

we have a relatively small portion of text this morning just 8 vv

Isa ch 56, 1 thru 8

we'll do the rest of the chapter, along w/ 57 next week

there's a distinct break in the subject matter between vvs 8 and 9

which is why we're stopping at v8 this morning

it's an upbeat passage, about salvation still in the afterglow of Ch 53

we saw last week how chs 54 and 55 celebrate the Salvation the Servant obtains in 53

56:1-8 continues along those lines with a distinct focus

it's about the salvation of the 'outsider' the INclusion of the EXcluded

and the outsider's pictured in two ways one as the son of the Foreigner

the other as the Eunuch

the Foreigner was, by definition, 'outside' Israel, not part of the community of Salvation

The Eunuch may have been inside Israel,

but whether their condition was accidental or intentional

they were excluded from the community Deut. 23:1

"He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD..

well Isaiah says, in light of what the Servant's done if they have the heart for it they will

and in this passage, Sabbath observance is the evidence of that heart

let's read Isa 56, 1-8

- 1 Thus says the LORD: "Keep justice, and do righteousness,
For My salvation is about to come, And My righteousness to be revealed.
- 2 Blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who lays hold on it;
Who keeps from defiling the SABBATH, And keeps his hand from doing any evil."
- 3 Do not let the son of the FOREIGNER Who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me from His people";

Nor let the EUNUCH say, "Here I am, a dry tree."
- 4 For thus says the LORD:
"To the EUNUCHS who keep My SABBATHS, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,
- 5 Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.
- 6 "Also the sons of the FOREIGNER Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the SABBATH, And holds fast My covenant—
- 7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."
- 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
"Yet I will gather to him Others besides those who are gathered to him."

the gathering of the outcasts, the INclusion of the EXcluded

The Eunuch says I'm a dry tree I have no descendents I'm a dead end

The Lord says if you follow Me you'll have a place better than sons and daughters
and a name that will never be cut off

The Foreigner says "The LORD has separated me from His people"

the Lord says Join me, love my name and you're ALL the way in
For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.

That's a familiar line because Jesus quoted it when He cleansed the Temple

Drove the merchants out with a whip turned over the money-changer's tables

17 [sayin] "Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"?
But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " Mark 11:17

The Lord said His house is for All Nations

nobody's excluded on the basis of ethnicity

the bible is very much against Racial discrimination

Ho! EVERYONE who thirsts, Come to the waters; and the world approves of that
but the Bible is very much for Moral discrimination and the world doesn't like that so much
to discriminate is to make a distinction, to tell the difference between

and Moral discrimination is what God does, and calls us to do

it was Martin Luther King's Jr Dream he said:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation
where they will not be judged by the color of their skin
but by the content of their character

he wanted his children 'judged' 'evaluated'

but not by the color of their skin that's the Wrong standard

they should be judged by the content of their character that's the Right standard

and that's just what Isaiah's saying here

Hey, you love the Lord and follow Him: your ethnicity doesn't matter You're In!
your handicap doesn't matter You're In!

now, being a eunuch is a pretty distinct form of QUOTE QUOTE 'handicap'

but let me tell you why I use the term

the point is about being 'physically intact'

the animals that they offered in sacrifice had to be whole, they had to be complete
'without blemish' is the biblical phrase

"When his offering is a sacrifice of a peace offering,
if he offers it of the herd, whether male or female,
he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD.

"If his offering . . . is of the flock, whether male or female,
he shall offer it without blemish.

without blemish other translations have 'without defect'
the point being there's nothing wrong with it
it's got all its parts in the right places, in the right proportions
no club foot, missing ear, crooked tail . . .
Why did it have to be that way? What difference did it make?
Well apart from the ppl of offering God our best, rather than the least we can get by with
the flawless animal sacrifice symbolizes this profound truth -
the sacrifice has to be Perfect in order to . . 'be effective'
in this instance, physical imperfection is reflecting / symbolizing 'sin'
if the sacrifice had its own imperfection it would have to . . die for itself
its blood would already be forfeit
but if it's 'without blemish' and sacrificed then its blood is, so to speak, 'available'
to cover other imperfections
the sacrificial system was illustrating Spiritual Truth at the physical level
in the fuller sense the fact that Jesus was Sinless and Sacrificed
is what makes His blood available to cover us
in the words of Isa 53 He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. [9]
He was 'without blemish'
Yet He poured out His soul unto death . . . And . . bore the sin of many, [12]
He did not deserve to die He chose to, Offered Himself
Therefore His blood is available to cover our sin

The reason being a Eunuch made one an outcast
is the fundamental symbolism of the sacrificial system
physical imperfection represented moral imperfection
and this standard held for the Priest as well as the Sacrifice
cuz the priest has got to approach God's presence to offer the sacrifice
and if he's got his own sin, that's not gonna fly
so like the Offering, the Offerer had to be 'without blemish' here's the description fm Lev 21
16 . . the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
17 "Speak to Aaron, saying: 'No man of your descendants in succeeding generations,
who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God.
18 For any man who has a defect shall not approach:
a man blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long,
19 a man who has a broken foot or broken hand,
20 or is a hunchback or a dwarf,
or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch.
21 No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect,
shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD.

the message that was being conveyed required those exclusions
we hear that w/ the modern ear and go Hey, that's unfair, it's prejudiced!
we want a wheelchair ramp to the altar!! Equal access to the Holy of Holies!!

at one level that's too much and at another . . .not enough
it's too much in that you have to let the symbol be what it is
you have to get the message before you can 'get beyond' the message
you have to get to First Base before you can get to Second, then Third, then Home
The sacrificial system conveys Spiritual Truths at a Physical Level
in order to enter the Holy of Holies you had to be physically perfect without blemish
not Blind not Lame not Broken and so on
Physical 'perfection' there representing Spiritual Perfection Sinlessness
you have to receive that message let it soak in
reflecting on it should lead to the realization you could never do it cuz you're not sinless
Then you realize Wow Somebody would have to do that for you
and you're One step closer to embracing the Gospel
which is Yes! Someone has done it for you The Servant of Chapter 53
the Perfect Sacrifice of the Sinless Servant is what enables God to accept Everyone
which is what Isaiah's sayin here

let [not] the EUNUCH say, "Here I am, a dry tree."
4 For thus says the LORD:
"To the EUNUCHS who keep My SABBATHS, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.

Salvation IS for Everyone it IS the Ultimate Equal Opportunity
but Only because God made the Ultimate Sacrifice

Now I want to take this opportunity to talk a bit more about transgenderism
I brought it up last week, talking about the essence of human identity Gen 1:27
God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male & female He created them
and I hope I made it clear the point is NOT condemnation of the Transgendered
I said we're not the righteous condemning the unrighteous we're all in the same boat
Isa 53:6 does not say

SOME like sheep have gone astray; SOME have turned to their own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of SOME
it says
ALL WE like sheep have gone astray; WE have turned, EVERY ONE, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us ALL.

so with that said, I bring up Transgenderism again because if you think about it
The situation of a Eunuch is about as close as the Bible gets to it, practically

not saying it's the same thing,
just sayin it revolves around the same thing
a fundamental disruption of Human Identity

Now the World is saying Transgenderism is a good thing, a positive thing

We're not saying that, that's wrong God created us Male and Female

trying to 'recreate' ourselves is just another way of trying to take His place

Trying to be LIKE Him, rather than UNDER Him which is rather the essence of Sin

The point is not that that isn't sin it is

The point is No Sin, in and of itself, can keep you from God

because He's made provision for it all

within the OT framework physical damage representing spiritual damage

The Eunuch was uniquely damaged profoundly damaged

and consequently EXcluded from the community

it had to be that way to convey the message

but ultimately, personally the Eunuch can be just as saved, just as blessed as anybody else

Who's your favorite character in the Bible?

that can be kind of a fun question generate some interesting discussion

and maybe you've got a few rather than just one

and I don't know if he's my absolute favorite, but on my short list is Daniel

Daniel of Daniel and the lion's den and so much more . .

but I'll just mention a couple of things

One is that Daniel stood out in the eyes of heaven, he caught heaven's attention

in chapter 10 he's overwhelmed, receiving a vision and the angel says to him

. . "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you . .

and again "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you;

those are vv 11 and 19 of Daniel 10

the statement and repetition of the phrase Man Greatly Beloved

other translations have Highly Esteemed

that's an angel telling him that!!

Daniel on earth was 'Greatly Beloved' Highly Esteemed in the Spiritual Realm!

and we may not know exactly what that means but it for sure means he was something special!

The angels in heaven were goin Wow, look at him, he's awesome

the other thing I'll tell you about Daniel is that he was probably a Eunuch
it's debated can't be certain but he probably was
he was imported from a conquered people and brought into the Babylonian court
that's prime castration territory to begin with
standard operating procedure in the Ancient World

The word translated Eunuch in our passage is the Heb word Saris
and it occurs 7 times in Dan Ch 1

3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs,
to bring some of the children of Israel . . .

6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names:

so if they're under the chief of the Eunuchs . . it's reasonable to assume etcetera
But the reason its fuzzy is it was so common for court officials to be Eunuchs
that the word 'eunuch' could simply mean 'court official'

In Dan 1 the NKJ and ESV translate saris as eunuchs
the NAS translates 'officials' but footnotes eunuchs
and the NIV just translates 'court officials'

bottom line it is not certain but if I were to bet on it
I'd bet he was a Eunuch and he's at the top of my list

Okay, Big picture we're in Isa 56 1 thru 8
it's about salvation for Eunuchs and Foreigners

I'm sayin we're still in the 'afterglow' of Isa 53

recall the celebration of salvation in Chs 54 and 55

in 54 it's at the level of National Israel

in 55 it's at the personal level Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters;

and I think here, in conclusion,

it's Emphasized that it's for Absolutely Everyone Even Foreigners Even Eunuchs

And I think there's a 3-fold message for us

- 1) Celebrate salvation Amen and Amen!
- 2) Do so humbly it's hard to avoid ranking ourselves by comparison on this or that scale
Paul's got a great bit about this in 1 Cor Ch 1

26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh,
not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise,
and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen,
and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

that's First Corinthians 1, 26 thru 29 I'm gonna read it again from the New Living Translation

26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes
or powerful or wealthy when God called you.

27 Instead,

God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise.
And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.

28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all,
and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

So 1) Celebrate salvation, 2) do so humbly

and 3) reach out to the lowly

among ministers there's a joke about ministering to the 'Up and outers'

not Down and outers UP and outers

the kind of people who are successful, attractive, wealthy AND realize they need the Lord

people who are successful, attractive and wealthy in worldly terms DO need the Lord

but most of them don't know it because they're successful, attractive and wealthy

Most often people Seek and Find the Lord when they're in need

when they're Down and Out Not "UP and out"

28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all,
and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.

29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

so our take-away here is Celebrate Salvation, Do so Humbly and share it with the Lowly

INclude the EXcluded

here in our text, representing the Excluded are the Eunuch and the Foreigner

we've talked about the Eunuch now let's talk about the Foreigner

ZZZ

and I wanna talk about God's inclusiveness in perhaps an unusual way

because to the modern mind, the idea that God even had a special chosen people can be offensive

equal opportunity level playing field break the spiritual glass ceiling

and we could say well it is that way in the Church God's done it

anybody can come to Christ Male Female Black White Jew Gentile Rich Poor Amen

What I want to show you is that it's actually been that way all along

Just as Anybody can come to Christ so anybody could join Israel

become a Jew sound weird? show you what I mean

Matthew is the 'most jewish' of the Gospels

opens with a genealogy starting with Abraham can't get any more kosher than that!

but in that genealogy he mentions 4 women, the mention of Women is unusual in and of itself

but each of these women illustrate God's inclusiveness in various ways

Matthew's genealogy reads:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.
all plain and simple but then

3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar,

there's the first woman, Tamar,
3 ~~Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar~~, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.
4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.
5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab,
there's the second, Rahab
~~5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab~~, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth,
Ruth's the third
~~5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab~~, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,
6 and Jesse begot David the king.
David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.
and there's our fourth, her name was Bathsheba tho she's not identified by name
but as "her who had been the wife of Uriah."

so the 4 women are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba

I just made the strange statement anybody could join Israel and 'become a jew'

how do these women illustrate that? Well, we're gonna have to pass on Tamar

rich story but we don't have time to do it justice

So on to Rahab Who was Rahab? She was the harlot who hid the Jewish spies in Jericho

A prostitute who, at the risk of her life, protected two Jewish spies Because she Believed
she hid them on condition that she and her family would be spared and they were

Josh. 6:25 . . Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had.
So she dwells in Israel to this day,

you say Okay Unusual Situation sure they let her live even among them

but she wasn't really one of them IN the community

Folks, this is the geneology of the Messiah,

you can't get more 'in' you can't get more 'jewish' than that

a nice Jewish fellow named Salmon married Rahab

the Rabbis argue about whether he was a doctor or a lawyer

but in either case, this fine fellow married Rahab

and Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth,

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth,

10 words

and it would be hard to find another 10 word sequence in Scripture

as stunning as that

cuz what that says is Rahab the Harlot is the mother of the fellow who married Ruth the Moabitess
and both of them are Rock Solid Dead Center in the Lineage of Messiah

Ruth the Moabitess is King David's Great Grand Mother

& Rahab the Harlot is His Great Great Grand Mother

the point Isaiah's making About Salvation applying to Everyone

Is the same point Matthew makes sneaks in in his geneology

and the Pharisees just had to sit there and squirm about it
because the stories are laid out in Scripture

Ruth was Ruth the Moabitess

beautiful story of loyal love for her mother-in-law Naomi and for Naomi's God

Ruth left her land her people and all hope of family and prosperity

to be with Naomi and her God in Israel she's the one who said:

16 . . . wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.
17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If anything but death parts you and me."

She's got her own book in the Old Testament!!

Joshuah's got a book, Daniel's got a book, Ruth's got a book!!

and she's in the messianic lineage,

Joshuah and Daniel got nothin on that!

Ruth the Moabitess is King David's great grandmother!

Which brings us to King David who "begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah."

that's Bathsheba she was the wife of Uriah

but she wasn't just the wife of Uriah she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite

it's a sad story there in 2nd Sam 11 where David commits adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite

and then arranges the murder of Uriah the Hittite

lotza lessons but for our purposes just note that Uriah was a Hittite!

Hittites weren't Jews they were inhabitants of the land the Jews were to dispossess!!

and yet, 4 centuries after the conquest there was Uriah the Hittite

a full member of the community fighting in the Lord's army

if you know the story you know Uriah comes off as a paragon of virtue

in sad contrast to the ultimate Jew, King David

Frankly, it's not entirely clear what had to happen, to join the community

certainly a male would have been circumcised

there's a variety of passages that come in to play

then there's the difference between what they did ^{thousands of years ago} and how it's interpreted now

various branches of modern judaism have their stipulations for the process

and they vary from one another

just one more e.g. before we move on

and that is Caleb Caleb of Joshuah and Caleb

after Mt Sinai, as the people stood on the verge of the Promised Land

they sent in 12 spies, leaders of each of the Tribes

Joshuah and Caleb were among those 12 Joshuah from the tribe of Ephraim

Caleb from the tribe of Judah

the text is Numb Ch 13 and if you know the story you know that

after spying out the land Joshuah and Caleb said "We can do this, for the Lord is with us!"

but the other 10 brought back a 'bad report' they saw the giants, the Nephelim were there

"and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" [13:33]

well, the people accepted the bad report and so were off on the wilderness wanderings

where the whole generation had to die

but Joshuah and Caleb, because of their faithfulness, lived to take part in the conquest
so Caleb was quite a guy A leader, if not THE leader of the tribe of Judah

he's identified as "the son of Jephunneh" 15 times we see the phrase "Caleb the son of Jephunneh"

so who was Jephunneh? we know almost nothing about him

nothing except this

3 of those 15 times the phrase "Caleb the son of Jephunneh" is extended

To Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, [Num 32:12
Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, [Josh 14:6
~~Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, [Josh 14:14~~

Like Uriah the Hittite, Jephunneh the Kenizzite was not a Jew

the Kenizzites, like the Hittites were among the peoples to be displaced [Gen 15:18-21

yet even tho Caleb's father was not a Jew, Caleb was

not merely OF the tribe of Judah But a leader of the tribe of Judah

God's salvation has always been for Everyone

but to deliver it, to accomplish the work He had to choose a special people

and use them to communicate basic things about Salvation

and to be the physical channel thru whom the Savior would come

and, to be honest, it can look prejudiced God chose them, He didn't choose anybody else

true but if you wanted to, you could join them

and He chose them to provide salvation for Everyone

His house shall be called a house of Prayer for All Nations

Salvation is for all Nations and is available to every individual

Life is hard you get bumped, you get hurt, you get wounded

within the symbolism of the sacrificial system

the sacrifice had to be without blemish physically perfect

and the priest had to be without blemish physically perfect

but the message isn't 'salvation is only for the perfect'

what's symbolized is moral perfection and if you had that you wouldn't need to be saved
the message is we need a perfect sacrifice and we need a perfect priest
and that's what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ

a lamb without blemish and without spot. [1 Pet 1:19

& a merciful and faithful High Priest [Heb 2:17

the New Testament builds and expands on this in many ways

but in the Old Testament it's stated nowhere clearer than Isa 53

and our passage this morning is kind of the tail end of Isa 53

the affirmation that the sacrifice the Servant offered is available to absolutely everyone

even the Foreigner even the Eunuch even You

We close with a story from the NT, the book of Acts chapter 8

an angel told Philip to travel down a certain road

27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia,
a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians,
who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,
28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

so a Foreigner who was a Eunuch was riding in his chariot reading Isaiah

29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."
30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said,
"Do you understand what you are reading?"
31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"
And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.
32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:
"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth.
33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."

the Foreign Eunuch was reading Isa 53!! those are vv7 and 8

34 So the eunuch [asked Philip]
of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?"
35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.
36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water.
And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"
37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."
And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still.
And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.
39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away,
so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.