

Come everyone who thirsts

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Date: 03 April 2016

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[0 : 00] Now as the Lord enables us, let us turn to consider words we have in this chapter we've read together. The prophecy of Isaiah on chapter 55, and reading again at the beginning of the chapter.

So, come everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come buy and eat, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price, and so on.

Amen. It has been said by someone a long time ago that this prophecy of Isaiah could very accurately be called the gospel according to Isaiah.

That there is so much of Christ in it. And although Isaiah lived around 700 years before Christ came into the world, the Spirit of God gave this man, Isaiah the prophet, an insight into who Christ was. And what Christ was coming to do in many years time. And also what the church of Christ was like.

[1 : 32] For example, in chapter 53 of this particular book of Isaiah, we find that verse 5 is so accurately mentioned there.

What Christ was coming to do. It says he was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his stripes we are healed. Not only was Isaiah given to see generally that Christ was coming, but he was given to see with great accuracy and in detail what Christ was coming to do.

He was coming to die in the room and in the stead of perishing sinners. So that he is a mighty saviour able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.

So this chapter 53 is full of Christ. But then in chapter 4, which is the following chapter, it is full of the church of Christ.

[2 : 44] That is, those who have come to know the blessing of God through faith in Jesus. See for example in chapter 54 verses 1 and 2.

He is saying there, And although the number of Christians at any one time in this world may seem small in comparison to the rest of the population, nevertheless, in the eyes of God they are an expanding company.

And when you hear of reports of the gospel going to various countries, for example like China, that to a great extent was closed to the gospel many years ago, nevertheless, no, there are millions of believers in China.

And what Isaiah here is saying is, let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out, don't be held back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes.

In other words, you are going to be expanding. Christians are going to come from the north and the south and the east and the west into the kingdom of Christ. And that is what Isaiah says in these verses of chapter 54.

[4 : 26] But then coming to chapter 55, he is talking not just about Christians, but he is talking to people who need to be directed as to where they ought to go in order to have their thirst satisfied and their hungry and souls satisfied.

He is actually in chapter 55 talking about the way the Lord brings feeding to his people who follow him in the world.

He is talking, as we say, about the means of grace, the word of God, the gatherings of God's people to worship him, to hear the gospel explained, to offer praise to the Lord and the people of God to be strengthened and encouraged and enlightened and strengthened in their most holy faith through coming to these places where the word of God and the blessing of God is to be found.

And this is what we have from the beginning of chapter 55. And there are three things in the verses that we have at the beginning of the chapter that I'd like to highlight just for a few moments with you this evening.

First of all, the Lord sends a friendly invitation in these marvellous words. And it's the Lord who's speaking, not just Isaiah, but the Lord himself.

[6 : 06] And he says, Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. That's the first thing. And secondly, he goes on at verse 2 and he poses two questions and he says, Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread?

And why do you labour for that which does not satisfy? He is well aware that there are plenty of people who don't come to the means of grace, who don't avail themselves of the provision that God has made in the gospel.

And he is challenging them with these two searching questions. Why do you spend your money for things that don't satisfy you? Why do you spend your labour and your effort for things that are of no avail at the end of the day?

These are challenging questions. And thirdly, we have a gracious encouragement. Let's see, in the middle of verse 2 into verse 3, it says, If the Lord is saying, Come here, listen diligently to me.

Eat what is good. Delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear, that your soul may live. And so on.

[7 : 30] It says, If the Lord is coming alongside them in a friendly way and he says, Listen diligently to me. This is the way you ought to go for your own eternal benefit.

Firstly then, what we had under the first point, a friendly invitation. See what it says. Come, everyone who thirsts.

who is he addressing this to? Well, it says here, everyone. Jews, Gentiles, rich people, poor people. If you think of the gospel account of the great supper, and the servant was sent out at supper time to invite people who had received the invitation before and some of them refused, then the master of the house said, Go into the highways and the hedges and the streets of the city and invite those who are poor and maimed and hot and blind, people who have nothing to commend them.

Bring them in, constrain them to come in. And isn't that what the gospel is like? He says here, come, everyone who thirsts, everyone, whoever you are, the gospel is an appropriate solution to your problem as a sinner and to my problem as a sinner also.

[9 : 06] Because there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved than the name of Jesus Christ who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.

Who are invited? Everyone. But then he goes on to qualify the invitation. Everyone, he says, yes, but everyone in particular who is thirsting, everyone who is thirsting, all who value the gospel of God, all who value the things of God, all who are not satisfied with themselves or their own righteousness or their own achievements, all who are not satisfied with what the world can give them, with what the flesh can give them, all who have come, as it were, to an end of themselves and who have thought themselves good enough up to a certain time in their life and then they realize, well, I have nothing if I were to drop dead today, I have no faith in Jesus, I have no sure ground to stand on, I have lived my life and misspent my opportunities and I know thirst for something better than what this world can give me.

Isn't that true? Maybe with some of yourselves here this evening. you think back to a time when you had no real sense of your need before God but now you sense that you have a need that you have a need that this world cannot satisfy and you realize the invitation is to you because you are thirsting for something better, you are thirsting for forgiveness, you are thirsting for salvation, you are thirsting for Christ the Saviour, you are thirsting to hear the voice of God in the Scriptures addressing yourself, whoever else speaks or whatever else sound you hear, nothing is going to make up for this great void in your life that you are longing to have filled but the Lord himself and you are seeking him, you are seeking him in prayer and you are seeking him earnestly because every other source of delight has dried up and you are seeking something with all seriousness that you can.

Come, he says, everyone who is thirsty and he says, come to the waters, come to the waters. I mentioned a few moments ago that he is talking here about the means of grace in particular.

When he talks about the waters, it's as if he is using the idea of people who live in a dry, arid country where they have to gauge their travelling days according to the number of watering holes or oases that they might come across on their journey.

[12 : 27] children of Israel, they came to Elam where there was water and where there was shelter for them. The people of God come to the means of grace where their souls are strengthened and

refreshed through the word of God as it is read and sung and preached.

And this is what he is saying here. You come to the waters. In chapter 12 of this particular prophecy, he talks about throwing water with rejoicing from the wells of salvation.

The wells of salvation like the oasis in the desert, the place where the people of God meet and where the Lord meets them to strengthen and encourage and feed their souls.

Of course, the Lord feeds our souls by his word and in the sacraments and the Lord uses his own word to feed and strengthen and encourage us as we journey on.

And he says here, you come to the waters. But somebody has said that really the main thing that we have to consider is where the waters are coming from.

[14 : 02] And the waters that refresh our souls and strengthen us are coming from Calvary's cross where there was a fountain opened in the death of Jesus.

And really we have to come to Jesus, not just to the prayer meeting or the Sabbath services, the means of grace. We have particularly to come to the Lord Jesus Christ and come to him by faith. Come to the waters that he has made available. Come to the waters that will give you life everlasting. Do you remember there was one day Jesus was at Jerusalem at the temple during one of the feasts and he cried aloud on the last great day of the feast and he said if anybody thirsts let him come unto me and drink.

You see the world will dangle various things in front of you in order that you might be satisfied with them but you may try a hundred different things and get satisfaction for a few moments and then it seems to get old fashioned and you're looking for something else.

When Jesus comes and offers eternal life to us that eternal life is exactly what it says it is life everlasting blessings forevermore when you close in with Jesus in the gospel.

[15 : 44] The waters when the woman of Samaria that we have an account of in John John's gospel chapter 4 she came to the well of Jacob at Zikar about midday because she didn't want to mix with the people because of her checkered lifestyle.

She came when the sun was at its hottest when most people would be taking time to get a rest in the shade of their house but who was sitting there at the well with the Lord Jesus Christ and he asked her for a drink.

She put so many obstacles his way of various kinds and then he said to her if you knew he said who I was you would ask of me and I would give you life giving water I would give you eternal life not just water from this well which will perish with the using but I would give you eternal life from the fountain that is eternally running this is what John saw in the book of Revelation behold he said I saw a river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb he saw the source of eternal blessings he saw the source of life everlasting proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb and you know in a very interesting but very real way waters from that source of eternal blessing are flowing by here this evening through the gospel the word of God brings these blessings to those who believe to those who receive by faith and this is what we have here come to the water you come what stops you from coming only yourself because you have no will to come that's the big big problem isn't it and then he goes on to say he who has no money come by and eat come you who have nothing avail yourself of the provision that the Lord has provided in the gospel even eternal life isn't it interesting I mentioned at the beginning that the poor are invited the hot the blind the lame people who have nothing at all people who have no righteousness or goodness in themselves nevertheless they are exalted to come to buy and eat how can we buy anything if we have nothing well there are a number of ways to answer that think of what's involved in a transaction when you buy something you receive whatever it is you're buying and you give whatever payment is asked of you you have to part with something in order to receive what you're buying you part with your money when you're buying something what is the Lord asking when he says if you have no money nevertheless I want you to come and buy and eat well there are things that you need to part with if you're going to receive what the Lord is freely offering you have to part with your sin you have to part with your self righteousness part with your selfishness and self importance part with your worldly outlook and worldly ambitions part with all of these agendas that you have that give you to be so rooted in the life of this world are not at all rooted in the things of God ask the Lord to break the tyranny of these worldly things that are holding your mind and holding your soul in captivity and ask him to break them that you might give yourselves just as you are to the

[20 : 31] Lord Jesus Christ and he will be happy to bestow upon you the wonderful blessings of the gospel come buy wine and milk without money and without price you see what the Lord is offering it's so valuable it's beyond us being able to buy it and besides that what the Lord is offering it's been bought already because the Lord Jesus Christ by his death he paid to the justice and the law of God all that the law and justice of God required of us as sinners he paid the price in full by his own obedience unto death even the death of the cross and now he says all is ready I've paid for it all all you have to do is receive it but the problem with so many is their house the house of their soul and their life is so full of the things of this world focusing upon themselves that they have no room for the Lord Jesus Christ to leave them outside so this is a very graphic picture we have in the book of Revelation chapter 3 one of the churches to whom the Lord is speaking there the church of Laodicea and the Lord says of her that she thinks she's rich but she's very very poor and he says to her I counsel you to buy of me gold right in the fire that you might be rich in other words throw aside your dud coinage and the things that you really value that are absolutely worthless in my eyes throw them aside and receive from me what will truly enrich you in your life even the heavenly currency of grace and salvation buy wine and milk you are asked to come to the waters but when you come you realise that there's far more to be made available to you than what you expected to have and that's the same with every

Christian everyone who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ they find that there is so much more that Christ offers and provides them with than they thought possible he feeds he strengthens he gives joy wine gives joy to the heart milk strengthens our bones you see this is what the apostle Peter says when he commends to us the way ahead as Christians he says as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby and the Lord here provides it freely to those who come a friendly invitation but secondly he comes at us with two questions and the two questions are very interesting especially in light of the wonderful invitation and the wonderful provision to which the Lord invites us he's talking about waters available to those who have no money wine and milk available without money and without price blessings of the gospel eternal life available to those who truly come and now he says verse 2 why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and why do you labour for that which does not satisfy and this is what is true with so many people in the world they labour for this world they labour for something to be enjoyed in time only they provide for themselves and there are certainly things to commend that we provide for ourselves and for our families security and comfort all of these things absolutely biblically acknowledged as some things we have to do take care of ourselves and our families have that as a priority for our families and ourselves but the problem is when that is all that you worry about that's the problem and that's the problem he highlights here you spend your money for that which is not bread in other words that which does not feed the soul or meet the needs of the soul or meet your needs as a child of eternity on the way into eternity eternity with his open mouth waiting for us to fall in at the day of our death and people and people so often just spending their time their effort their money on things that don't really prepare them for eternity at all and it's as if the Lord is saying why what is the logic behind the way you're living why do you spend your money why do you spend your effort on things that really are so secondary in their importance when you compare them with the great primary need of your soul that is to close in with

Jesus Christ and him crucified as your own Lord and Saviour it says in 1st John chapter 2 love not the world and are the things that are in the world love it not may it not be the object of your love may your love not be shackled by the things of the world and the things of time and the things of sense you have to have a larger how can I put this you have to have a better view of things that extends into eternity itself do you remember the way the

Bible speaks of Moses and when you look in Hebrews chapter 11 he is mentioned there as one of the saints in the Old Testament who lived by faith they all lived by faith but he is mentioned as the one who when it came to a certain time in his life refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter he had been brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter with all the honor with all the money with all the influence with all the luxury with all the power that that involved and there was a day when he said I don't want it some of the theologians say that he may very well have ascended the throne of Egypt as a king of Egypt that was quite possible but whatever lay in the future for him in Egypt he says I don't want it what does the scripture say he chose instead of the route to the throne of

[29 : 12] Egypt he said I would rather suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season some people might say he was crazy but the Lord said he was wise he

knew that the pleasures of sin were momentary only for a short time and he saw that the people of God although they were downtrodden in Egypt the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians and their taskmasters required impossible burdens of them to be born nevertheless he said these are the people that I want to be with I wonder why he said that was he just a do-gooder wanting to help the people who were downtrodden no he was more than that he was a man who saw the glory of God's people he was a man who knew that the

Lord was with them that the Lord had promised wonderful things to them that there was a kingdom awaiting them even the land of Canaan and that there was a kingdom in heaven awaiting them and he saw with the eye of faith a glimpse of their glory and he said the glory of the throne of Egypt pales into insignificance in comparison with the glory that attaches to the people of God because the Lord is with them and the Lord says why why do you spend your money for that which is not bread reports on the news a couple of days ago I didn't get the whole report but there thinking that they've discovered more sarcophagi or burials in these places in Egypt and they're so excited about the mummies that they may find there and the historical information they'll get about the Egyptian hierarchy and the Egyptian lifestyle of 3000 years BC and all of that so great in the eyes of so many of them but what is that in comparison to an eternal inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fades not away it's nothing why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy maybe you have a lot of money in the bank I don't know maybe you're well healed in so many ways with a lovely home nothing wrong with any of that nothing but if that's the be all and end of all of your life how poor you really are in the light of eternity and it's the light of eternity that the Lord is bringing to bear upon these people when he speaks to them like this there is so much available and so few taking it up there is so much available and so few happy to try and get the best that this world can offer and that's all they're happy with they don't see their need of anything else well ask the Lord to give you the sight that Moses had when he saw the throne of

Egypt for what it was and all the glory of the Egyptian monarchy for all it was and all the treasure in Egypt for all that they were and he realised that they're nothing in comparison to our moment's fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and thirdly he comes now to this the Lord's gracious encouragement in verse two and into three he says listen diligently to me in the original it says listen listening listen listening you'll find in the Bible the Lord Jesus using these words he who has ears to hear let him hear the Lord didn't give us ears just to play with them the Lord gave us ears to listen to things that have been told us and primarily he who made the ear he speaks to the ear that he has made words for our eternal good and our eternal blessing and this is what he is saying here listen diligently to me what's the first voice that you hear in the morning maybe your husband wife family radio

TV well the first voice you ought to tune into in the morning is the voice of the Lord who made you hear the voice of the Lord who made you and to whom do you speak first in the morning again your wife your husband your family well you ought first and foremost to speak to the one who gave you a tongue to speak who gave you a voice who gave you a heart to desire things and this is what he is saying listen diligently to me he said I am your Lord I am your maker at last I will stand as your judge at the great judgment seat of Christ and now in the day of opportunity and gospel privilege he says listen diligently to me and then he says eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food eat what is good for you in this very prophecy we have a wonderful picture of what the gospel is like the blessings of the gospel in chapter 25 of

[36 : 06] Isaiah at verse 6 and he says on this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food a feast of well aged wine of rich food full of marrow of aged wine well refined it's as if he is using the most wonderful provision that the people of Isaiah's day could think of to illustrate the wonderful gospel blessings available for our soul and it's available on the gospel mountain in the church of Christ available in the word of God in the meetings of God's people in churches such as this on evenings and mornings like the Lord's day we have nowadays when we go to the house of God and open the house of God to enter and to worship and it says here delight yourselves in rich food incline your ear it says and come to me here that your soul may live

I will make with you an everlasting covenant my steadfast sure love for David he's talking about the blessings that come to us through Jesus Christ the blessing of forgiveness of sin the blessings of eternal life the blessings of being made sons and daughters in God's family through adoption the blessings of having the Holy Spirit come dwell within us and at last sanctify us holy for the souls of

believers at their death are made perfect in holiness and to immediately pass into glory and their bodies being still united to Christ rest in their graves until the resurrection and that is the covenant God makes with his people who believe in him in this world he says

I'll make with you an everlasting covenant I'm binding myself to fulfilling the promises that I make in the Bible by way of forgiving your sin and at last receiving you into heaven at the end of life's journey these three points the invitation to those who are thirsty the questions to be answered why are you spending your money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which does not satisfy and thirdly the Lord's gracious encouragement listen diligently to me and you know I would say that the first step in listening diligently to the Lord would be to make sure that wherever his word is preached that you be there the psalmist said in

Psalm 85 I'll hear what God the Lord does speak that was his priority on that particular day and he says to his folk he'll speak peace and if you want to know the peace of God that passes all understanding you come and hear the word of God preached you come to where the people of God are fed and watered in their souls and you continue coming because this is what the Lord commands in his holy word may he bless these thoughts to us let us pray Lord our God help us to praise thy great name that we are found on mercy's ground where the word of God is preached and where Christ is freely offered in the gospel oh grant us the wisdom and the ability to come unto him and rest in him alone for salvation as he is freely offered in the gospel to us bless us now we pray and bless this congregation as they continue to witness for thee in this community and bless the minister we pray that as he studies and as he goes in and out among the people that he may be strengthened and filled with thy spirit so that his service would be down to thy glory and that many will be blessed through his ministrations here forgive us now we pray for all that we have said amiss and cleanse our sin for Jesus sake amen let us now conclude singing again from sing psalms and from psalm 63 sing psalms and psalm 63 verses 1 to 8 oh god you are my god alone i seek your face with eagerness my soul and body thirst for you in this dry weary wilderness i have seen you in your holy place your power and glory held my gaze far better is your love than life and so my lips will sing your praise i'll bless you lord throughout my life raise my hands to you in prayer my joyful lips will sing your praise my soul is fed with richest food upon my bed i lie awake and in my thoughts remember you i meditate throughout the night and keep your constant love in view because you are my help alone in shadow of your wings i'll sing you hold me up with your right hand to you oh god my soul will cling psalm 63 from sing psalms verses 1 to 8 oh god you are my god alone and we stand to sing oh god you are my god alone i sing your face with heaviness my soul and body thirst for you in this thy weary wilderness wilderness i sing

you with your holy place your power and glory has my gaze far ever is your love life and soul my lips will sing your praise i bless you lord throughout my life i'll raise my hands to you in where my joy to live to sing your praise my soul is set with richest food upon my bed i lie awake and in my cross remember you i meditated throughout the night and keep your constant love in you you because you are my help my lord in shadow of your wings i sing you hold me up with your right hand heart to you o god my soul will sing now may the grace of our lord jesus christ the love of god the father and the fellowship of the holy spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore amen amen