of our new man.

The Word Brings Forth and Makes Fruit

Then God says, the rain "maketh it bring forth and bud." So the Word formed in the heart brings forth. The word brings forth life where there was only death; the word brings forth faith to receive the truth and love of it; the word brings forth hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood, obedience, and salvation; the word brings forth love which cleaves to the Lord with the whole heart; the word brings forth patience and contentment to endure afflictions trusting God's word. All gospel fruit is produced by Christ the Word in the heart.

When men do not see results immediately they think God's gospel is returned to God void so they turn to other means-methods. They are like the children who did not see Moses return from the mount so they turned to their own wisdom and way. But God says, "my word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please."

Not a drop of rain or a flake of snow is wasted. It may be swallowed up in the desert, but it is not lost. Every drop has a mission, and its mission will be fulfilled. So it is with the gospel word.

2 Corinthians 2:15: For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

The problem men have is that like the rain and the snow, the efficacy of the word depends entirely upon the mouth of God to bless it—he says "my word shall accomplish that which I please, whereunto I sent it!"

God's Word is Irresistible

Does man have any control over when or where the rain and the snow fall? No! Man arrogantly imagines he can control the climate. But man has no ability to bring rain and snow or to hinder rain and snow. It comes whenever and wherever God is pleased to send it. God said to Job:

Job 38: 22: Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, 23: Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? 24: By

what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? 25: Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; 26: To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man is; *on* the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man; 27: To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground*; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? 28: Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? 29: Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?...37: Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven, 38: When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

The Word Comes Where God Sends It

Likewise, the Word of God comes from God, at God's appointed time, at his appointed place, and none can stop it—"whereto I sent it."

Christ the Word came "in the fullness of time"—at the time appointed from before the foundation of the world. Satan tried to stop him. Wicked men tried to prevent him. But none hindered the Word from being made flesh and dwelling among us.

Likewise, it is God's word comes into the heart of his child when and where God is pleased to send it. To know God—in spirit and in truth—is not the work of human will or works any more than it is our will or works that makes it rain and snow. Just as we have no power to stop the rain or the snow from coming down from above, we have no more power to stop the Word of Life from entering the heart at God's appointed time

Illustration: Free will preachers are like rain-dancers trying to accomplish what they have no power to accomplish.

John 1: 12: them that believe on his name: 13...were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

God Personally Accompanies His Word

The truth of the gospel is the only word in which God personally sends where he will and personally accompanies with his Divine presence. The "wisdom of this world" is "foolishness" with God." But God says, "My Word shall accomplish that which I please, and shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." A man can declare his own words but it is only God's word that God blesses.

This is offensive to men because it means God's will and man's will are on a collision course and all God's adversaries shall be defeated—every enemy shall be made his footstool. But it gives his true people great content to wait on God to bless his word. And we have to wait.

Illustration: When I was 13 I planted my first vegetable garden. I tilled the ground, prepared it and planted the seed. Then I waited for the rain. But I was so excited, I grew impatient. One day I dug down to see if anything was happening. Sure enough the seed had germinated. So I covered it back up and waited. Eventually, the little plants began to peek out of the earth. But that whole time, there was an unseen work going on beneath the ground. So it is when God plants his word in the heart. God works unseen by his word so we have to wait on God.

III. THIRDLY, GOD ALSO SAYS LIKE THE RAIN AND SNOW HIS WORD SHALL PROSPER—
Isaiah 55: 10: [The rain and snow not only brings forth life] **it gives seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, [not only shall it] shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**

The Word Provides Bread

God promises to prosper us by continually giving us Christ the Bread by his word—“bread for the eater.”

John 6:35: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst....37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

The bread must be eaten; “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Believe on Christ the Bread. Feed on Christ the Bread. Those who do shall never hunger or thirst. He gives Everlasting Life, everlasting Righteousness and eternal redemption. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance we shall never hunger or thirst for anything we need for acceptance with God.

God’s word shall never fail us. The word of life quickens. The divine word converts the soul. The word of wisdom makes us wise unto salvation. Truth which is after godliness sanctifies. The nourishing word grows in grace. The word of consolation comforts. The word is a storehouse to thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. As divine light, the word is our guide. As a spiritual sword, the word is the mighty weapon of our warfare in the hands of the Spirit. When the books are opened, the word will judge us at the last day. Such is the word of God, which lives and abides forever.

The Word Gives Seed

Also, God promises to prosper us by giving “seed to the sower.” When the seed from the harvest comes in, we not only eat it, we also sow the seed for a future harvest.

Likewise, the gospel is not only to give us life and nourishment, but we are to sow this word for the calling out of Christ’s lost sheep. We are to help the poor so we can preach the gospel to them, help each other so we can have the gospel, provide for the furtherance of the gospel so others can hear the word.

Some might say, “What I have is my own why should I cast it upon the waters?” How soon we would starve, if the clouds overhead said “We have the waters for ourselves, why should we cast it upon the earth.” But God’s word says,

Ecclesiastes 11: 3: If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth:

God promises, just as he keeps the clouds full, he shall keep us full so we can sow his word to others.

Ecclesiastes 11: 4: He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. 5: As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. 6: In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Someone sowed this word to us. And look how God blessed their sowing. Aren’t you glad? Aren’t you full? So sow thy seed to those in need. God promises “it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” If God has given you a heart to sow his gospel he will provide for you so you can sow the seed of the word:

2 Corinthians 9: 9: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10: Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

2 Corinthians 9: 8: And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:...11: Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

The Word Returns to God

Think of the rain and snow. "It returneth not thither," that is, not in the same form. It does return by evaporation; but not as rain and snow. Likewise, when the Lord is pleased to give life it returns not to him in the same form. The Sun of Righteousness causes his word to return as praise, gratitude, love, thanksgiving; fruit in the heart, in the lips, and in the life of his people.

So sinner, you can be sure God will be merciful if you come to him. And brethren, we can be sure God's word shall accomplish that which God pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto God sends it.

Amen!