

Come everyone who thirsts

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back just for a few moments this morning, this afternoon, to the chapter that we read. Book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 55. We'll read again just two or three verses at the beginning of the chapter.

Isaiah 55, reading from the beginning. Come. Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. He who has no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live. And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

I read a story somewhere a wee while ago about a rich man who was on holiday.

[1 : 07] And as he was walking down by the harbor in this town where he was staying, he came across a fisherman. He was just sitting lazily on the end of his boat, just doing nothing.

And so the rich man went up to him and he said, Why aren't you out there fishing? It's a great day. Why aren't you out there fishing? And the fisherman said to him, Because I've caught enough fish for today.

Well, why don't you catch more fish than you need? Said the fisherman. Said the rich man. The fisherman said, What would I do with it? Well, you could sell them.

You could earn more money. You could buy a better boat so that you could go further out. You could catch more fish. You could then buy bigger nets. You could catch even more fish. And make even more money. And soon you'd have a fleet of boats.

And you'd be rich like me. And the fisherman looked at him and he said, Then what would I do? Well, then you could sit down and you could enjoy life.

[2 : 07] Said the rich man. What do you think I'm doing now? Said the fisherman. That's a level of contentment with life that very, very few of us ever reach.

That's a level of satisfaction and comfort with providence and what life has for you that few of any of us ever attain to.

We're a very, very discontented species. One poet put it like this. He said, As a rule, man's a fool. When it's hot, he wants it cool. When it's cool, he wants it hot. Always wanting what is not. That's us. That's us to a T. We live in a world full of discontented people.

Full of malcontents. And everywhere you look, people are working, struggling, laboring to get more stuff.

[3 : 10] To get more money. To have a better career. And very, very few people are content or satisfied with their lot, what they have. Why is that?

All my life, I've seen people looking for their satisfaction in places and people that will never provide it.

Look at verse 2 in our text there. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? Why your labor for that which does not satisfy? People are looking for satisfaction in possessions.

They spend their lives making money so that they can spend that money to get more things.

They're looking for contentment in the things that they possess. They're looking for contentment in the things that they possess. And it's not just cars and houses and boats and holidays and furniture and clothes.

I have an uncle. He's dead nearly 20 years now. He was obsessed with his sheep. It's Friday afternoons.

[4 : 13] His Saturdays were spent with his sheep. And when he got older, when his health started to fail, his wife said to him, Well, don't you think we should, you know, you should think about selling

the sheep or at least reducing the number.

Maybe getting rid of some. And he turned to his wife and he said, I'd get rid of you first. We can look for our satisfaction in things that will ultimately not provide it.

Because what we don't realize, what people like that don't realize is that all our possessions are best are temporary. They wear out.

Our cars need replacing. Our houses need refurbishing. Our clothes wear out. All of these things that we hold so dear. They'll all be left behind one day.

They'll still be here. But you and I won't. You won't take your house. Or your car. Or your career. Or whatever your thing is.

[5 : 19] You won't take that with you into eternity. Because everything that we have will one day be left behind. Remember our minister in Stornoway.

The late Murdo Alec MacLeod. Speaking about the rich man and Lazarus. And he said this. When a rich man dies, there's the question that's always asked. And the question that's asked is, how much did he leave?

And the answer is, he left it all. Everything that we have, we will leave behind if it hasn't worn out by the time we're gone.

Our possessions can never satisfy the deepest needs of our soul. And people look for satisfaction in their pursuits as well. They work, Isaiah says, for that which does not satisfy.

They spend all of their time, all of their energy chasing things that can never satisfy their souls. Your work, your career, your hobbies, your sports, the pleasures of this life.

[6 : 28] They will never satisfy the deepest needs that your soul has. Now please don't get me wrong. These pursuits, these things that you work for.

These things may be perfectly legitimate in and of themselves. But the more time and the more effort that we invest in them, the more these things demand.

The farther up the tree you go with your career, the more time that career demands from you.

Regardless what you pursue in this life, whether it's work or pleasure, what you'll find is that in the end, you'll find that they will consume you if you let them.

Before I was reading this morning and I came across a quote by a musician, an American musician called Trent Reznor.

And he said this, he said, The biggest revelation I've had, he's not a believer as far as I know, but he said this, The biggest revelation that I've had about my life is that I've done everything I've wanted.

[7 : 38] I've pretty much had a go at everything I've wanted. And I'm still miserable. Your life pursuit will end when your life ends.

What you chase after will not satisfy that aching hole that there is in your soul, because it's God-shaped. Now in our text, in Isaiah, God shows through Isaiah the true source of permanent satisfaction.

He gives a rock-solid guarantee of perfect, eternal contentment to everybody who answers his invitation. And this is an invitation. First word of the chapter invites us in.

Come. So let's see what God has to say today about the real contentment that's found and also how much this contentment costs. Everything has a cost.

so look at the offer that comes with this invitation God here makes some wonderful offers when you read these three verses he makes some wonderful offers that are too good to ignore he offers the right provisions here he offers the right things there's three important things that he mentions here right at the start he mentions water now water is one of the most important substances to human beings we can go for days maybe over a week without food but our bodies are about two thirds water and it takes a lot of water to keep us alive to keep us functioning we have to have water to live the average human being if he's fit or she's fit can last for maybe three days without water water is vitally important to us and in the bible water is often used as a picture of the new birth when Jesus when he spoke to Nicodemus when he came when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night so he wouldn't be seen

[9 : 42] Jesus said to him unless one is born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God water is a picture of the gospel's message the salvation message of the gospel received by faith so people can be saved that's what water is a picture of in the bible and when Jesus when he spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria in John chapter 4 he said to her this he said everyone

who drinks of this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks of the water that I'll give him will never be thirsty again the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life so Jesus was there talking about water and he was talking about drinking water and the word drinks he's used it twice there and he's used it in two different ways the first time he uses it is in what they call the present tense it refers to a continual action in other words what he says to the woman is every time you drink from Jacob's well you will have to drink again and you will have to drink again and you will have to drink again you will have to keep on drinking to satisfy your thirst the second time he uses it there to the woman he uses it in a way which means a once and for all action in other words what he says to her is this if you take just one drink of the water that I offer you you will never thirst again if you take just one drink from the gospel of salvation you will never need to drink again

Jesus promises here complete contentment to everyone who drinks from his spiritual water now unlike physical water which we have to drink every day many many times a day Jesus is spiritual water it completely satisfies your soul and mine and he repeats this offer throughout the Bible it's a theme in John chapter 7 he stood up in the temple and he said if anybody thirsts let him come to me and drink there's that water theme again that drinking that satisfying theme again and right at the end of the Bible just before God's word closes in Revelation chapter 22 we're told this let the one who is thirsty come and let the one who desires take the water of life there's that water again let him take that water of life without price there's a connection back to what we're looking at today his offer of soul satisfying water his offer of the good news of the gospel it still stands today this isn't a dead book this isn't a closed offer this isn't like one of these repeat television programs that you see and there's maybe a competition and the phone number comes up and then something comes under and says all phone lines are now closed the competition is over the offer is gone this still stands today and Jesus is open for business

Jesus is willing Jesus is listening for your call he's waiting for you to come and take this water and he also mentions wine in Bible times wine could be as important as water because a lot of the water wasn't fit to drink there was no purification systems so they would add wine to the water to kill the bacteria and make it suitable for drinking and wine is used in the Bible as a picture of joy we sang about it there in Psalm 104 verse 15 wine was used at times of feasting times of celebrations and wine is also a picture of the Holy Spirit who enters believers at the very moment of salvation and he comes into our lives so that we can experience what Peter calls joy that's inexpressible joy that's full of glory God does not just save us he fills us with his joy and it's that

Holy Spirit it's the helper that Jesus sent that gives us peace that gives us the comfort that gives us the satisfaction in Christ as we travel on at Pentecost the Jews who saw the disciples rejoicing they thought that they were drunk with new wine but Peter told them that they weren't they weren't drunk with wine they were under the influence of the Holy Spirit because it's the Holy Spirit who controls the saints of God at the wedding in Cana of Galilee Jesus took six stone pots and he had them filled with water you remember the wine had run out at the wedding so he asked for six large stone pots that were filled with water and he then took that water and he changed it into wine that's exactly what God does with his children he takes our stony hearts and he fills them with the saving satisfying water of his gospel and he changes us by his power by his power he puts his spirit into us and then he pours us out to his glory in this world so there's water and there's wine and there's milk milk is essential for healthy growth milk is the first thing that a human baby gets for nourishment and it holds all of the essential nutrients all of the goodness that's needed to take a child an infant and to turn them into a healthy child in the bible milk is a picture of the word of God

God doesn't just give us the water of life that saves us he doesn't just give us that and the spirit that gives us joy he also gives us his word to help us grow strong in the things of God Peter says in 1st Peter chapter 2 like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation now the world looks at the church as if we're stupid as if we're ignorant as if we're bigoted but because we have this sincere milk of the word this pure spiritual milk this word of God the church is far wiser about God's things about eternal things than this world will ever be we know the way of salvation we know the way of faith we know the way of righteousness we walk in that way by the spirit's help and we know this because we're drinking deeply from the pure spiritual milk that is the word of God and it brings us on it matures us and it leads us so these are the three things that he mentions there the right provisions but these right provisions are at the right price the world that we live in makes us pay for everything and sin the flesh and the devil they all make you pay dearly

for any promise of contentment that they may offer you the devil came to [17:53] Eve in the garden and whispered in her ear that she would be like God if she ate of the fruit that God had forbidden her to you're not going to die you'll be like God you'll know good and evil he whispered this and the other he tempted her and she gave to Adam and they both ate but what a payment they had to make not only did they die they saw one son murder another son they saw all their children die they brought death into the world they allowed sin to rule the pay packet that comes with sin the price we pay for sin is beyond calculation God on the other hand in his word God lays every offer that he has he lays them all on the table and he lays them all out free of charge they're a free gift he offers salvation and contentment to all who come to him free of charge and since

God's gifts are free anybody can receive them God doesn't want money he doesn't want righteousness he doesn't want you to earn your salvation with righteousness your righteousness or your good works he won't accept that if you offer them to him the only currency that God requires is the currency of faith and when you bring that faith when you come in faith he opens the storehouses of his blessing to everyone who has simple faith in the offer of the gospel and comes to him and that is an offer that anybody can afford without money and without price because somebody else has paid the price so when you accept this offer what do you receive what are the opportunities that come with this invitation from God well the second half of verse 2 and into verse 3 show us at least three opportunities for those who receive the Lord's free offer the first one is salvation

God promises that those who come to him he promises that their souls will live their souls may live and that's a picture of salvation our souls in their natural state are separated from God and because of that separation we are in terrible danger maybe we don't realize it maybe we don't think we are but that doesn't mean that we're not everybody who is born into this world is born with a sin stained soul all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that word all covers everybody because everyone who is born into this world is bound for hell there's a poet who said this I was blinded by the devil I was born already ruined

I was stone cold dead as I stepped out of the womb that's how we're born into this life we're born in sin we're born with a penalty for sin hanging over us but when someone accepts God's free offer when somebody comes and drinks of the water of life that he's offering when they believe the gospel of grace then they're saved that's a special word isn't it that's a special word to every child of God when I was saved when I was rescued from all harm from all danger that's a word that's special to my heart when Jesus saved me when God makes his offer when we accept Jesus as our savior then we enter into a salvation relationship with God he does all the saving we do all the sinning and that's the way it works but at that exact moment when we come into that saving relationship there is no more condemnation for our sin we're saved by

Jesus blood from the awful wrath of God we change from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive we become brand new creatures in Jesus Christ we're set free we receive salvation we receive the safety from harm and from danger thank God today for salvation and we're given satisfaction verse 2 there says that those who receive God's offer they delight themselves in rich food when God saves somebody when God saves you or he saves me he gives us a new life life he also gives us a far better a more abundant life and he allows you to rest in what you have in Jesus Christ you're no longer seeking satisfaction in this world or you shouldn't be you're no longer looking for happiness and peace and pleasure and drink and drugs and whatever it is your saved soul finds everything that it needs in Jesus for true peace and eternal satisfaction the list of blessings that believers receive because of their salvation this list of blessings it's far too long for me to go into in one sentence

[24:13] I can name just a few we receive peace because he is our peace we receive joy because he has loved us we can receive rest because he has done everything for us we can find acceptance into his family with his children because of his blood we can have blessing love salvation no wonder believers underneath it all believers are a happy are a joyful satisfied people and there's the opportunity for security God promises that he will make an everlasting covenant with you and that's a binding contract which God makes with his people some covenants that we come across in the

Bible that God makes their conditional salvation where he promises that he will bless his people if they walk to a certain standard or do a certain thing but this covenant here this everlasting covenant has just one requirement there's only one clause that has to be complied with when you accept

God's free offer and drink of the water of life God makes an unconditional everlasting covenant with you if you receive him by faith call it what you will we have different names for the same thing eternal security once saved always saved eternal life when you accept God's offer of salvation then you are promised that your salvation will last for eternity it is an everlasting there is no end to it it is an everlasting covenant that is the great promise of the

Bible if Jesus is your savior you needn't worry that you will lose your salvation no child of God need to entertain that thought why because he gives you eternal life and because he gives you eternal life you will never perish these are his words not mine and nobody can nobody is able to snatch you out of his hand that is the security that comes with this eternal covenant but there are obligations to this tremendous offer everything that we need for eternal salvation everything offered at just the right price one that we can all afford so what do we need to do to accept this offer well some things are mentioned in these verses there's some things that

Isaiah mentions here but don't worry because God's requirement for this everlasting covenant they're not onerous they're not difficult he mentions something that you must have that right there in verse 1 something that you must have is mentioned we're told that this offer is for everybody who thirsts we all get thirsty but what we're talking about here the thirst we're mentioning here is spiritual thirst not everybody has that spiritual thirst and some people when they get a spiritual thirst or the beginnings of a spiritual thirst they try and drown it with the flesh and the world and pursuing other avenues of satisfaction they don't see their need they kill the vision that they have of their need they have no desire for a new life they see no reason to come to God but every now and then somebody does develop a spiritual thirst they look at their life and they start to become dissatisfied they want more than they've got they know that something is missing something important isn't there that's when men and women become candidates boys and girls become candidates for God's offer of salvation and God's offer is only for sinners you must be a sinner to accept

God's offer of salvation he didn't come into this world to save people who think that they're righteous who think that they're good enough who think that they will add something to God's heaven God cannot God will not save somebody who does not see their need of him he will however save all who see their need and all who come to him now this thirst for God isn't natural it comes through the Holy Spirit working in your life and when he begins working in your heart he convicts you of your need he creates a thirst for more he makes you uncomfortable with the life you live that's what he did to me when I was 15 when I was 16 when I was a teenager and life I was on the doorstep of life and life should have been great and all I could think about was there's got to be more to life than this it felt so meaningless so empty and that was the spirit touching my life creating this thirst in me the greatest day of your life the greatest day of your life is the day that the spirit the Holy

[30 : 23] Spirit draws you to Jesus because that is the day of your life when you become complete and you begin to do the thing that you were made to do so there's something that you must have there's also something that you have to hear look how often we're told in these few verses that we need to hear God's message we're told to listen diligently we're told to incline your ear we're told to hear if we hear God calling then we can come and get what we need for salvation we have to listen through the reading of the word through being under good preaching we have to listen for God's call and when we hear his call we come and we get what we need for salvation four times he says come in these three short verses once he invites us to eat if there's a thirst in your soul for a different life today if you're dissatisfied with your life if you're dissatisfied with your prospects for eternity maybe there's something at the back of your mind you know life no matter how long you get it will run out I was at a funeral a week ago a man passed away and he had been married 70 years he was 94 and it all came to an end no matter how long we get this part of life ends the next part of life doesn't the next part of our existence does not and if you my friend are concerned about your prospects for the next part of life then that is God speaking to you that is his Holy

Spirit making you uncomfortable with what is lying ahead of you come to him because he will save you if he begins something in you he will save you if you come to him he will give you this eternal life and the third thing is there's something you must do God says come to me that's it that's all you have to do come to him look at the Philippian jailer in Acts chapter 16 and he's about he's about to kill himself he's about to end it all and Paul comes and stops him and he asks the supreme question that any human being has ever asked what can I do to be saved look at the answer that Paul gives him believe and you will be saved believe that's it that is the secret that is the thing that you must do

to be saved the one thing is to believe the single most simple most complex thing that you will ever do with your life and at the end of your life you will bless

Jesus that he enabled you to do it so how can God make a free offer like this to people like us because he can because his son because Jesus because he went to Calvary because he died on the cross and because he paid the whole price there is nothing left outstanding on that bill salvation was not something like when you go out for a meal and you go Dutch everybody pays their own part salvation is not like that our elder brother the Lord Jesus Christ he paid everything he left nothing for us to pay we simply have to believe remember the Amazon card I spoke to the children about well I can enjoy the full benefit of that gift card

I can buy what I like from the Amazon website because somebody else paid the full cost he paid the cost I can enjoy the benefits it's the same with salvation we can have it we can enjoy the full benefit of it without money without price without worrying about the cost because somebody else because Jesus Christ paid the full cost of it one songwriter said this he said Jesus paid it all all to him I owe sin had left a crimson stain he washed it white as snow what about you today are you really content are you truly content are you satisfied with life it's as good as it gets have you heard God's call to come to him for salvation has he given you the contentment that your soul is desperate for if he has then you are truly blessed you should thank him and praise him today that he did it all and he gave it all to you but if you're not satisfied if you're not content if you can see that there's something missing there's a part of the puzzle that you cannot find you cannot lay your hand on you don't know what it is it's missing it's not there there's a hole you need to come to him for salvation because that's what's missing do do you want the contentment that he offers wouldn't you like to enjoy through soul satisfaction you can but you can only find it in one place

Jesus Christ Amen let's pray eternal father bless us this morning forgive us for anything that we said that was against your will help us father to see that without money and without price that is before us the greatest offer we live in a cynical world that says there's no such thing as a free lunch but it's your good pleasure to give us the kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen Let's finish singing together from Psalm 34 Scottish Psalter version of Psalm 34 we're going to sing from verse 5 down to the end of verse 10 page 247 in the psalm book Psalm 34 they looked to him enlightened were not shamed were their faces this poor man cried God heard and saved him from all his distresses down to verse 10 the lions young may hungry be and they may lack their food but they that truly seek the

[38 : 04] Lord will not lack any good Psalm 34 from verse 5 down to the end of verse 10 to God's praise they looked to him enlightened were they looked to him and light and were watching ever in his sister and by his heart and his distresses the angel of the lord encamps and round encamp us there for those who else are about that to them delivered for

Jesus he that all is good who trusted him is blessed here hear all his saints none that him fear shall be with one to rest but thy own young may and be and they may lack their food and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love and may the grace of the Lord the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Ooh my God it pert for little