

# Isaiah 55:1-3

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to the passage you read in the Old Testament Scriptures in the Prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 55, reading at the beginning.

The Prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 55. O, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat.

Ye come, buy wine and milk without money or without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?

Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

This is one of the very great chapters in the Bible.

[ 1 : 21 ] And I would like on Sabbath evenings to look at it with you for a short time.

There is a very close connection between chapters 53, 54, and 55 of Isaiah. 53, as you know, deals with the sufferings and the death and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

54, 54 deals with the blessings and the glory of the church for which Jesus died.

And 55 opens with an invitation to all who care, all who are willing to come, to come that they may receive of these blessings and experience them with the rest of the people of God.

55, 54, 54, 54, 54, 54.

[ 2 : 59 ] And in that sense, it is a perfect picture of mankind in the desert-like circumstances rather in which they all live.

And just as a voice is heard either in the market place or in the desert to these people who are looking for satisfaction and failing to find it, as a voice is heard speaking to them, stop, listen to me, I have something to say to you and I have something to offer you which will give you real and lasting satisfaction.

So the same voice is heard in the gospel of the grace of God speaking to mankind to all and sundry, besieging them to stop in their mad, fruitless rush and pursuit.

After an illusory satisfaction, stop, says God to us all in the gospel, listen to what I have to say to you, come to the waters that I offer you and take of the bread that I provide for you.

And I would like briefly therefore in that way to look with you at these verses and look first of all at the description that is here given to us of those who are invited.

[ 4 : 36 ] Secondly, consider the activity in which they are engaged. Thirdly, look at the invitation that is addressed to them and the offer that is given.

Fourthly, the manner in which this offer is to be received. And finally, the appeal with which the invitation is enforced.

First of all then, the invited described. Now there are three things told us about them here in this verse.

They are thirsty, they are hungry and they are penniless. Oh, everyone that thirsts.

Now you know that the Bible speaks time and time again of people who are a thirst.

[ 5 : 41 ] And there are two thirsts that the Bible identifies. It speaks for example of the person who is thirsting for God.

The Psalmist gave expression to it, I thirst for God, my soul longs for the God of my salvation.

And we know that as we apply the teaching the word of God to that particular individual, that that is a person who is looking for and thirsting for forgiveness, for sanctification, for fellowship with God, for more of God.

He's thirsting for nearness to God. When shall I approach near unto him? There is that spiritual thirst that the Bible speaks of.

The man who yearns and who looks for satisfaction and fulfillment in God. The man who depends for all his spiritual nourishment and for all his spiritual satisfaction upon God as is revealed to him in the gospel through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 55 ] That is what is true of the believer, the Christian. He thirsts for God. But the Bible speaks to us of another thirst and that's the thirst that this verse identifies.

It speaks to us of the mass of mankind of whom someone once said that man is, every man is a great bundle of yearnings and necessities, all dependent on externals for his satisfaction. And you would agree, I think, that the picture the Bible paints for us of man in a graceless state and I think that thirst here really means that essentially.

It means a person who is without God, without Christ, without living fellowship and contact in his heart with God. That person who is in a condition in which he has no grace, graceless, that in that condition he looks for and he yearns for satisfaction, happiness, contentment, fulfillment in many avenues.

He tries many things looking for this thing which always seems to elude him.

[ 8 : 23 ] No matter how often he thinks that he has found that this is it, there is something gnawing away at him, telling him and reminding him that he has so far failed in this pursuit.

And so mankind is presented to us in the Bible as generally been dissatisfied with a sense of need, uneasy, with an undefined longing after something which he has not yet possessed.

No matter how near he comes to him, it always seems to elude him, to evade his grasp. No matter how near he comes to him, he comes to him, he comes to him, to evade his grasp.

No matter how near he comes to him, he comes to him, anything else is in vain. And I think that perhaps there are some of you present here at night who might be prepared to identify yourselves and to see that this might very well be a picture of you looking and looking and looking and looking, and still having failed to find what you would identify as the source of lasting satisfaction.

Similarly, this person here invited is described as being hungry. Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread and your labour on that which does not satisfy you?

[ 10 : 25 ] I say he is devastated from time to time by thirst, so this man is not aware by this sense of hunger that is his.

He always seeks something to satisfy and something to gratify. But no food ever seems continually to sustain him.

And it's interesting the picture the prophet gives us here of this people. They are spending money on that which is not bread. They think it is bread, but it isn't.

They are labouring for that which they think will satisfy, but it doesn't. And so it is that there are so many people who turn to things in this world and look for satisfaction and they think that this is it. It is, but it is not. It is said of some people throttling in the desert that there are times when gnawed by such hunger that they come to shrubs, dried up shrubs and trees with no leaves at all.

[ 11 : 39 ] And they think that it is bread. And it isn't that at all. That's a picture that the prophet gives us here of people who are living under a delusion, seeing nothing before them but that which is a mirage.

When they come to it and sample what it has to offer, it leaves them emptier than they were before. And the third picture we're given here of this people invited is that they are penniless.

Now this passage puts it in a very interesting way. Whoever you not thirsteth, come ye to the water, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and ye come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Yet the next verse pictures them as buying that which is not bread. Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? Now you may seem to think that there's a contradiction.

Here, first of all, are people who have nothing with which to buy. And at the same time, what they do have, they're spending on that which doesn't satisfy.

[ 12 : 50 ] But there is no contradiction at all. The Bible, again, makes it abundantly clear that the only thing that you and I possess coming into this world and that we add to while we're in the world is our sin.

That's the only thing that we have that we can claim as our own. We have sinned ourselves and come short of the glory of God.

And day by day, we're adding to our credit balance in this particular instance. And all we're adding to it is sin. And you know, that sin, that sin takes from you your ability to meet your own need.

It's because man has nothing but sin, unforgiven, undealt with sin, that he seeks satisfaction for his sinful existence and his sinful desires in things which will not satisfy him at all.

And so we are, as the Bible tells us, spiritually corrupt of myself, said Paul. I can think not even one good thought.

[ 14 : 15 ] This is what sin has done to us. It has left us spiritually bankrupt. And so here is an invitation addressed to a spiritually bankrupt individual who is looking and thirsting for satisfaction where he won't find it and for sustenance where it has eluded him.

But before passing on to look at the second point here, let us immediately establish this. That these verses do not even suggest to us that this person isn't from time to time content and even to an extent happy in the life that he's living.

What the verse tells us is that what he thinks is happiness and contentment is not happiness and contentment at all.

And therefore the gospel comes to that person with this invitation. Come ye to the waters and drink. Take of me and live.

Take of me and live.

[ 16 : 01 ] Spiritual desires as he is by nature to seek after God. What is it that he has that he's spending? What is it that God has given to him? That he spends in a fruitless activity?

How has his life, albeit a sinful life, been enriched by the God who gave him being in his world? Well, his very being, his world.

The fact that he's here. And the fact that he's got certain powers and certain abilities and certain natural powers and abilities and gifts and talents and energy and time and opportunity.

All that constitutes the life that God has given him in this world. Look at what he's doing. Look at what he's doing with it. According to this verse, he's spending it on that which is not bread and laboring for that which will not satisfy him.

You remember the picture that is painted for us by Jesus of another man in his lostness, in his alienation? The prodigal son, who took all that he had that his father had given to him, went off into a far country and wasted his substance in riotous living.

[ 17 : 31 ] It's the same thing. He's spending all that he had on that which will not satisfy. And you, I'm sure, will agree that there are times when that life, albeit in the midst of all the joy and the pleasure and the enjoyment and the happiness and the exhilaration that you have from time to time, I'm sure that there are also times when you agree that life can be very weary, very weary, very fatiguing and very unsatisfactory.

Doing and seeking and trying to get as much out as you possibly can. But the problem is that you're running in the wrong directions and you're operating in the wrong places.

This desert, as someone said, this desert of spiritual death into which man is born and in which he lives, is a desert which is not without its hot sands and leafless shrubs, its weariness, its bitter pangs, its thirst, its famine.

Rendered more tormenting by the cruel mockery of its illusions. Many people in this town tonight, no doubt, were reveling, reveling in song and dance.

And tonight, no doubt, but it's not without its own. And tonight, no doubt, is a nightmare. And tonight, perhaps, full of remark, full of sadness, full of that aching void that this world and its allurements and pleasures leaves in its way.

[ 19 : 18 ] And there's man refusing the only real good that is available to him in his guilt, in his folly, in his blindness, making this mistake that he can find satisfaction in things apart from God.

And as I said, to an extent, he will. But the satisfaction is imaginary, it is transitory, it is superficial, because he's looking for it in the wrong place.

And it is to that man that this invitation is now addressed. Come unto me, O everyone that thirsts me to the water, come buy and eat ye, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. And here again, there is imagery used so that we can understand something of the blessings of the gospel offered to us.

The text speaks to us of water, of milk, of wine, of that which is good, and of that which is full of fatness.

[ 20 : 41 ] And these are terms we are used to indicate to you and to me the fullness and the wonder of the blessings available to our lost soul in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whoever you will not thirsteth, come ye to the water. Do you remember the picture we have here? The picture of a person in the desert or in the marketplace, desperate for a drink, dying of thirst, looking for water.

And here, says the Lord, are waters from which you can drink. And the word is used in the plural to indicate to us the fullness, together with the freeness, of the offer of salvation in the gospel of his grace.

The Old Testament prophet Zechariah tells us that in Jesus Christ, a fountain has been opened for sin and for uncleanness.

And here is a person who can meet with the depth of our guilt, and also with the depth of our sin and of our pollution.

[ 21 : 55 ] One who can meet with the depth of our sin and of our sin and of our sin and of our sin and of our sin. As sinners in our own need. And one who can meet us abundantly.

And one who has an all-sufficiency of supply in himself to meet every thirst of the human heart. Come ye to the water.

Fountain of living water. Open for us. And then he's described for us here as milk. Buy wine and milk. Without money and without price.

Now the difference in water and milk in this context is this. That milk not only meets a person's thirst, a child's thirst, but it also has nutritional value.

It sustains and feeds the person who takes it. Peter, taking up the same straight road to young Christians on day and said, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the world, that you may grow thereby.

[ 23 : 10 ] You see, you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, not just of your needs as a sinner made and to a forgiveness, to receive forgiveness. But you come so that you may receive spiritual food for your soul.

The doctrines of the grace of God, the Bible speaks of the person of Christ and his work in the world.

That is that which meets and sustains. We need to grow. We need to accumulate more knowledge. We need to become more personally acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think that this may be one of the problems of the Christian church today, if you will permit me to say it. That perhaps we as believers, particularly young Christians, aren't as concerned about our spiritual nourishment as we ought to be.

You see, when you come as a sinner to a Savior, and you receive the Savior, who forgives you your sins and receives you into his own family, you begin to get to know him.

[ 24 : 25 ] And you begin to grow in grace and to grow in your knowledge of the doctrines of the grace of God. If any person is thirsting in reality for Christ, it expresses itself in wanting to know more and more and more and more.

And I think it's a sad reflection on the Christian church today that she seems to hold in far lighter esteem than she used to be.

I need to know the great truths of the Christian faith, the doctrines of the grace of God.

If you're a Christian tonight, if you became a Christian a year or two ago, that should manifest itself in a desire for growth on your part.

Desire the sincere milk of the world that you may grow thereby and proceed then from milk to stronger meat let your soul, it says, delight itself in fatness.

[ 25 : 41 ] But Jesus Christ also presented to us in this way as wine by milk and wine. Now what the Bible says about wine is this, that wine exhilarates. Wine makes the heart of man glad or merry.

In those days they drank a lot of wine with their food as they do in some other countries today. In other countries today. And the idea here is that Jesus presented to us in the gospel of his grace and received by faith fills us with joy.

Exhilaration. And the Lord himself acknowledges this. That man just doesn't want to live. Man wants to enjoy life. That's true of you all here tonight.

You young people, you want to enjoy life. Get as much enjoyment of this life as you possibly can. And maybe you're saying to yourself, well, if God spares me, I would like to become a Christian maybe when I'm 40 or 50.

Let me enjoy life first. Then I'll come. Now the Lord doesn't deny you enjoyment. What he says to you is this, come and receive real enjoyment.

[ 26 : 57 ] Take milk and wine, that which will really make you glad and really contented and really happy. And this is true. This is true.

There are some people who write books and preach sermons and they say that you should never present Jesus as though he's going to make you happy. Take Jesus because he'll make you happy. That is very true.

You should not present Jesus that way. Present him as a saviour who was going to save you from the power and the guilt of your sin. But there is no person in this world and beyond it whose presence with you in the world will make you more happy than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fills your life with exhilaration and joy. Look at a new convert. Look at the joy with which the convert comes to the house of God. The joy with which he reads the Bible.

The joy with which he listens to the gospel. There is nothing in the world that thrills the soul like the gospel doing business with his heart. Touching him in the very center of his life and uplifting him in his soul to rejoice in the God of his salvation.

[ 28 : 11 ] Buy wine and milk. And he says take that and eat that which is good. That which is good.

You see the Lord recognizing what man is doing he's thinking he's got something great and something good in this particular channel or in this particular place and he's spending his all on it. Life is wonderful. Ah says the Lord to him you eat that which is really good. Remember what Jesus said of Mary when Martha found fault with it because she was sitting at his feet.

You know he said to Martha Mary had chosen the good part. Living vital fellowship with himself. Learning at his feet.

Drinking in his word. This is what the gospel offers you. This is what is really good. Good because it's provided by God for you. Good because he knows there is nothing in the world better for you than to receive him freely offered in the gospel.

[ 29 : 20 ] Eat that which is good and particularly good because he comes to you the gospel with himself. And let your soul is this delighted self in fatness, the richness and the nutritional value of this provision of Christ in the gospel.

As rich as the grace and the love of God himself. So rich it cannot become, cannot be made any richer than it is. all this is contained in the gift that is offered freely in the gospel and that flows to us from the heart of God himself and comes to thirsty lips, to the thirsty lips of a part humanity with the all-sufficiency of this supply, the water, the milk, the wine, the good, the riches of it all.

This is the offer that is extended to us all. Fourthly, it is an offer which is extended freely.

He that hath no money come ye buy and eat, ye come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Now you will look at that and you will wonder maybe immediately how is it possible to buy anything without money?

If you went to the shop tomorrow, God will leave for some commodity or other, you know yourself that if you're going to buy it, the person from whom you're buying it expects you to pay for it.

[ 31 : 09 ] You've got to give so much for what you get. and if you have no money and no prospect of having it, there is no point in going for it because you won't get it.

It's perfectly paid. How then can you explain this? The gospel bids you and me who are penniless, you who have no money, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

how can you receive salvation when you have nothing to buy it with? And that's exactly what highlights the wonder of the grace of God.

What he offers is totally free. That's what, that's the meaning of the terms here. That's how the freeness of the gospel offer is brought before us.

after all as I said earlier and as this passage makes clear, what have you and I got to offer God anyway? Well of course we know what some people offer God for salvation. I'll become religious and that will save me.

[ 32 : 22 ] I'll start reading my Bible and that will save me. I'll start saying my prayers and that will save me. I'll start going to church that will save me. I'll reform my life I'll stop being what I was that will save me.

I'll stop going to these places alright then I'll stop looking for satisfaction in the place that this world offers me and chuck that. And that will save me.

I'll stop spending all the money I have and all my energy and all my talents and all my time in these particular places and I'll start looking to the things of God and that will save me.

no it won't. Nothing will save you. Nothing that you do is ever going to save you. Nothing you say nothing you promise to be will save you.

You see my friend if you're going to be saved if you're going to receive the offer that is given to you you must come in all your spiritual poverty and this is the transaction you come as a debtor to his grace that you may become infinitely rich.

[ 33 : 30 ] After all what have you got to offer him? What have you got tonight to offer God? Not a thing but your sin and your own pollution and your own inability your own spiritual poverty do you think that's a fair exchange?

that won't buy you salvation. Salvation is so free that all you have to do is to come and receive it. Some of us have become so afraid of being branders and minions that we're almost afraid now to extend the free offer of the gospel. Ah well we bless our Lord that there was no one in this world who was more free with the offer than himself.

Come unto me all ye that labour and heavy laden and I will give you rest. You've got to become a debtor to his grace and you've got to come as you are and with what you have and recognise that nothing that you are and nothing that you do will merit salvation from the hand of God.

he has provided it he offers it to you freely you have nothing to place in his hand not a thing you are spiritually bankrupt you come that you may receive what he so freely offers to you and you remember that that you will never ever purchase salvation by your own goodness by your own affirmation by your own religion by your own works or by anything it is not for those who are so rich that they think they have got something to God that they have got something they can give to God it's for those who are so poor I am come he says to preach the gospel to the poor love only you and I would recognise tonight how poor we are then we would come the problem with so many of us is that you're so spiritually rich that your very possession stand between you and salvation you've got to come as you are and finally this appeal is enforced in this way listen he says unto me bend your ear and hear what I have to say to you come to me and your soul will live and

[ 36 : 34 ] I guarantee you he says this salvation that I offer you is sure and certain I will make an everlasting covenant with you even the sure mercy of David what's the Lord saying to us here he's saying two things he's again emphasizing the uniqueness of the salvation that he offers and he's emphasizing the certainty of it if we come to receive it first of all he's emphasizing its uniqueness and here again is the emphasis that the gospel constantly places on this there is no other way of being self saved oh says the Lord stop he says to mankind listen to me it's not the voice of this religion or of that religion or of that sect or of the next it is the voice of almighty

God from heaven through the only channel that he has opened for man in the world and that is the gospel of his grace and I don't care what you think what anybody else thinks and this is not being bigoted in any way it is being faithful to the word of God there is no other way listen he says to me give me your ear come unto me and be ye saved take what I have to offer and I tell you that you live as long as Methuselah you will find salvation nowhere else but in the gospel of the grace of God and the other thing he is saying is this and this is very important he is saying to man don't stop looking for satisfaction don't stop craving for that which you need and which you don't have but look for it he says somewhere else take your desires and your needs and your cravings to me you see the Lord who created us knows that we must look for something and what he's saying here to us is this

I know he says that you're looking and I know that you're straining all all the all that you're straining at the leash and that you're looking and looking and looking and looking and happening for a long time maybe some of you well he says listen look for it in me come to me with your desires and your longings and your thirst and your hunger and your emptiness come to me come in faith and penitence come that you may receive and that you may enjoy it come he says buy wine and milk without money without price eat that which is good take what I have to give you and start eating it live on it enjoy it to your full then when you end this life you will enter into a glorious eternity where you will live forever drinking and eating from me and in me that's what the Lord is saying here channel your direction your energies in the right direction delight yourself in what

I have to give eat you're full of it and then you'll be able to say with the church he brought me into his banqueting house and his banner over me was love and the other thing he's saying finally is this if you come he says and take what I have to offer you you will find it a sure and certain salvation this is not this is not illusion you won't come and find that something has eluded you you're not going to come here and stretch out your hand and grasp on me it's gone no he said I will make with you an

everlasting covenant even the sure mercies of David and the emphasis here is on the certainty of the salvation that you come to receive you will receive it without a shadow of doubt I will make a covenant with you he says I will enter into an engagement with you even the sure mercies of David I promised David mercies and I gave them to him I made a covenant with the David of the new testament the lord Jesus Christ and in that covenant engagement he died I told him you go into that world and die for sinners so that I will offer them the blessings that you purchased with your death I made that covenant with him and he came and he honoured it and he died and he lives and he purchased these blessings and if you come I assure you he says that just I made a covenant with him so I will make a covenant with you this is as sure and as certain as God is in heaven and as certain as that Christ died that you and I may live come he says to me and live now then how many of you in this church night need to hear this voice again how many of you need to respond to this invitation how many of you have come to that situation in your life when it's high time that you stopped and listened to the one who speaks to you again in the gospel of his grace and who says to you

[ 43 : 20 ] I know that you're looking for something which has eluded you all your life I bid you come to me that you may find it then you will say with the hymn writer of old I thirst but not as once I did the vain delights of earth to share thy wounds Emmanuel forbid that I should find my pleasures there all my wealth springs at the psalmist