

Series: Isaiah

Title: Persevere in Faith, Judgment and Justice

Text: Isaiah 56: 1-2

Date: November 20, 2014

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

The end of Isaiah 55, we saw the effect of the Word when God blesses the gospel to the heart of a sinner.

The Word gives new liberty— “ye shall go out with joy.” (Is 55: 12) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, making us the righteousness of God in him—so we are no longer under the law, we are under grace.

The Word gives a new Leader—“and be led forth with peace.” (Is 55: 12) Christ leads us forth by the Holy Spirit through the gospel.

The Word gives new eyes to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus---“the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” (Is 55: 12)

The Word makes us new creatures, new creation, in Christ—“Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” (Is 55: 13)

The Word makes us who once gloried in ourselves, to now glory in the Lord—“and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” (Is 55: 13)

So Isaiah 56 continues speaking to believers who are made new by the Word. Our text teaches us to: Persevere in Faith, Judgment and Justice.

When a sinner is saved by grace by Christ’s doing and dying, it makes the believer keep that which is equitable and right—toward God and toward our fellow man. We do that by one, turning from all our vain works for righteousness and salvation to rest in Christ; and two, by seeking to obey God’s word in our worship toward God and in our lives toward our fellow man. God says continue in both these.

Isaiah 56: 1: Thus saith the LORD,

This is the word of the LORD God. This is God’s will for those he has made new by grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 56: 1: Keep ye judgment, and do justice:

Toward God and your fellow man do that which God says is equitable and right. Here is our one motive.

Isaiah 56: 1: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

It is because Christ is God’s Salvation and Righteousness for his people. Believers of old were looking forward to Christ coming the first time; We look for Christ’s return the second time.

Isaiah 56: 2: Blessed is the man *that* doeth this, and the son of man *that* layeth hold on it; [my Salvation and Righteousness]

These next two things make up what it is for the believer to persevere in faith, judgment and justice.

Isaiah 56: 2:...That keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it

Resting on the Sabbath Day typified believers resting in Christ our Salvation and Righteousness through faith.

Isaiah 56: 2:...and keepeth his hand from doing any evil

Believers seek to do as God commands in his word toward God and our fellow man, doing judgment and justice, that which is equitable and right. To better understand how verse 1—applied to the believer in Isaiah’s day and how it applies to the believer in our day—let’s begin with verse 2.

BELIEVE AND REST IN CHRIST

First, we begin where the sinner begins. We begin with that which typifies resting in Christ through faith, “Blessed is the man...that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.” (Is 56: 2) To keep judgment (equity) and to do justice (that which is right) we must first rest from all our works, trusting God’s Salvation and God’s Righteousness, who is Christ Jesus his Son.

There were many Sabbaths but we will look at the seventh day sabbath of rest in connection with the manna from heaven. It pictures faith in Christ Jesus our Bread and rest in Christ our Sabbath Rest. In Exodus 16, God gave manna from heaven to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Clearly, Christ said he is the true Bread from heaven, “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.” (Jn 6: 35)

The works of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent. That is what God teaches us in the wilderness with the manna and the Sabbath day. When God gave the manna, he commanded the children of Israel that on the sixth day (Friday) they were to gather enough bread for two days (enough to last Friday and Saturday). Saturday was the day of rest, the seventh day, the holy Sabbath.

Get the picture. Christ the Bread finished the six days of his work on this earth by laying down his life on the 6th day, Friday, on the cross. He fulfilled the law in precept and penalty for his people in judgment and justice—in equity and righteousness. When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Christ, through faith in Christ (eating Christ the Bread) we have full justification, full righteousness in Christ. Christ said, “He that believes on me shall never hunger or thirst.” Through faith in Christ, we have the judgment and justice God requires in the full equitable amount. And we have enough to last the whole day of grace.

In the wilderness, having plenty of manna, in the seventh day Sabbath, they were to rest from all their works. It meant, toward God, they were to believe; toward God they were to keep judgment and do justice trusting God’s word; they were to trust that God had provided all they needed in the manna; they were to rest from their works because they believed God that the manna would sustain them and be their life the whole seventh day.

It pictured us keeping judgment and justice by believing on Christ and resting from our works; trusting Christ is our Life, our seventh (perfection), throughout the day of grace. Notice in Exodus 16: 18, “He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” So it is with the believer. Our life in Christ is not our faith but Christ and his abundance. Those who believe on him—be it much or little—“never hunger nor thirst but have everlasting life.” Sinner, believe on Christ and you’ll find judgment and justice which is equal to God which you need, you’ll find rest with God.

Also, in the wilderness, they were to keep equity and do justice toward their fellow brethren by taking all yokes off everyone in their house—man and beast—so all could rest. It pictured Christ who took the yoke of

the law off everyone in his house—off all God’s elect—by perfecting us forever by his one offering. So believers are not under the law but under grace. We cease from our works for righteousness and holiness.

Also, we keep equity and that which is right for our fellow brethren, by not bringing each other back under the legal yoke of the law. We are to take off that legal yoke, declaring that in Christ we have complete Righteousness so that we can Rest from our works this whole day of grace.

This is faith, judgment and justice. Through faith in Christ—resting in Christ our Perfect Rest—our Seventh Sabbath—we fulfill both tables of the law in equity, the righteousness which God requires.

TWO TABLES HINGED BY THE SABBATH

In Exodus 20, if you look at the law, there are two tables. The first table is toward God. (Ex 20: 2-7) The second table is toward man. (Ex 20: 12-17) In the middle is the Sabbath. The Sabbath involved trusting God, as well as, taking the yoke off fellow man; it was toward God and man; toward both tables of the law.

Christ is that Seventh Sabbath—our perfect rest. He fulfilled the first table toward God in equity and righteousness (judgment/justice) and Christ fulfilled the second table toward all his people in equity and righteousness. Through faith in Christ, by his doing and dying, God’s elect fulfill the first table toward God and the second table toward man.

Exodus 20: 8: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

When God writes the new covenant on our hearts, the Holy Spirit says, “Remember Christ, to keep him sanctified in our hearts.

Exodus 20: 9: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: 11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

The reason God used the seventh day to typify Christ is because God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day because the works were finished. Christ finished the works that God gave him to do in the days he walked this earth, creating his new creation in righteousness, so that God is satisfied in Christ and satisfied with his believing people who are resting in Christ. God blessed Christ and hallowed him raising him to his right hand where Christ is resting from all his works and God is resting satisfied in Christ his Son.

WORKING INSTEAD OF RESTING IN CHRIST

But in the wilderness, and all through the old covenant, as they do today, most tried to work, rather than resting, in the seventh day. And because they did so, God rejected them and cut them off from his people. Those in whose heart Christ is not made Righteousness and Sanctification, who refuse to rest in Christ through faith, are not God’s elect and not God’s true people. Those who attempt to add their works to Christ’s works find no Bread in Christ. They hunger and thirst because they have not truly eaten Christ through faith. They have no rest in Christ. Christ is only the end of the law for those who believe. (Rom 10: 1-4) When they turn believers back to the law, using the law of the Sabbath to make sinners attend a Sunday church service on the first day of the week, they break the very spirit of the law which is to take the yoke off the believer so he can rest and feed upon Christ the Bread. All who meet God, trusting in their works, mixing God’s grace with their works, shall be destroyed by God’s justice because they have broken both tables of

the law through unbelief. Their works are iniquity (inequitable, not equal the righteousness of the law); their works are unjust by not resting in Christ.

Hebrews 4: 9: There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10: For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. 11: Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

So faith in Christ is the first way we keep judgment and justice. In verse 1: God says Christ is “My Righteousness” and “my Salvation” Judgment means equity. Christ’s obedience to the law is equal—is equitable; it is the exact judgment of God’s justice, righteousness. Our obedience to the law is not equal—is not equitable; it is not the exact judgment of justice equal to God’s righteousness. So first, we keep judgment and justice by resting in Christ through faith. “Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it,” by resting in Christ through faith.

KEEPING OUR HAND FROM EVIL

Secondly, the believer keeps equity and does that which is right toward God and men by keeping our hand from evil. (Is 56: 2) Some claim if we preach that Christ has fulfilled the law for his people, so that the believer is no longer under the law but under grace, believers will live in sin. They say the doctrine of grace is licentious doctrine—that it gives the believer a license to sin. It is not true! They do evil by saying that of God’s doctrine. Our text says it is not so. The apostle Paul was accused of preaching licentious doctrine. He wrote:

Romans 5: 20: For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord...6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2: God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Back in October, in our bulletin, I put a quote from Brother Paul Mahan, “Free grace no more makes a person want to sin than health makes a person want to get sick again. The notion of sovereign grace giving people a license to sin is the foolish excuse of Pharisees who are not willing to give up their own righteousness. God forbid such talk.”

Our text declares that the doctrine of God’s sovereign grace in Christ Jesus does not make the believer want to continue living in sin. A sinner saved by grace, through the cross of Christ, is given a new desire to keep that which is equitable and right by resting from all our vain works in Christ our Righteousness and Salvation and by obeying God’s word in our lives.

LED BY CHRIST IN SPIRIT

The way we are kept from turning our hand to evil is by being led effectually of Christ through the Holy Spirit through the gospel. We learn the Spirit of the law, rather than the dead-letter, from Christ through the gospel who teaches us from where he is set at God’s right hand in the holy mount. (Mt 5: 1-2)

The Pharisee’s, like they do today, accused Christ of preaching licentiousness, calling him a devil. But it is from Christ that the believer learns the Spirit of the law in truth. Christ said,

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Christ fulfilled the law for his people, making us righteous, through faith. Through faith we establish the law by Christ's doing, not our own.

Matthew 5: 19: Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven:

Will-workers, self-righteous Pharisees, bring the law of God down to man's level; ignoring the spirit, the heart-reaching, condemnation of the law—therefore, by their obedience to the letter only, they break the law and teach others to break it. They break it by teaching that men can obtain righteousness by their obedience to the law. (Note Mt 5: 20) Christ said,

Matthew 5: 19:...but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

That is what Christ did and teaches. He fulfilled the law for his people and he teaches us to rest in him for righteousness. We establish the law through faith in Christ. Then Christ teaches us the spirit of grace and love, as he does in his sermon on the mount and throughout the epistles of the New Testament. Which every believer delights in. In Ephesians, we have been learning how to keep judgment and do that which is right in love and grace, not in the letter in legalism.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Let's see some examples of keeping judgment and doing justice and keeping our hand from evil, by what Christ taught in the sermon on the mount.

In Matthew 5: 21-26, Christ teaches murder is in the heart, in unjustified anger. We only learn that through the Spirit from Christ, not from the letter of the law. If you are in the midst of making an offering to God by serving others, by giving, and so on, and you remember your brother has something against you. Do not think your offering will make up for that. Christ said, "First, be reconciled to thy brother then come offer thy gift." (MT 5: 24) First, be reconciled to Christ. He has ought against you. Then also be reconciled to your earthly brother.

In Matthew 5: 27-32, Christ teaches adultery is in looking with lust upon a woman in the heart and by divorce. The only way we could be forgiven as the adulterous bride of Christ is by Christ being that one member who took the place of his bride and was plucked out in our room and stead so that the whole body did not perish. Now, by Christ' work our old husband the law is dead to us and we are dead to the law so that we are no more an adultress but are married to Christ lawfully. (Rom 7: 1-4) And in that same passage, by using an exaggerated example, Christ teaches us who believe, whatever the cost, avoid looking upon a woman; husbands and wives do what it takes to remain faithful to each other. Grace makes us desire to do so above all else. Christ is teaching us to cast off the old man with his members and walk in the Spirit looking to Christ in faith.

I encourage you to read the whole sermon. Keeping equity and doing right is both toward God and our fellow man. We only learn these things in heart from Christ in Spirit, but we never learn them by returning to the letter of the law and to legalism. In fact, much of what Christ teaches includes the proper way to worship and pray. For example by not doing your alms to be seen of men, by not praying to be seen of men and so on—this shows us that keeping equity and doing that which is right includes our worship of God.

Christ sums up judgment and justice in Matthew 7: 12-14, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

So free grace is not a doctrine which gives believer’s a license to sin. It teaches us the one way to be justified and made righteous is through faith in Christ. And Christ teaches every believer to keep that which is equitable and to do that which is right, according to the commandment of Christ our master in Spirit, in grace and love, both in our worship toward God and in our dealings with our fellow man.

PERSEVERE IN FAITH, JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE

Lastly, to sum up verse 1 of our text, God says to his believing child, persevere in faith, judgment and justice because Christ is soon to come, “Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation *is* near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.” (Is 56: 1)

Christ is God’s Salvation and Righteousness for his people—“My Salvation” and “My Righteousness.” At the time of this prophecy, the one way the true children of Christ differed from all others were these two things. One, they kept the Sabbath from polluting it; under the Mosaic covenant they were required to keep the actual day; but the true believer did so beholding Christ in it. Two, they kept equity and did that which was right toward God in worship and toward their fellow man in their day-to-day dealings.

That is how we are distinguished as true believers under the everlasting covenant of grace. We rest from all our works for righteousness and sanctification in Christ who is our Righteousness and Sanctification—our Sabbath—and we keep equity and doing right according to Christ’s word in our worship of God and toward our fellow man.

OUR MOTIVE: CHRIST’S RETURN

Their encouragement and motive was that Christ was soon to come the first time. John the Baptist came preaching, “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mk 1: 15) John the Baptist was, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” (Lu 3: 4) And just as John said prepare for Christ’s arrival, our motive is Christ is soon to return the second time.

Imagine if I called you up in the middle of the night, tonight, to say, “Wake up! This is it! The Lord Jesus is here!” But you said, “Let me gather up my worldly things; let me have a drink; let me settle this quarrel between the lady down the street.” I would answer, “Don’t worry about all those worldly things; it is time to go with Christ!” That is what he is saying in our text. Paul said it this way:

Romans 13: 11: And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our Salvation nearer than when we believed. 12: The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13: Let us walk honestly, as in the day;[as in that day the Lord returns] not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Do you suppose we will be trying to make last minute provisions for our flesh—a few last minute works of darkness—in the day Christ returns? Everything we own will be destroyed in the earth in that day. Knowing then that this heaven and earth and all things in it, will soon be destroyed when Christ returns, Peter says,

2 Peter 3: 11: *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, 12: Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13: Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14: Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless...17: Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18: But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Christ shall “present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard...[that hope] is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” (Col 1: 22-23, 27)

We need God’s grace to do all of this! So our text says, to you who are made new creations in Christ by the gospel of God. One, keep believing and resting in Christ your Sabbath, without polluting faith by legal works. Two, keep judgment and justice in your worship and service to God and among men, keeping your hand from doing any evil! Three, persevere in Christ because God says, “my Salvation is near to come, and my Righteousness to be revealed.” Christ shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

Amen!