

Guest Preacher Rev Kenneth Ferguson

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[0 : 00] Now let us turn together to the portion of Scripture we've read, from the prophecy of Isaiah, in chapter 55. I'd like, with the Lord's help and leading, to say a few words on the opening verses of this chapter.

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.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

And so on. One or two thoughts, as the Lord enables us. The prophet Isaiah ministered about 700 years before Jesus Christ came into the world.

And he was ministering to a people who had, to a large extent, turned their back upon God.

[1 : 25] It says at the beginning of the prophecy, in chapter 1, at verse 3, The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib.

But Israel does not know. My people do not understand. In verse 4, they have forsaken the Lord. They have despised the Holy One of Israel.

They are utterly estranged. And when Isaiah was commissioned to go out to preach the gospel to them, he was told what kind of reception the message was going to receive.

The people were not going to listen. And that was obviously a hard furrow for Isaiah to plough, to plough, as he ministered among them.

Nevertheless, he was faithful in his ministry. And we still have these words in chapter 1 in Isaiah, giving us an insight into the way the Lord was dealing with them.

[2 : 47] When he says, If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.

But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. The people were unwilling to turn.

But the Lord goes on to reveal, throughout this prophecy, his own plan for the salvation of the people. For the salvation of his people in every age.

It says in chapter 7, That a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And his name shall be Emmanuel. God with us.

What people were not able to do, the Lord was going to come and deal with their lost situation. Deal with their hard hearts. Deal with the sins of their life.

[4 : 02] And in chapter 9, it goes on, At verse 6, Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given. The government shall be upon his shoulder.

And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, And the Prince of Peace. He's talking about Jesus, Jesus the Messiah, Who is going to come To deal with the root problem of the sins of the people.

And then when you reach as far as chapter 53, In Isaiah, You see these marvelous words. Jesus Christ, Wounded for our transgressions, Bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, And with his stripes, We are healed. The prophet there is speaking With certain anticipation of something that's going to happen Into the future.

And he's using the past tense As he writes the account in Isaiah 53. He was wounded, he says, For our transgressions.

[5 : 18] He was bruised for our iniquities. Something that hadn't actually in time yet happened. But it's so certain from God's point of view That the prophet is directed by the Spirit of God To write it in the past tense.

And then chapter, And I'm just saying these few things by way of introduction. In chapter 54, After the account we have of the work of redemption In chapter 53, He talks so encouragingly about the church of Christ.

Sing, O barren one, Who did not bear. Break forth into singing, And cry aloud, You who have not been in labor, For the children of the desolate, One will be more than the children of the one Who was married, Says the Lord.

Lord, Enlarge the place of your tent. Let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out. Do not hold back. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. He's talking about a time of expansion, An increase of the people, And of blessing from the Lord.

But then coming to chapter 55, He says, There are people there, Who need to hear about this marvelous news, And who need to be exhorted, And encouraged, To come, To the provision the Lord has made, In Christ Jesus, For sinners such as we are.

[6 : 58] 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.

So on. I'd like to say a few things under three headings. First of all, It's a marvelous invitation. And the invitation is written, With a very urgent emphasis.

It says, Come, Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters, And so on. Secondly, We have, The questions of verse 2.

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.

Delight yourselves in rich food. And then thirdly, In verse 3, The promise he gives, I will make an everlasting covenant with you, My steadfast, Sure love for David.

[8 : 09] One or two thoughts under these three headings. The invitation, The questions, And the promise. First of all, The invitation.

Come, Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters. The picture we have, Of, The soul of man, In his unconverted state, Is, Like a desert situation.

A spiritual desert situation. You remember when Adam and Eve, Sinned against God, In the book of Genesis.

We found that, The Lord said to them, That the ground that had been so, Marvelous in producing food for them, Up until then, Was now going to be a difficult thing, For them to work.

Thorns and thistles, It will bring forth for you. With the sweat of your brow, Now you shall work, To get your food. And that's the way it is, With every one of ourselves.

[9 : 27] We are the children of Adam. And we are, We have inherited this, Wilderness within our soul. An empty, Dry wilderness, Situation.

And you see that, The Lord knows that. And he knows, What will deal with that, Empty barrenness, That lostness, That hardness, That unfruitfulness of spirit.

And he says, Come, Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters. One of the commentators says, That waters here in the plural, Proves, That they are waters of a superlative degree.

In other words, It's not just a trickle of water. It is, A gushing supply of pure water, Ready as it were, To fill the souls, Of lost sinners, Who are so barren, And dry, A wilderness, Spiritually speaking.

And the thing is, Come, Everyone who thirsts. It's amazing, What people, In that wilderness, Lostness, Thirst after.

[11 : 04] I mean, Many people, Thirst after, Money, Or success, Security in their employment, Happy family circle, All of these things, Legitimate enough in themselves, But with many people, They are the be all and end all, Of what they want out of life.

To be popular, To be famous, To gratify our sensual pleasures, Do this and that, And the next thing, This week and next week, I'm going elsewhere, Just to enjoy myself, Well, That's the kind of thirst, That prevails, In the heart, That has not been touched, Savingly, By the Spirit of God.

But whoever it is, And whoever thirst, People may have, In that respect, The Lord points them, To a particular source, Of water, To quench their thirst, To show them, To show them, That there is, A solution, To their problem, Although they don't yet know, That they have a problem, The Lord will bring them, To realize, That in Him alone, Is their salvation, In Him alone, Is relief, For the longings, And the thirstings, That are filling their lives, And He says, Come everyone, Who is thirsting, To the waters, And he who has no money, Come buy and eat, Buy wine and milk, Without money, And without price.

Isn't it amazing, The money, Currency, That is required, For us to avail ourselves, Of this, Water, And this life, It's really not, Worldly money at all, The Pharisees thought, That they were able, With the exchange rate, Of their own good works, To please God, Remember the young man, Who came to the Lord Jesus, And he says, What must I do, To inherit eternal life, And Jesus gave him, A list of the commandments, And he says, I've kept them all, Since I was young, He didn't realize, That his problem, Was a deeper set problem, His problem, Was a problem of the heart, His heart hadn't actually, Come to realize, That there was,

A currency, That he was, Completely ignorant of, And that is the currency, Of the grace of God, He who has no money, He who has no, Spiritual currency, The invitation, Is to those, Who have nothing, But their sin, To come, To the source, Of cleansing, In the prophecy, Of Zechariah, There's an amazing, Opening verse, In chapter, I think it's 13, In that day, A fountain, Shall be opened, To the house, Of David, And the inhabitants, Of Jerusalem, For sin, And uncleanness, And that fountain, Opened, Speaks of the death, Of Jesus Christ, Our Saviour, And in opening, That fountain, There is, A superlative degree,

[14:48] Of pure water, Available, To cleanse, The filthiest sins away, Come, Everyone who thirsts, To the waters, That the Lord has opened, And made available, And he who has no money, Come buy and eat, How can we buy anything, Without money?

Well I think it's an interesting, Concept, When you think of, What's really involved, In buying something, Over the counter, Let's say you go into a shop, And you're looking for something, And there it is on the shelf, And the assistant, Brings it forward, And that's it, I'm happy with it, And then you bring your, Credit card out, Or your money, And there is an exchange there, You part with your money, And you receive, The goods, What is it you part with, When you respond, To this particular, Invitation, And command from the Lord, I mean if you have no money, If you have nothing to give him, How can you expect to receive, All this marvelous blessing, Well I think the secret is, That you have to come, Just as you are, Without one plea, Except here I am a sinner, I have nothing to commend me,

I have nothing Lord to give you, I cannot serve you, I cannot do anything, That will glorify your great name, I am just a barren wilderness, Fruitless, Helpless, Hopeless, In myself, But the fact that you have called me, I seek to come, Come, Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters, Where are these waters, Available to us, Well I believe, That this is, One of the places, In the whole world, Where these waters, Are flowing, In the gatherings, Of God's people, In the house of God, Where the word of God, Is being faithfully preached, Where the word of God, Is being read, And sung, And preached, Where people are praying, Such is,

An avenue, For these waters, To run, From the throne of God, In heaven, Right through, The services, In this place, And every other place like it, That holds services of worship, Into the hearts, And souls of those, Who are ready to receive, That's why it's, So important, That we, Attend the house of God, The means of grace, It's as if they are, Rivulets, Coming from the throne of God, With the water of life, And the people of God, Know this, Many of the times, They may have come into, A building such as this, Feeling empty and dry, And maybe one word, Or a phrase, From the gospel, Enlightens their minds, And their soul is filled, With the water of life,

The joy of the Lord, Becomes their strength, Or the people of God, Often feel, As if they are, A wilderness themselves, They feel that, Maybe, More as they go on, In the wilderness of life, I was reminding the men, At the prayer meeting, At back the other night, After we had finished, I can't remember, What the discussion was, After we had, Finished from the, From the worship, But something came, Into my mind, That I told them, That one of the men, Long ago told me, That he was, Seeking himself, And he was out, At one of the, Question meetings, The Canoon Kish, And he was up, On the gallery in back, And a man, Was called upon, To speak to the question, And he said, This old man, With grey hair, Stood up, Away over there,

[19:25] And he said, The first thing he said was, Now there's 50 years, Since I was first, Called upon, To speak to a kishjir, And I am, Feeling, More krihanoch today, Than ever I was, I'm feeling as if, I'm weaker, And impoverished, In my soul, He felt, As it were, So fruitless, And weak, As a Christian, These times, Come into our experience, As we move on, In the Christian journey, But the solution, To that is, To come, To where the waters flow, Come to the word of God, In private, Come to the place, Where you pray, To the Lord, Even just yourself, With the door closed, Behind you, As the Lord Jesus, Commends to us, And come, And the waters will flow,

In God's good time, Flowing into your soul, Buy and eat, Buy wine and milk, Without money, And without price, The wine, Indicates that, The blessing of God, Makes glad, The joy of the Lord, Enters, Through the blessing of God, And the milk, The sincere milk of the word, That Peter speaks of, In 1 Peter 2 verse 2, As little babies, Desire the sincere milk of the word, That you may grow thereby, If you want to grow in grace, And in the knowledge of your Lord and Savior, Be often at the word of God, Be often at prayer, Be often at the means of grace, Sabbath, And weekday, Because that is where the water flows,

The water of life, You remember the interview, The Lord had with the woman of Samaria, In John chapter 4, And Jesus asked her, Give me a drink, And she refused, Because of a long standing, Problem between the Jews, And the Samaritans, And he said, If you knew the gift of God, And who it is, Who is asking you to give me a drink, You would have asked of him, And he would have given you living water, Jesus talking about this water, This blessing from heaven, If she had asked for it, He would have given it to her, But the interview went around in such a way, That at last she realized, That he was the one, The Messiah, Who they were waiting for, When Jesus said, I am he, She left her water pot, Went and told the men of the city,

Come, See a man has told me everything I've ever done, Is this not the Christ? And then they came, In response to what she had said, And they said, Well, We have heard him ourselves, And now we believe indeed, That this is the Christ, The saviour of the world.

So that's the first thing, The urgent invitation, Come. Secondly, In verse 2, Why do you spend your money, For that which is not bread?

[23 : 02] And your labour, For that which is not satisfied? Listen diligently to me, And eat what is good, Delight yourself, In rich food.

Why do you spend your money, For that which is not bread? There are so many things, There are so many things, That we seek for ourselves, That may not at all, Be conducive to our growth in grace, That may not at all, Advance us in spirituality, That may not at all, Give us, To bear fruit unto the Lord, Unto holiness.

And we ask the Lord, Lord, Keep me from involving myself, With these things, Whatever they might be, Because he's asking here, Why do you spend your money, For that which is not bread?

The things really, That are not at all, Good for your soul, And why do you labour, For that which does not satisfy? Maybe you have satisfaction, For a short time, If you involve yourself, With various things, But really, It's not a permanent satisfaction, But these people, Who heard from the woman, Of Samaria, They heard, The word of Christ, For themselves, And they believed, For themselves, And they rested upon him, Alone, For salvation, And that's what we seek to do, Day by day, To seek to place our hand, In his hand, And lean upon him, As we journey through life, As the song of Solomon says, In chapter 8, Verse 5, Who is this coming up, From the wilderness, Leaning upon our beloved, Leaning upon Jesus Christ, Who is our Lord,

And her saviour, And her friend, And her physician, And her confidant, The one to whom she tells, All the secrets of her life, And who understands her, When nobody else is able, To understand her.

[25 : 12] Why do you spend, Why do you spend, Your money, For that which is not bread, And your labour, For that which is not satisfied, And then, There's an interesting, Line here, In the middle of verse 2, Listen diligently to me, And in the Hebrew, The word listen, Is repeated, Listen, Listen, As if he is saying, She is not giving me, As if the Lord is saying, She is not giving me, A full attention, Maybe one ear is listening to him, And the other ear is listening, To something or someone else, And isn't that the way, It often is with us, We only listen half heartedly, With one ear as it were, To what the Lord is saying, He says, Listen, Listen, As if he wants to, Attract her attention,

More definitely, And more fully, Listen diligently to me, And then he says, Eat what is good, Eat what is good, The provision, That the Lord himself, Has made, Do you remember, What the Lord Jesus said, And some of those, Who were following him, Refused to follow him, After that, Saying his teaching, Was too hard, He said, Except you eat the flesh, Of the son of man, And drink his blood, You have no life in you, And when some of them, He heard that, This is too hard for us, We don't want to follow him anymore, And Jesus said to the disciples, Will you also go away?

Peter said, Lord, To whom shall we go? You have the words, Of eternal life, However hard, The teaching might become, And difficult for us to understand, It is to stay with the Lord, And what does it mean, When it says, Except you eat of the flesh, And drink of the blood, Of the son of man, Well I believe, It's talking about, The Lord Jesus Christ, The God, Man, Mediator, In every aspect, Of his

work, In every aspect, Of his obedience, Every aspect, Of his sufferings, Unto death, That that may be, What we feed upon, Day by day, Looking unto Jesus, And feeding upon, The scripture, Message about him, He is able, To feed us, And strengthen us, As we go on, Through life, The word of God,

Is living, And powerful, Sharper, Than any two-edged sword, Reaching to the dividing, Asunder of soul, And body, Joints, And marrow, And is the discerner, Of the thoughts, And intents, Of the heart, We come, To the word of God, And have our ear, Opened to him, Hear that your soul, May live, And that your soul, May live, Jesus, When he was, Speaking at one of his, Gatherings, With the people, He who has ears, To hear, Let him hear, That's why the Lord, Gave us, Hearing, An aptitude, To hear, That we might hear, First and foremost, What God, The Lord, Does speak, A psalmist, Said that, I'll hear, What God, The Lord, Doth speak, To his folk, He'll speak peace, And to his saints,

But let them not return, To foolishness, Listen, Listen, He said, That your soul, May live, I will make with you, An everlasting covenant, This is the third, And last point, The third, And last point, This covenant, Isn't it amazing, That the Lord, Made a covenant, With David, If you go through, To the, Second book of Samuel, Chapter 23, At the beginning, Of that chapter, We have there, David's last words, And he's talking about, What the Lord, Has done for him, He has made him, The sweet psalmist of Israel, Raised him from, Following the sheep, And set him up, As a king, And so on, But then he comes to say, The authorised version,

[30 : 14] Translation, It says, Although my house, Be not so with God, As if he's complaining, That he hasn't really, Come up to the mark, That he ought to have, Come up to, As a leader of the people, Nevertheless, He says, Although I don't have, Haven't come up to that, Particular mark, He has made with me, An everlasting covenant, That's ordered in all things, And sure, The Lord, Commits himself, To his people, In such a way, That he will not renege, On any of his promises to them, That he will be with us always, Even unto the end of the world, That he will never leave us, Not forsake us, That he will supply all of our needs, According to his riches in glory, By Christ Jesus,

That he will stay true to us, And this is what it says, Elsewhere, Your maker is your husband, And the Lord of hosts is his name, He is in a marriage relationship, With his people, I will betroth you unto me, Forever, Those who come to him, Confessing and forsaking their sins, Will find, That he will forgive their sins, And he promises, And he promises, To take them, With himself at last, Into the glory, To which he has gone ahead of them, Ahead of them, You remember what he said, In John chapter 14, I am going to prepare a place for you, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, And receive you unto myself,

So that where I am, There you may be also, What an amazing commitment that is, An everlasting commitment, Have you, Reached a stage in your own life, When you feel, That you need Jesus, Above anything and anyone else, Well he says here, Come, If you are thirsting for my fellowship, If you are thirsting for my forgiveness, If you are thirsting for my blessing, Upon your soul, Come to the water, Come to where I am, Avail yourself, Of the living water, That your sins may be cleansed, Avail yourself of the wine, Of the fellowship of the gospel, That makes people glad, With joy unspeakable, And full of glory, Avail yourself of the milk, Of God's word, That will give you to grow, In grace, And in the knowledge, Of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I've been reading, A wee while ago, About Finlay Monroe, Who was, An itinerant evangelist, A young man, Who was in the island here, In the 1820s, And he had, A lot of blessing, Attaching to his ministry, And the last day, That he was, To preach in the island here, He was preaching at Moornack, The top of the hill, And people gathered, From all around, From Ness, From here, West side, And back, To Gress, In Tolstice, And I believe, That there were some, Young women who were, Employed, At the port, Port of the ash, There was some, Fishing going on there, And people were, Landing fish there, And these young women, Were gutting them, Or packing them, Or whatever, Anyway, They went for their day's work, And they had taken with them, Their good, Church clothes, In a pack, So that when they would finish, Their work, They could then walk to Moornack, Change their clothes, Into their worship clothes, Their good clothes, And listen to Findlay Munro, I don't know what day, Of the week it was, It couldn't have been a Sunday, Because they had just been at work, Anyway, After their day's work, They walked all the way, Across the moor, Probably four miles, And Findlay Munro, Preached on that, Day, From Isaiah 25, In this mountain,

[35 : 23] Shall the Lord of hosts, Make unto all people, A feast of fat things, A feast of rich food, Feast of well aged wine, Of rich food, Full of marrow, And of aged wine, Well refined, He's talking about, The work of Jesus Christ, As he, Finished the work of salvation, Upon the cross, He was preparing, An eternal feast, For his people, And he will swallow up, It says on this mountain, The covering, That is cast over all peoples, And the veil, That is spread over all the nations, It will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God, Will wipe away tears, From all faces, That's, The gospel message, And Findlay Munro, As a young man, Preached there, A little place there, On the top of moon, I call, Tell me why,

If you're ever on the top of moon, I go and see it, And the thing is, The crowd was so large, That the singing, At the end of the service, Could be heard, In Glen Tolstah, Miles and miles away, These people, Had come to the water, They had been refreshed, By a heavenly drink, Of living water, They had tasted, Of the wine, Of God's fellowship, And joy, And they had tasted, Of the milk, That sustains, And gives growth, In holiness, What about you?

Maybe you're saying, You're too young, To consider these things, Or maybe you're saying, You're too old, And you lost opportunities, Well, Now is the accepted time, Today, Is the day of salvation, Today, If you hear my voice, Jesus says, Don't harden your heart, Today, Come to him, And you will find, That he is, Through to his word, And he will give you, Eternal life, According, To his promise, For God so loved the world, That he gave his only begotten son, That whosoever believes in him, Should not perish, But have everlasting life, These three points again, The invitation to come urgently, Secondly, The questions, Why are you spending your money, And that which does not satisfy, And thirdly, The promise, He makes an everlasting covenant, Commitment, To be yours, Forever, Will you not come, Let us pray, Help us Lord, This evening, To hear what you are saying to us, Open our minds, And our hearts, That we might receive your word, In faith, And in love, And obedience, Bless the labors, Of your servants, Throughout our presbytery, And throughout our land, And may the word, That is so often preached, In great weakness, Nevertheless, Be used, With the almighty hand of God, Bringing life, Where death prevails, And bringing light, Where darkness, Has prevailed hitherto, Have mercy upon our souls, We pray, And take us all safely, To our various homes, In Jesus' prayer, Amen.

Now we'll sing in conclusion, Psalm 143, From the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 143, The second version of the psalm, And from verse 6, To verse 10, Psalm 143, Second version, Verse 6, My hands to thee I stretch, My soul thirsts as dry land for thee, Haste, Lord, to hear, My spirit fails, Hide not thy face from me, Lest like to them I do become, That go down to the dust, At morn let me thy kindness hear, For in thee do I trust, Teach me the way that I should walk,

[40 : 10] I lift my soul to thee, Lord, Free me from my foes, I flee to thee to cover me, Because thou art my God, To do thy will, Do me instruct, Thy spirit is good, Me to the land of uprightness, Conduct.

These verses of Psalm 143, Verses 6 to 10, My hands to thee I stretch, My hands to thee I stretch, My soul thirsts as dry land for thee, It's hard to hear, My spirit fails, And not thy face from me, Lest like to them I do become, That walk out to the dust,

But more than thee in thy kindness hear, For in thee I trust, Teach me the way that I should walk, I lift my soul to thee, Lord, Lord, In my foes, I flee to thee, To thee to cover me, Because thou art my God,

To do, I will do thee, To thee to cover me, And not thy spirit is good, To thee to the land of uprightness, For of the brightness, O night.

Amen. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, The fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Rest upon and abide with you all, Now and forevermore.

[43 : 16] Amen.