

Turn To Me And Be Saved

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[0 : 00] 10 with me in the chapter we just read, Isaiah 45, and you will find our text for meditation in verse 22.

Isaiah 45 verse 22, turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other.

This is one of those passages of the Bible who are well known. I am quite sure that you heard other sermons preached from this passage.

If I remember correctly this was the text that God used to say Spurgeon and bring him to salvation and I think it was a sermon that he preached almost every year to remind himself the work of God in his heart.

It's well known, it's a beautiful text rich of gospel teaching. Before we look at some of the aspects, some of the teaching from this verse, just a reminder that the Old Testament is not simply about Israel.

[1 : 19] We might be tempted that the New Testament is for the church and for the Gentiles, for everyone and that the Old Testament is only or exclusively for Israel.

Now of course Israel as a people is central in the Old Testament narrative. God spoke to them, God is working with them especially and yet we find even in this chapter that God controls is not limited to Israel, that God's will doesn't stop with Israel but he has a plan that is greater than Israel.

He calls Cyrus a Persian king to save Israel and he assures him that he will use him and that he will establish him.

But notice that the purpose of Cyrus being raised as a king is not simply the salvation of Israel but it is that people that today don't know God might know him.

So you can see that God's purpose is greater than Israel. But even in our text, those who are invited to come, those who are invited to turn are not Judas and Benjamin and Manasseh but the ends of the earth.

[2 : 46] And in Isaiah you find that God has promises and plans of peace and prosperity for Egypt and even for Assyria. So the Old Testament has plenty to say to the ends of the earth, not just to the Isolate but to all of us.

We also might be tempted to think that the Old Testament is all about the law, that with Jesus grace came, the New Testament is all about God's grace and the Old Testament is mainly or exclusively about the law.

We find plenty verses in the Old Testament that lead us to the Gospel, that are Gospel warning, Gospel invitations, Gospel sermons, even in this chapter, even in our very text we see the Gospel, we see God's grace, we see God's salvation.

God is unchanged. He was a God of grace in the Old Testament, as he is a God of grace in the New Testament. He is a righteous and holy God in the New Testament as well as he is the holy and righteous God in the Old Testament.

So the Old Testament is not just to teach us how to behave but also a reminder of God's grace and God's salvation.

- [4 : 18] The Old Testament doesn't see the Gospel as fulfilled but he looks forward to when that will happen. The New Testament is looking backward, is looking to the day Jesus came and died and was raised for our justification.
- The Old Testament longs for that day, promises that day and creates in us a desire for that day to come. Jesus said about Abraham that he saw my day and rejoice.
- From the very book of Genesis, from the book of origin, from the very beginning the people of God were waiting for the Gospel to be fulfilled.
- Then Paul tells us that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. So the Gospel is not a new thing. It's as old as God. From chapter 3 in Genesis, the Gospel is presented and revealed.
- And in our text, we find the Gospel and on this Gospel I would like to focus my attention with you this evening. So first of all, we learn from this text about the Gospel imperative.
- [5 : 31] When he says, turn to me and be saved, both words are in the original, imperatives. Now what is an imperative?
- An imperative is a command. It describes something that has to be done. It's not just an encouragement.
- It's not an exhortation, there's much more than that. It's a duty. It's a command. It's a must. And if you are a father or a mother, you know imperatives.
- We use them all the time with our children. Sometimes there is a please after that, often especially for Italian, there's no please. There's just imperatives.
- You have to do this. And now here we have an imperative. God is commanding something to all of us.
- [6 : 33] And this Gospel imperative is a divine imperative. The one speaking here is God himself because he says the second part, I am God says, turn to me for I am God.
- So the one speaking here is not Isaiah. He's the one writing. He's the one speaking for, but the author of this message, the origin of this message is God.
- So it is God who is commanding the ends of the earth to turn. It is God who is commanding the ends of the earth to be saved.
- So when the Gospel is preached, when the duty of the Gospel is presented before you, it's God himself who is speaking.
- Disobedience to the Gospel is not disobeying the church. Disobedience to the Gospel is not upsetting the minister. Disobedience to the Gospel call is a knack of rebellion against God.
- [7 : 41] It's not an option that we can say yes or no. It is a command that we have to obey. And we might do many good things in this life.
- If we don't listen to God as he speaks to us in the Gospel, if we refuse to turn, if we refuse to be saved, we are guilty before him because we are disobeying him.
- It doesn't matter how much obedience we do to our parents or to civil authorities or even to the elders and the minister. It doesn't matter if I disobey God.
- It's a divine imperative. And this imperative is also universal. All the ends of the earth are commanded to turn, not some of them, not just the Israelites, but all the ends of the earth.
- Everyone is called. Everyone is summoned. Everyone is invited. Everyone is called.
- [8 : 54] That means everyone. That means you. It means me. Everyone in this building, everyone in this community is called to turn and to be saved.
- So this imperative is not for the Christian only. This imperative is not only for the unbelievers. We are called to turn friends, all of us, from our sins to Christ.

We are all called to surrender to His will and to be saved. None of us is excluded.

Have you ever turned to Christ? Have you ever looked to Him, like says the Old Translation, for salvation? Have you sought Him?

Have you come to Him? Have you prayed Him for salvation? There is no limitation here. The invitation, the command, is not for the elect.

[10 : 00] It is for everyone. For those who believe and for those who do not believe. For those that will, who are chosen to believe and those who are not chosen to believe.

And yet the command is for everyone. You cannot use election as an excuse to come to Christ.

Because the command is said before you. God's imperative is for everyone to come, to turn and to believe.

This Gospel imperative is an imperative to conversion. What are we commanded here? What is God asking from the ends of the earth?

What is God asking to turn? And this is the Old Testament word for repentance. God is asking everyone to change.

[11 : 00] Is asking everyone to stop looking where they are looking and look somewhere else. God is commanding all men to stop going where they are going and turn and go towards Him.

What we are commanded here to do is to be converted. Is to repent and to believe.

To stop going towards a lost eternity and turn towards eternal life. To believe.

To come. To seek. That's the invitation friends. But also the command is to be saved.

Now that's a strange commandment. I would have said turn that you might be saved. But God says something different here.

[12 : 01] God commands all men, God commands all the ends of the earth to be saved. Salvation is not just the result of your faith and repentance.

Revelation is what God said before you. And He is saying to you take it. I want you to have it. I command you to take it.

It's an offer that shows you by using the imperative God shows you how sincere He is in this invitation. He is not pretending.

He is revealing His will. God is revealing to you what He wants. And He does that through an imperative.

He wants you to be saved. And He commands you to be saved. Even through this sermon friend.

[13 : 01] God is speaking to you today. God is reminding you your duty. You must be saved.

Jesus uses the same language when He speaks to Nicodemus. You must be born again. You must.

You know that being born again is the work of a sovereign God. That being born again is salvation means being saved. And God says you must do this.

You must have this. You must have salvation. God wants you to be saved.

That is command. That is His will. This is what the Gospel reveals about God.

[13 : 59] What will you do my friend? Will you hear? Will you listen? Will you obey? Or will you continue rejecting that command?

Will you keep disobeying God? Will you keep resisting His will? You must be saved. Secondly, we learn from this text about Gospel simplicity.

Now God uses a very simple word. He doesn't use a word like regeneration. He doesn't use a word like justification, although he does in other parts of the Bible.

But when he calls men to come to Him, He says, turn. Now my children know what the turn means. All of us know exactly what that means.

It's not difficult to understand. It is difficult to do it. Not because it is difficult in itself, because we don't want to do it.

[15 : 12] But see how simple the Gospel is presented by God. What a difference between God's word and some book, some books written by well-meaning Christian theologians.

I fear, friends, that we as preachers have made the Gospel a very complicated business. We have tried to examine every facet, every little detail.

We're trying to explain everything, questioning everything, doubting if faith is real faith, or fake faith. And we have made the Gospel difficult in the ears of sinners.

What it is to be converted, it is to turn. Turn from something to something else. You and I are, by nature, walking towards lost eternity.

Jesus uses the picture of a wide road. We're all walking on that road, a road that is made of sin and disobedience and rebellion and evil.

[16 : 34] We all follow that road with many billions of people. And then the Gospel comes to us and says, stop going towards that direction.

Stop behaving the way you are behaving and turn. But notice that the turning is towards someone and not something.

Very often, especially in reform circles, we present repentance turning as stopping doing sin and starting doing good.

That is not biblical repentance. That is legalism. That is moralism. Repentance is turning from darkness to light, from sin to God.

Not to a different lifestyle, but to God. That's why faith and repentance are together. We cannot divide them. Because if I turn from a way of living to another one, I do need faith.

[17 : 48] All I need is to work hard to try my best. But God calls us to turn to Him. And that requires faith, because it means that I turn from my evil ways to Him hoping in His mercy, hoping that He will welcome me, that He will receive me, and that He will save me.

And maybe you have tried to turn from sin to righteousness. Maybe you have tried to be a Christian in your own strength.

You have tried to satisfy God's requirements and God's law by yourself. That's not conversion.

That is kind of self-reformation. What God requires here, very simply, is that you and I go to Him.

So Jesus used the language of come to me. Again, very simple, very uncomplicated. What does it mean to come to Jesus?

[19 : 08] It means that He's there, and I go where He is. How do I go there? How do I speak to Him? Prayer. How do I obtain salvation?

By asking. Remember, the man was crucified in Jesus. What did he do? How did he come to Christ?

By asking Jesus, remember me. That's all you have to do to obey God's imperative.

That's all it is required that you turn to Him and ask Him for help. How am I going to be saved?

By asking the one who does the saving. Don't ask me. Don't ask the elders. Don't ask the church. Ask God because He is the only Savior.

[20 : 09] And you show faith and you show repentance by going to Him. Turn to Him, my friend. Look to Him.

Come to Him. Ask Him, and you will be saved. So there is gospel imperative. There is gospel simplicity.

Thirdly, there is gospel foundation. What is the argument that God uses to bring people to Him?

For I am God. So this tells us that the gospel is founded. And has its strength and power because it's the message of the only God.

Through the whole chapter, God has been arguing, I am the only God. There is no one besides me. God says, I am the Creator.

[21 : 20] No one else created things. I am the one who made all things because I am God. Then He says, I am revealing this to you, Cyrus, before it happens so that you may know that I am God and there is no one besides me.

God claims here to be the only God. There is no other God but Him. And this is one of the gospel foundation.

This is why we can be so dogmatic and so exclusive in our proclamation. There is no other gospel.

There is no other good news apart from God because no one else has the right and the power and the will to save us. There is only our God who can save us.

For I am God. God says to the people, I can truly save you. I can really deliver you from all your sins, from all your troubles, from all your afflictions, from death and bring you to eternity because I am God and there is no other.

[22 : 39] Trusting in other messages is foolishness because there is no other God that is able to save.

This God who is the only God is the mighty God. He reveals Himself as the Creator. He made all things out of nothing.

He spoke and the thing came to pass. His power is not limited to creation but is extended and revealed in history.

He says, I have chosen you, Cyrus. I have equipped you. I have prepared you. You don't know me but I know you from eternity and you are not a puppet in my own hand.

I do with you whatsoever pleases me for my own glory, for I am God and there is no one else beside me.

[23 : 40] God is saying, I've got the power to save you. I've got the authority to do this. Don't go to other gods. They just touches.

They can't hear you. They have legs but they can't walk. They have hands but they cannot work. They have ears but they cannot hear. They have mouth. They cannot speak.

I am God. So don't go to them for help but come to me. So come to God my friend.

He is God. There is no one else beside him and no one else is like him. He has the power to save you. There is no sin big enough.

There is no heart hard enough. There is no case difficult enough to stop God from saving sinners.

[24 : 37] This God is the righteous God. Notice that righteousness is presented in a context of salvation and yet this is what the gospel involved, the righteousness of God.

That is the requirement. You and I have to be as right as God to be saved. Nothing less. God demands perfect obedience, perfect righteousness.

So how can this be a comfort? How can this be good news? Luther used to hate this. He was terrified of God's righteousness until he understood that that righteousness that God demands is the same righteousness that he provides.

The righteousness of God is imputed, is offered in the gospel. So Paul can say to the Corinthians that we have become not righteous but the righteousness of God.

That's how God sees us friends in the gospel. If we turn from our sins, if we turn to him, if we ask him for salvation, the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Jesus will become our righteousness.

[26 : 03] And therefore we will be saved. Because of that righteousness, reckon as our righteousness, there is no more condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.

Because God sees us righteous, innocent, free from sin.

This gospel is founded in God as the Savior, the Savior God. Verse 21 is the righteous God and a Savior.

This is our hope friends. It's God. He's not in man, not in churches, but in God.

And sadly often as believers we turn our eyes away from God. We examine ourselves. And there is truth there.

[27 : 09] We have to examine ourselves. Friends but don't stop there. Turn to God. Don't turn too much into yourself.

You won't find any hope or any comfort there. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Turn your eyes upon God.

Fix your eyes upon him. For he is the Savior. Your faith will not save you.

Your repentance will not save you. Your prayers will not save you. Your begging won't save you.

God is the Savior. God saves sinners. All we have to do is to come to him and let him do the work.

[28 : 06] He is the Savior God. And so God in his command is telling you turn to me and put your trust in me.

Ask me what you cannot do for yourself. The foundation of the gospel is God himself. The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Finally, there is gospel promise. And this promise is certain salvation.

The language that here is used. There is no room for uncertainty. God doesn't say turn to me that you might be saved and hopefully you will be saved or probably or likely.

No. Be saved. As we turn to him, as we call upon his name, as we ask him to be saved, we will.

[29 : 21] Be saved. God's salvation is not conditional. God's salvation is certain.

It's certain. But more than that, this salvation is everlasting. In verse 17, that's the language God uses. Israel is saved.

Notice is using the past tense as that salvation has already happened. It's so certain that God can speak of that as something of the past.

No question, no doubts. And yet he says Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation.

Everlasting friends. The gospel has to do with what is eternal, with what lasts forever.

[30 : 20] As you turn to God from your sin, as you look to him for salvation, as you cry out to him for help, you will obtain an eternal salvation.

We saw this morning how the man that was healed by Jesus was content with a temporal salvation, with earthly salvation.

But God's purpose for the man was much bigger. God's desire, God's plan for sinners is not just to help them in this difficult earthly life.

God's plan for sinners, God's desire for sinners to the ends of the earth is for an everlasting salvation, a salvation that lasts forever and ever, a salvation that will never end, a salvation that cannot be taken away from us or that we can even lose.

A everlasting salvation. If you have turned to Jesus, if you have come to him, if you have asked him for salvation, what God has given you, what you have received from him is something that will never end.

[31 : 45] And think of this. It is God's kingdom that shall never end. It's the Lordship of Christ that shall never end.

And if you are a Christian today, if you are a disciple of Jesus, what you have received in Christ is to be part of that everlasting kingdom, that never-ending kingdom, something that will never cease to exist.

It's not just a duty to come to Christ. It's not just an imperative. It's convenient.

It's good for all of us to turn from sin to God. You lose nothing by turning to Christ.

You gain everything. You gain him as your Lord and Savior. You gain God as your Heavenly Father and you gain an everlasting kingdom.

[32 : 55] If you don't, if you keep rejecting him, you lose everything. And all you get is everlasting damnation.

What is best? What is worst? What is inviting you, is commanding you, is offering to you everlasting salvation.

Take it. He wants you to have it. Let's pray. Our Savior God, we are thankful that our eternal happiness does not depend on ourselves, does not depend on our doing, but it is your doing, it is your work, it is your will.

We pray, O Lord, that we would obey you and that all of us would come, that all of us would turn, that all of us would be saved.

Save us, we pray, for we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Our final singing for this evening service is Psalm 100 from the Scottish altar.

[34 : 17] All people that on earth could well sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth, His praise foretell. Come ye before Him and rejoice.

All people that on earth could well sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him serve with mirth, His praise foretell. Come ye before Him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed. We bow down in His name.

We are His stockings of fasting. And for His sheep in the fasting.

[35 : 45] O enter in this gates with praise. Approach with joy His courts unto.

Praise Lord and bless His name always. O it is simply so to do.

For by the Lord our God is good. His mercy is forever sure.

It's good that all times fair may soon. Unshall from age to age entomb.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Amen.