

Invitation to the Thirsty

Isaiah 55:1-13

Key verse 55:1a

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters..."

Welcome to our Summer Bible Conference: The Way. How did we know to all meet at this place? Probably you were invited by your Bible teacher or friend- maybe someone sent you an email. Thank God you accepted the invitation! Tonight's passage is also God's invitation to us- Come all you who are thirsty. As we look at Isaiah 55, may God open each of our hearts to accept his personal invitation through this conference.

I. God's Invitation- Come to Me! (1-5)

This passage is set in the following context. In ch.1 God rebuked the nation of Israel, saying, (Is 1:3) *"The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."* They had been blessed as God's people, but rather than thanking God they following the idols of the surrounding cultures. They thought God was old fashioned, old news, the god of their parents and ancestors. God allowed the superpower nation of Babylon to invade Israel as God's discipline, with many of the survivors taken from their homes to live in exile in Babylon. They were full of despair and lost hope. But in ch.53 God gives great hope in their being rescued by a Savior. *"By his wounds we are healed."* (Is 53:5) Because of the promise of a savior, in ch.54 God says though they are like barren women they can sing and shout for joy and enlarge the place of their tent. Though they provoked God's discipline, God still loved them and graciously made a way to forgive them. Despite their living in exile, they could have hope and vision because of God's great word of promise. Which brings us to our passage.

Read v.1. *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."* The first sentence ends with an exclamation point, meaning God was calling out seeking people's attention. The language here is like in the market place. It's like the snack guy at a baseball game on a hot summer day, *"Ice cold water, Hey, get your ice cold water here!"* *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters!"* Why does God call them thirsty? Because God is our Creator- his life gives us life. When we become separated from God, we become like a cut flower that becomes dry and thirsty and eventually dies. That's what happens to our souls. Just as our physical body becomes thirsty without physical water, so our eternal souls become thirsty when we are disconnected from the eternal source of life from God. Like the exiles, our sin cuts us off from God- our intentional or unintentional disobedience against God. God. We may not realize it on the surface, but it causes us to be spiritually thirsty- also spiritually hungry, poor and needy. It means we have wants and desires that we are unable to satisfy- what is the purpose/meaning of my life, how can I attain true love, lasting security, be truly happy? These things come only from God. Ps

42:1 describes the condition of the exiles, *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”*

Are we anything like the exiles? Thirsty? Panting? Maybe we enjoyed sweet fellowship with God and his people for a time. But at some point, we began slowly drifting away- a compromise here, some questionable relationship there, giving in to a temptation, developing a bad habit. We are seeking to quench our thirst but it doesn't work. God knows our thirst. But he does not condemn us (you deserve it), but he lovingly and graciously invites us saying, *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...”* God invites those who have no money to enjoy water and wine and milk and eat without cost. Water quenches our thirst, wine can represent joy, and milk gives strength. The exiles were poor, but God invited them to a wonderful banquet- all for free! How would you like to find out all your meals at this conference are free? Someone else is paying for you. That's good news! But God's message of good news in this passage is much better than free meals.

Read v.2a. *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* In v.1 God called to those who are poor and here in v.2 God asks a question for those who have money. Maybe some of the exiles managed to adapt in the foreign land and after years of hard work they could achieve some sense of security. But though they lived in nice houses and enjoyed fine food, they still were not satisfied. In our times we can save up to get the latest iphone. But as soon as we see a commercial for the next generation phone, *“I want that!”* We want to upgrade. Upgrade my tv, my car, my house, my car. Some parents can work hard to give their kids good environment and education for their future. But what good is it if they don't commit to God? Some spend time and heart to find someone to love, but it can end in breaking our heart. God knows this so he asked, *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* Like the exiles God asks each of us, *“Is all your work and things you buy and the time you spend really satisfying your desires in life? Why don't you come to me and enjoy satisfying food and drink without cost?”*

Read v.2b-3 (SLIDE). *“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you (your soul) will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; listen, that you (your soul) may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.”* So far God invites/calls us to COME to him. After we COME we need to LISTEN to God. We came to this conference to listen to God's word. Jesus said in Mt 4:4, *“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* Rather than spend money and time on things that do not satisfy, we are to spend time with God listening to his word which is bread that satisfies our souls. At this conference God is calling to us and he wants to feed us with the richest of fare: God has prepared many delicious Bible messages for you, group Bible studies, testimony writing and sharing. Specifically, God's word in v.3 is he gives us the same promise he gave to King David. What was that promise? In 2 Sa 7:12-13 God promised David, *“I will raise up your offspring to succeed you...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”* This was God's promise of the

Son of David, the Messiah, Jesus. Through Jesus we have the wonderful new covenant which restores thirsty sinners to the holy God. Jesus told the woman at the well with a big thirst for love problem, *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water willing up to eternal life.”* (Jn 4:13-14) When she accepted Jesus’ words, she left her water jar at the well and ran to tell her townspeople about Jesus. She was no longer thirsty. Summer T. from Baltimore will share her life testimony tomorrow night. She thought young men could love her, but she something was always still thirsty until through Bible study she met Jesus who satisfies her with eternal love, living water for her soul. personally through Bible study. May we each stop spending on what does not satisfy, and come to Jesus who promises to satisfy our thirsty souls.

II. God’s Direction- Seek the Lord! (6-13)

Read v.6. *“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.”* We already saw when we seek things of the world they will not satisfy. So God gives us new direction to seek the Lord. What we are seeking determines our life direction- the way of our lives. If we are seeking God then our heart is filled with God’s love and peace and joy in our heart, and all cheap, junky things of the world that do not satisfy are driven out. And we should not miss the opportunity to accept God’s invitation to seek him while he may be found and is near. It means God makes himself available to us through his gracious invitation. We owe him everything, yet he is the one offering us the opportunity of a lifetime, but we need to get it while it is near. At one of my previous jobs I was told that one candidate was invited to an interview, but the person said, *“I can’t. I’m at the beach.”* So another person got the job. (I got the job by God’s grace). Every day we are nearer to Jesus’ return, but one day it will be too late. With this in mind, Bible teachers need to have a sense of God’s urgency to spread the good news of Jesus to all nations before it is too late. God is near us at this conference inviting us to a relationship with him. Dr. Daniel met the Lord when he was a college student through a Bible conference. Perhaps you came for the first time. Or you have come to many conferences like Dr. Daniel and myself. Don’t miss God’s direction to you to seek the Lord while he may be found and call on him while he is near.

Read v.7-9. *“7 Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. 9 ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”* These verses tell us how to come and seek the Lord which is through a repentant attitude. Repentance is described here as forsaking our ways and thoughts which make us wicked, and turn toward God’s ways and thoughts. Our ways and thoughts are that we can solve our life problem- satisfy our life thirst and hunger *“my own way.”* But we need to confess to God, *“My way doesn’t work! The world’s way doesn’t satisfy! From now on I want to follow your way!”* Jesus said in Mt 11:28, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* We

need to trust Jesus at his words. We will be successful if we entrust everything to Jesus without holding back. May we repent of our own way, and accept God's invitation- God's way through Jesus (theme of conference).

Verses 10-13 teach us the fruit and blessing of accepting God's invitation to come, seek and repent. Read verses 10-12. 10 *"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. 12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands."* God sends the rain and the snow nourish the crops and the forests of the earth. Last month we had a staff conference in Seattle and there was so much green- grass and very tall trees. Because it rains there so much, the trees are happy, like clapping their hands it says in v.12. In the same way, as we learned at the beginning of this message, God promises his word has the power to revive our dry and thirsty souls. Not only that, but God's word goes out and does not return to him empty but always bears fruit, such as joy and peace with God through forgiveness of sins in Jesus.

When I was in college, I used to spend weekends going to clubs in D.C. I drank alcohol, ate buffalo wings and fries and danced the night away, but I still went home feeling lonely, empty and sometimes sick. But the next weekend I would do it all over again. See, I was drinking and eating, but my thirst and hunger remained. Then God invited me to Bible study (Come to the waters- come to Bible study) and I accepted Jesus who was like drinking cool refreshing water that satisfied my thirsty soul so I no longer desired the party life. Fast forward a couple decades and I've been living under God's blessings. But I ended up maintaining the blessings, not my relationship with Jesus. I had to work hard at my job and spend money to feed my family, pay for cars and house; fixing cars, fixing house, kids education (2 kids in college- soon 3). And even though I was "serving God" (teaching the Bible, giving messages) I lost my focus/ dependence/ connection to the source of water and life in Jesus and became exhausted and irritable. Through this message I pray to come to Jesus again, and have a renewed thirst quenching, satisfying relationship with him.

John 7:37 says, *"On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.'"* This is not the last day, but the first day of the conference, but Jesus gives us the answer for our lives. Stop insisting on things that don't satisfy. Come to Jesus and drink. Open our hearts through this conference and believe he is the answer to the thirsty desires of our hearts and souls. May God refresh, renew and eternally satisfy us when we accept his invitation to come to Jesus at this conference.

Read key verse 1a.

Let me share my story related to this passage. When I was in college, I used to spend weekends going to Georgetown since in those days you could drink alcohol at 18. I drank alcohol, ate buffalo wings and fries and danced the night away, but I still went home feeling lonely, empty and sometimes sick. But the next weekend I would do it all over again. See, I was drinking and eating, but my thirst and hunger remained. Then God invited me to Bible study (Come to the waters- come to Bible study) and I accepted his word which was like drinking cool refreshing water that satisfied my thirsty soul so I no longer desired the party life. Fast forward a couple decades and I've been living under God's blessings. But I ended up maintaining the blessings, not my relationship with Jesus. I had to work hard at my job and spend money to feed my family, pay for cars, car insurance, house, house insurance, fixing cars, fixing house, kids education (2 kids in college- soon 3). And even though I was "serving God" (teaching the Bible, giving messages) I lost my focus/ dependence/ connection to the source of water and life in Jesus and became exhausted and irritable. Through this message I repent and pray that I may come to Jesus again, and have a renewed thirst quenching, satisfying relationship with him. And I hope if you can relate in any way God may move you to do the same.

For what do we thirst???? (end message- it is Jesus)

- I. God's Gracious Invitation- Come to Me! (1-5)
 - a. Israel's sin and exile- failure and thirst through idols
 - b. Come all who are thirsty (unsatisfied, needy, desires)
 - c. Why spend life on what not satisfy?
 - d. Listen to God for soul to have life
 - e. God's covenant relationship- forgiveness and love
- II. God's Direction – Seek the Lord! (6-13)
 - a. Seek the Lord
 - b. Turn-Repent from sinful ways to God's forgiveness/mercy
 - c. God's ways not our ways- better
 - d. God's word is water and food our souls longing for
 - e. Transforming power word- joy, peace
 - f. God's blessing coming to us through conference: messages, Bible studies, life testimonies, world mission reports...

. All they need to do is come to him. May God help you today to accept his offer of living water to quench your thirsty soul (cf. [John 4:10; 7:37-38](#)).

v.1 The Israelites felt cut off- separated from God due to their rebellion. They had taken their relationship with God for granted and followed idol worship. Now they were in exile and wanted to be restored in their relationship to God. But was there any hope? They were in a foreign land hundreds of miles away from their homeland. The people of Babylon worshipped idols, not the God of Israel. They longed for the days when they could hear the Bible during their worship service and sing songs of joy and praise to God from their deep hearts of thanksgiving. It seemed hopeless. But to a hopeless people God declared, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters..." [The exiles were like

people lost in a hot desert who have to travel hundreds of miles to get to civilization. They need food and water to make the journey, but they had none. They were lost and broke. Spiritually speaking they had nothing to offer God, because they turned away from God. Their situation filled them with sorrow. But in their hopeless situation God called out to them, *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”*

v.7-9. In Gen we see the example of Abraham and his nephew Lot. Their flocks had grown too large for them to occupy the same land. Abraham offered Lot the first choice, and Lot pitched his tents near Sodom since it looked like an exciting and fun place, but they were sinning greatly against God. Abraham stayed in the land far from Sodom. Later, Lot had moved from near Sodom to settling down inside the city. He would have been destroyed when God’s judgment came on them if not for Abraham’s intercessory prayer for his foolish nephew.

V.3b. In John 4 we know Jesus spoke with a Samaritan woman at a well of water. She was thirsty and came to draw water in the heat of the day. She also had married and divorced five times, and now had a live in boyfriend. She was thirsty for love, but rather than make her feel loved, men just used her for their own enjoyment, and ditched her one after another. What did she do? She listened to Jesus. She asked him questions. She believed his words and suddenly was no longer thirsty, but instead ran to her townspeople proclaiming, *“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* (Jn 4:29) The promise of the love of God in Jesus finally quenched her thirst for love. When we listen to Jesus and believe him, he fulfills his promise to us and our thirsty souls are satisfied with the joy and peace of eternal life.

Come all who are thirsty (1)

- a. God's gracious invitation
 - b. Types of spiritual thirst (desires): love, money, success, intellect, joy, peace, rest, comfort, meaning, relationship
 - c. Prodigal son- God's grace to welcome undeserving sinners
- II. Why work for what does not satisfy? (2)
- a. Work hard in school and job: food, position, house, cars, phones, computers, clothes, entertainment, vacations...
 - b. Always empty feeling, longing for more (Sam woman)
- III. Listen to God's Word (2-3)
- a. Your Soul may live (soul more than body); need listen/ obey/ apply God's word
 - b. Jesus is living water for our souls (Jn 7)
 - c. Jesus is bread of life (Jn 6)
 - d. Jesus invites us to eat (rship) with him (Rev 3)
 - e. Jesus offers himself to satisfy us (body and blood) (Mt 26)
 - f. Man not live bread alone, every word from mouth of God (Mt 4)
- IV. God's Covenant in David and Jesus (3-5)
- a. God's promise to David of Messiah
 - b. God's fulfilment of promise (Acts 13)
 - c. God's covenant of forgiveness and love through Jesus (son David)
 - d. Jesus came to save not only Israel, but all nations
 - i. Jesus invites thirsty, hungry, weary, burdened souls to come to him (Mt 11:28)
 - e. Come to Jesus; stop seeking satisfaction in world; listen and accept Jesus as only way; satisfy the thirst and hunger in our souls with eternal life/ rship with Jesus

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Alternate notes:

- I. v1) God's free grace
- II. V2. Only God's salvation truly satisfies
- III. V3-5 all can have new life as nations come into new covenant
- IV. V6 God warns all to seek him while he may be found
- V. V7 response of true repentance
- VI. V7 pardon and forgiveness truly possible
- VII. V8-9 God above all but can still be known
- VIII. V10-11 God's word is powerful and will do it's saving work
- IX. V12 joy and peace from salvation
- X. V13 fruit of salvation overcomes the curse of sin

[Isaiah 55](#) can be broken down into four distinct units:

- (1) the gracious action of God which gives covenant and life (1-5);
- (2) the command for Israel to seek the Lord (6-9);
- (3) the purposeful and powerful word of God (10-11);

(4) permanent joy and the transformation of life (12-13).

I. A gracious invitation, 1-2.

ii. An everlasting covenant, 3.

iii. The messiah's mission, 4-5.

I. Called to seek God and repent, 6-7.

ii. Called to God's ways and thoughts, 8-9.

iii. Called to confidence in & reception of God's word, 10-11.

Iv. Called to bear the fruit of the word, 12-13.