

Series: Isaiah

Title: God's Call to the Thirsty

Text: Isaiah 55: 1-3

Date: May 4, 2014

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Turn with me in your bibles to Isaiah 55. Our text this morning is not Isaiah the prophet speaking. It is God speaking. As we read these words, try to ignore my voice speaking. Instead, concentrate on God speaking. These are God's words.

I. FIRST, GOD ISSUES A CALL WITH A CONDITION—Isaiah 55: 1: Ho,...

It means give God your undivided attention. Set aside every thought. Focus all your attention on what God is about to say.

We Must Be Thirsty

He does not issue this call to everyone. He says, "**Ho, Every one that thirsteth.**"

God is not forbidding anyone from coming. He says "Every one." The problem is that sinners are not thirsty. Do you genuinely desire to be satisfied? Satisfied that you have found the true and living God? Satisfied that all is right between you and God? Satisfied that God himself has put away all your sin and fulfilled the law just for you? Do you genuinely desire to find true, lasting delight for your soul? Spiritual meat which fills the soul? Are you thirsty for everlasting life and to be sure that you have life everlasting? Do you thirst for full assurance—to be sure—that God will show you sure, everlasting mercies? This call is only to those who thirst! God is not forbidding anyone. The problem is that men are not thirsty by nature. You do not have to talk a thirsty man into taking a drink of cool, clean water.

Matthew 5: 6: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

God's Command

If you meet this first condition, then hear the LORD's command—**Isaiah 54: 1:...come ye to the waters.**

If a man is thirsty, where does he go? A thirsty man does not go to a dry place; to a dry desert; to a dry fountain? A dry place will not satisfy your thirst; a dry place will not delight the thirsty; a dry fountain won't provide the water of life.

Sinner, looking to ourselves in any regard—for righteousness or holiness, for edification, for preservation—is trying to quench our thirst with a cup of sand. Those who are dying of thirst must come to the fountain of living waters. God says, "Come ye to the waters?" Come to where full provision for all your need may be found—Come ye to Christ!

Christ is the Fountain of Living Waters

Our triune God in Christ Jesus the Son of God is the fountain of living waters. To the woman at the well...

John 4: 10: Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11: The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12: Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the

well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13: Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 7:37: In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38: He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Our text speaks of Water, Wine, Milk, and Bread—they represent Christ—the fountain of living Waters is Christ, whose sin-purging blood is the wine that rejoices the heart, whose gospel is the sincere milk of the word, who is the Bread of Life given by God the Father. Notice the text commands us to hear and come to him: verse 2: hearken diligently unto ME, and eat ye that which is good; verse 3: Incline your ear, and come unto ME. The blessings Christ promises are spiritual: spiritual life, spiritual nourishment—true soul food: verse 2: let your soul delight itself in fatness; verse 2:...hear, and your soul shall live;

Sinner, can you just for a moment, take off your blinders and look at the horizon. There is more than this little life with all its trinkets of dust and its desert mirages! You have an eternity to spend somewhere. You have a need for acceptance with God. You have sin which needs to be put away. You need righteousness which you don't have and can't produce. Oh that God would make you thirsty today! God says, "Ho, everyone that is thirsty, come ye to the waters. Come ye to Christ!"

II. THEN GOD ISSUES A SECOND CONDITION AND A CALL—Isaiah 55: 1:...and he that hath no money;

We Must Have Nothing with Which to Pay

Not only must you have a genuine thirst, you must have no way of paying for that which you need--**"he that hath no money."**

Christ the Master declared, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mt 19: 24) The way is too straight and too narrow, my friends. You must come with no merit in you, no worthiness in you, no righteousness of your own, no works of your own, no wisdom of your own.

Why is this a vital necessity? If you come with anything at all, then Christ will not be your All and in all! One who thinks he has wisdom of his own—will not trust Christ to be all his Wisdom; one who thinks he has righteousness of his own—will not rest in Christ to be all his Righteousness; one who imagines he has holiness of his own—will not have a heart for Christ to be all his Sanctification; one who imagines he can redeem himself from the curse of the law—will not look to Christ to pay all the debt he owes to God and his justice.

"In my hand no price I bring
Simply to Christ I cling"

Illustration: I went on vacation once, and ran out of money. I went to a restaurant between breakfast and lunch and begged for a leftover pancake. I begged for water at a convenient store. When you have nothing and are nothing you are forced to come to Christ begging for mercy. Christ said,

Luke 5:32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Illustration: A man at a convenient store in Houston Texas said to me, “No, I will not give you a cup of water. But I will give you something—advice—get a job because nothing in this life is free.” He was right! The world is not like God and God is not like this world. It is just the opposite with God. **Isaiah 55: 1:...he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.** Man-made religion is trying to get you up to their price. God says we must come down to his—salvation is free!

Illustration: Melinda and I were at a restaurant back home one summer eating dinner. My cousin, Tim, was there with his family. He left before we did. When I asked the server for my bill, she said, “It is already paid!”

Sinner, when you come to Christ you find out everything is already paid in full. Redemption from the curse of the law is already accomplished for all those God everlastingly loved! Righteousness is already established and sins have already been purged for all for whom Christ died! All, all, all was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ when he cried, “It is finished!” Salvation is free to those who come because it cost the precious blood of God’s only begotten Son.

Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owed
Sin had left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow

How do I know Christ accomplished this for me? Are you thirsty? Have you no price to bring? Then come, feast upon the wine of Christ’s blood and the sincere milk of the word, without money and without price.

III. THIRDLY, GOD ASKS A QUESTION—Isaiah 55: 2: Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is not bread?* and your labour for *that which satisfieth not?*

Remember this is God speaking. What condescension! God comes down to our feeble reason and says, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Is 1: 18)

Vain Spending and Vain Laboring

The vain imagination of every carnal mind and of all false religion calls you to the field and to the kitchen. They bid you plant and cultivate and pick your own grapes, crush them yourself, strain them yourself, make your own wine; yet you never get to drink the soul-refreshing wine of Christ’s blood with all the he accomplished so freely for his people. They are too busy telling you how to earn a righteousness for yourself.

They bid you raise your own cow, milk it yourself, strain it yourself; yet you never get to drink the sincere milk of the word. They’re too busy using the scriptures to tell you their is life by the work of your hands.

John 5:39: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

They bid you raise your own wheat, harvest it yourself, prepare it and bake it yourself; yet you never get to eat Christ the Living Bread. They are too busy telling you the lie that the work of God is for you to work rather than the truth, “this is the work of God that you believe on him whom he has sent!”

God says, “Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is not bread?* and your labour for *that which satisfieth not?*” Works religion takes all from you—but it can never give you what only Christ the living

Bread gives to his people. You labor, labor, labor but it will never satisfy God, nor will it give you the satisfaction that only God gives in Christ.

Christ's Yoke and Burden is Light

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30: For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Why is Christ's burden so light? Scripture says two things are on Christ's shoulder: the government is on Christ's shoulder. And when he finds his lost sheep—you believer—he carries it on his shoulder. His burden is light to us who rest in him because we, along with everything necessary to make us accepted with God, is all on Christ's shoulders. Sinner, "Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which* is not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not?"

IV. BUT HOW DO I COME TO CHRIST? NEXT, WE SEE THAT ONLY GOD CAN MAKE US WILLING TO COME TO CHRIST—Isaiah 55: 2: hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which* is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Dead Men Eating and Drinking and Getting Life

"How can a dead man hearken and eat?" It sounds contradictory to tell dead sinners to do these things then tell them if they do their "soul shall live." Remember, the valley of dry bones? God told his preacher, "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD." God said, "Tell them they are dead." Sinners will not be given life by God through the message that tells them they have a little spark of life in them. God says, "Tell them they are dead!" God did not tell his preacher to give the bones a step-by-step guide on how to be born again. A dead man can do nothing! God said, Declare to them how I will give life to these dry bones through this gospel.—"Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

Sinner, you are a dry, dead bone in yourself. No ability, no will, no spiritual discernment in you whereby you can hearken to God's command. But the words "Hearken" and "diligently" are the exact same verb. They both mean "hear with spiritual discernment." The first word is spoken in the "imperative"—it is God's command. The second verb is in the "infinitive absolute"—like an adverb—it teaches us how to hearken.

As the call of this good news goes out—God gives the command effectually in the heart—"hearken!" By his command he gives life and spiritual discernment in the new heart. The gospel cannot be understood any other way.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15: But he that is spiritual judgeth all things,

Likewise, by the same command, God gives us "thirst", making us hearken—"diligently."

Illustration: When your favorite band drops their latest record—you listen to them over and over and over again. You hearken diligently to them.

When God makes his holy law come alive to his lost child, he empties our hands of all our vanity, when God makes us see our sin he dries us up and makes us thirsty for righteousness from another. That is how God alone makes the sinner hearken diligently unto God!

Who Do We Harken Unto and How?

Further, by this same command, God tells his child who to harken unto, **“Hearken diligently UNTO ME!”** In the preaching of the gospel, in the holy scriptures: both as the gospel is being preached, then at home as you study the things you have heard.

Likewise, by this same command, it is God who teaches us how to come and how to eat—**Isaiah 54: 3: Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;** God teaches his child to come to Christ through our ear, hearing the gospel that declares Christ; we come to Christ in our heart, believing on him; we come to Christ, coming to his throne of grace to beg mercy from him; we continue coming to Christ all our days the same way—“to whom coming!” It is by God’s effectual command through the hearing of the gospel of Christ that God gives faith in the heart!

Romans 10:17: faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It is by God’s same effectual command through the hearing of the same gospel of Christ that God continues to grow believers in the new man.

Galatians 3: 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, [by the hearing of faith] are ye now made perfect by the flesh? [by the works of the law?]

Believers continue and grow, the same way we began, by the hearing of the faithfulness of our triune God in Christ Jesus!

But notice, this general call has gone out this morning so that every one hears the same message. God has hid nothing from any sinner here today. So sinner you can stop blaming God for not believing on God. No sinner here can plead ignorance for refusing to bow to Christ. Flee to Christ today!

V. LASTLY, FOR THOSE TO WHOM THIS WORD COMES IN POWER, WHO OBEY AND BELIEVE ON CHRIST, GOD MAKES A PROMISE—Isaiah 55: 3:...and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.

Note, God says, **“I will make”**—It God’s prerogative alone to make covenant with whom he will. God alone can write the law of his covenant on our hearts.

Note, it is an **“everlasting covenant.”** It is from everlasting to everlasting—eternity to eternity. It is God’s covenant of free grace given to his people in Christ before the foundation of the world. Founded on nothing but the goodness and grace of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, it cannot be undone—it is an everlasting covenant

Note, God says, I will make this everlasting covenant **“with you.”** With you who look for salvation in no other but Christ; with you who look for righteousness in no other but Christ; with you who come to Christ through faith, thirsty, without money and without price—“ye shall be filled.”

Note, God calls his covenant, **“the sure mercies of David.”** **Sure**—because every stipulation of this covenant is accomplished by God in Christ Jesus—it is all finished, nothing remains for the sinner to pollute by the work of our hands. **Mercies**—because we need abundant mercies. God gives mercy after mercy after mercy. **Of David**—because David, as a king and mediator, typified Christ, who came through the house of David, the covenant God makes with us is the Son of David, Christ Jesus; the same inheritance God gives to Christ, he promises to each believer.

Romans 8: 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. with Christ.

Let's end by dropping down to verse 6 and just reading God's command.

Isaiah 55: 6: Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8: For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9: For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10: For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. 12: For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. 13: Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off.

I pray God make his word effectual in our hearts.

Amen!