

# God's Ways • Isaiah 55:6-11

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Pilot

1. A pilot encountered a bit of trouble while flying his little airplane.
2. He called the control tower and said, "Pilot to tower, I'm 300 miles from the airport, six hundred feet above the ground, and I'm out of fuel. I am descending rapidly. Please advise. Over."
3. The dispatcher said, "Tower to pilot, repeat after me: 'Our Father Who art in heaven . . .'"

### B. Three Important Lessons

1. The text before us today has *three important lessons*
2. They're lessons we all need to pay close attention to because – quite frankly, like that pilot, we don't have a lot of time
3. I realize that sounds drastic – but it is absolutely true!
4. As the very first lesson teaches us . . .

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 6-7

**6 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

**7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**

1. Isaiah lays the emphasis in these words on the here & now

**Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

2. The time to do business with God is now!
3. Many people believe God is real, and that they ought to live for Him, but they put it off – they delay.
4. They reason within themselves – “When I'm a bit older and had a chance to enjoy what the world has to offer, then I'll get religious.”
5. They think, “As soon as this relationship I'm in is over, then I'll get right with God.”
6. There are as many excuses for failing to seek God as there are people making them!
7. But what all these excuses have in common is the presumption that there will be a “later” in which they can get right with God.
8. No one is guaranteed a “later.”
9. All we have for sure is right now!
10. Dan & Bob were identical twin brothers.
  - a. one year they were invited by a friend to a church high school summer camp, and they went

- b. one night, at the campfire, one of the counselors gave a powerful and passionate appeal to receive Christ and gave the kids a chance to do so, a few responded, but not Dan & Bob.
- c. on the way back to their cabin, the brothers talked and both admitted they had been stirred and realized they needed to confess Christ
- d. so they agreed, on the *last night* of the camp, they would do so
- e. the next day, while water-skiing on the lake, Dan cut too wide too fast and fell close to shore
- f. when the boat turned around and came back, they found him face down in the water.
- g. Bob and a couple other boys jumped in and lifted him into the boat
- h. he was dead – several water moccasins had been disturbed by his fall so close to land and had bitten him
- i. Bob was inconsolable in his grief – most of all lamenting that they had put off their decision to receive Christ for a *more convenient time*

**Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

- 11. This verse really speaks to me and provokes me to become more whole-hearted in my devotion to God.
- 12. This week, I was talking with a man who told me he wished he could go back to his teens with all the knowledge he has now, and relive those years over again
  - a. how *differently* he would live them
  - b. and how he *regrets* he didn't live them the way they should have been lived
  - c. anyone here look back with *regret* on a year or two of their past?
- 13. I'm teaching a class at a private high school, M-F > 23 students
  - a. *every day* I wish I could say or do something that would instill in them a sense of urgency to wake up and seek God NOW!
  - b. a few of the students *are* diligent in their studies and seem to have a genuine faith in God
  - c. but the rest of the class seems to be far more interested in chatting it up, poking each other, giggling, passing notes and goofing off
  - d. they only rarely take notes, are sloppy in their work, and it seems they could care less if they get anything out of the class
  - e. they're just bidding their time, putting in their hours
  - f. without exception, every student there has the potential of getting an "A"
  - g. but only a handful are
- 14. Every day, I stand in front of them and lecture on US History, and I work hard at making the class interesting and as engaging as my limited abilities allow.
- 15. But they look at me with a look of total boredom, or they turn to their neighbor and chit chat.
- 16. So badly I want to say to them, "You guys are missing it! One day when you are my age you're going to think back on this period of your life and kick yourself you didn't apply yourself more to your studies and seeking God."
- 17. Sometimes – I actually DO say it!
- 18. But you know what? As often as I find myself thinking that about them, I have to stop and wonder if in 10 or 20 years I won't look back at myself NOW and

think the same thing!

- a. am I just toying around the edges of my relationship with God?
  - b. am I, like those students in my history class, just showing up to life each day, occupying my spot, staring blankly into God's revelation of Himself while He displays before me the abundance that can be mine if I'll just seek Him with *my whole heart*?
19. Listen – seek the Lord with your whole heart, with all you are and all you have.
  20. Don't just play round the edges of the pool – splashing in the shallows
  21. Immerse yourself in the depths of God's truth and grace
  22. And don't put it off another day
  23. God is calling you deeper – deeper than you've ever gone
  24. Go! Follow Him!

**Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.**

### **B. Vs. 8-9**

**8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.**

**9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

1. Here is the second lesson we must learn: We can trust God because He knows what He is doing!
2. God is God & you are not! And God's ways are so far above your ways that there is no comparison
3. One of the great errors we make is to begin to think that God thinks as we do.
4. So when things happen in our lives that we would not chose and do not like, we begin to wonder if God knows what He's doing.
  - a. we call His love and justice into question
  - b. like Job, we demand answers from the Almighty
5. We forget that God's ways are not our ways.
6. And if God did explain Himself to us, it would be so complex we'd fry some wires trying to understand it
7. You see, His ways are informed by His omniscience
  - a. He knows the end from the beginning
  - b. and all the moments in between
8. He sees all the facts and knows all the details
9. And in it all, He is at work to accomplish His perfect will and awesome glory, as well as our good.
10. Our lives are like a tapestry where each day is another trip of the shuttle on the loom.
  - a. God knows the pattern He is weaving
  - b. only heaven will allow us the vantage point of seeing the completed work

***The Loom of Time***

Man's life is laid in the loom of time  
To a pattern he does not see,  
While the Weaver works and the shuttle flies  
Till the dawn of eternity.

Some shuttles are filled with silver threads  
And some with threads of gold,  
While often only the darker hues  
Are all that they may hold.

But the weaver watches with skillful eye  
Each shuttle fly to and fro,  
And sees the pattern so deftly wrought  
As the loom moves sure and slow.

God surely planned the pattern:  
Each thread, the dark and fair,  
Is chosen by His master skill  
And placed in the web with care.

He knows only its beauty,  
And guides the shuttles which hold  
The threads so unattractive,  
As well as the threads of gold.

Not till each loom is silent,  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
Shall God reveal the pattern  
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads were as needful  
In the weaver's skillful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
For the pattern which He has planned. [\[1\]](#)

11. I heard an illustration recently that I thought captured what these verses are saying in a specially potent way
  - a. if you go down to the beach at low tide, you can find at several places along the coast here, tide pools
  - b. and in the bottom of each are all kinds of little creatures
  - c. one of them is the sea anemone; it looks like a little underwater flower, but it's actually an animal
  - d. it attaches itself to the rocks and lives its entire life in one spot
  - e. it's whole realm of existence comprises about a foot or so; that is its whole universe, though it is in fact living in a vast ocean
  - f. there you are looking down at the anemone from your lofty vantage

point

- g. your world is far bigger, almost *infinitely* bigger than the anemone's
  - h. but we are like the anemone in its tiny little pool when it comes to comparing ourselves and our understanding to God
12. The difference between and us and the anemone on one hand and us and God on the other is that while you and I really don't care a whole lot about the sea anemone, God *does* care about us.
  13. And He applies all His power and wisdom to *take* care of us
  14. We are so limited in our understanding, we don't always see His hand as the good thing it is.
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15. And now, the third lesson . . .

### **C. Vs. 10-11**

- 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make 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 goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.
1. Isaiah uses a picture from nature all of us can relate to
  2. We all know what it's like to drive by a barren field during a period of no rain
    - a. for a long time, nothing grows on it
    - b. but then the rain falls one day
    - c. and just a couple days later, little shoots of growth have sprung up all over
    - d. within a couple weeks the weeds are standing knee high
  3. There is potential life in that soil that just needs some moisture, then it springs forth
  4. God's word is like spiritual rain.
  5. It possesses the power to bring forth life.
  6. And God says that His word *will accomplish* what He intends it to accomplish
  7. It will never fail!
  8. It will always return to Him having done what it was supposed to do
  9. This is why it is so important that each of us be committed to a regular exposure to God's Word.
    - a. it has the power to bring life!
    - b. it has the ability to soften the dry and seemingly sterile areas of our lives
    - c. like the rain, it penetrates us, reaches in to the inner person, and raises up something toward God
  10. This is why our only program at Calvary Chapel is to teach God's Word
    - a. it's God's Word that brings life, not man's word
    - b. if you want psychology, listen to the radio or buy the books
    - c. if you want entertainment and some funny jokes to make you laugh, watch TV
    - d. what we're going to stay with here is God's Word
  11. I am continually amazed that so many churches have turned to every latest fad that comes down the pike to get a crowd

- a. there are actually high priced church growth consultants who go out to churches and analyze the church's program to see what they can be doing differently to be more successful
  - b. and when they leave, they usually hand a dozen page report to the elders about changes that need to be made and suggestions for maximizing church growth
12. It ought to be a short report – one page in fact, with just one suggestion:
13. **TEACH THE WORD!**
14. Why?

**10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make 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 goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**

**Hebrew 4:12**

**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

**2 Timothy 3:16 & 17**

**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

**Psalms 19:7-11**

**7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;**

**8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;**

**9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.**

**10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.**

**11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.**

15. In replying to the temptation of Satan that He turn stones into loaves of bread, Jesus said,

**"Man shall not live by bread alone, but He shall live – BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD!"**

16. If you come to us for counsel, what you can expect from us is the counsel of scripture and you'll be disappointed if you come for something else

17. When people come to *you* and ask your counsel, what they need is not your august and vast wisdom – they need to know what God says – so tell them

18. And if you don't know, then your first task ought to be to learn

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *It Accomplishes*

1. When a local pastor died, his relatives found he had neatly tied up the messages he had delivered over the years and placed a card on top of them with this inscription: "Where has the influence gone of all these sermons I have preached?"
2. On the bottom he had written in large letters, "OVER."
3. On the other side this answer was found:
  - a. "Where are last year's sunrays? They have gone into fruits and grain and vegetables to feed mankind.
  - b. "Where are last year's raindrops? Forgotten by most people, of course, but they did their refreshing work, and their influence still abides.
  - c. "So, too, my sermons have gone into lives and made them nobler, more Christlike, and better fitted for Heaven."
4. I don't expect that you will remember what I preached 4 Sundays ago, or even *last* Sunday.
5. But what I do expect is that God will be faithful to His promise to take His word as it is proclaimed from this pulpit, and use it in the lives of those who sit here each week
6. That it will nourish your spirit and bring forth life that will glorify God.
7. Is it doing that?
8. Are you growing here?
9. Do you know God more now than you did a year ago as a result of your being a member of this church?
10. Do you love Jesus more, are you closer to Him?
11. Good – then God is keeping His promise!

#### B. *Recap*

1. Look again at the three lessons Isaiah proclaims here
2. 1 = Seek God!
3. 2 = Trust God!
4. 3 = Listen to God!
5. Say them with me
  
6. 1 = Seek God! – NOW!
7. 2 = Trust God! – He knows what He's doing!
8. 3 = Listen to God! – His Word is life!
  
9. If we learn these lessons well, then we will experience a new level of intimacy with God that will transform not only our lives, but our homes, our church, and our county.

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[1] --Author Unknown, quoted in Hazel Felleman, *Best Loved Poems of the American People*