

Come to the Waters

Isa. 55:1

Introduction:

1. I have been greatly blessed in life. I have never gone hungry, or thirsty. The only fasting I have done has been by my choosing, and never longer than three days.
2. I cannot imagine what it must be like to feel the threat, of life being extinguished by thirst or hunger.
3. I do remember what it was like when I was young and we put up hay in the hottest of summers. If you have tasted the sweat in your mouth and felt its sting in your eyes, if you have been in a tight corner of a hay-loft, stuffing bales up next to the roof where it was approaching 120 degrees, then you can appreciate the image of the iced tea commercial I remember from a few years back.
4. A man, hot with sweat, was handed an ice-cold glass of tea. He began to gulp it down, turning the glass bottom up, leaning back as he drank, until he fell into a sparkling pool of cool water. Ah! Refreshment!
5. Perhaps such an image came to Isaiah's mind as he recorded the invitation of God. *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost"* (Isa. 55:1).
6. What a magnificent and gracious invitation!
7. In our study together this morning consideration was given to Psa. 95 and the call to authentic worship. We observed that Israel in the wilderness at Meribah complained about not having any water and questioned God's shepherding. They asked, "Is God among us or not?"
8. Isa. 55 defines the good nature of God to provide for His people. He provides water, food, pardon from sin, and lavish blessings because of who He is.

Discussion:

- I. The context and historical setting of the invitation.
 - A. The book of Isaiah was written prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
 1. Both Israel and Judah had given themselves over to idolatry.
 2. Israel would be taken captive in 722 B.C.
 3. Judah in 606 B.C.
 - B. The book of Isaiah can be divided into two sections for study.
 1. Part 1 consists of chapters 1-39.
 - a. In this section God condemned his people of sin.
 - b. Chapter 1 graphically describes them.
 - 1) As sons who have revolted against their father (v. 2).
 - 2) As dumber than the ox and donkey (v. 3).
 - 3) As abandoning and despising the Holy One of Israel (v. 4).
 - 4) As sick (v. 5-6).
 - 5) As desolate land (v. 7-8).
 - c. They worshiped but not genuinely (11-15).

- d. And so God demanded change (16-17).
- 2. In Part 2, chapters 40-66, the tone changes.
 - a. God calls out, “Comfort, O comfort My people, speak kindly to Jerusalem” (40:1).
 - b. Why? Because God has removed her iniquity (40:2).
 - c. Later, chapter 53 reveals that the Lord has caused the iniquity to fall on His suffering servant.
 - d. “He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed” (53:5).
- C. This is the context and historical setting of the great invitation to come to the waters.
 - 1. We know that Judah went into Babylonian captivity in 606 B.C. (2 Chron. 36:10ff). Young Daniel and his three friends were among those taken into captivity, by king Nebuchadnezzar.
 - 2. 2 Chron. 36:22f describes how the Persian king, Cyrus allowed them to return to Jerusalem, thus ending their captivity.
 - 3. Now it might be interpreted that this deliverance from captivity was the refreshing waters referred to in Isa. 55:1.
 - 4. But I believe that the invitation goes beyond that.
 - a. Read Isa. 55:3.
 - b. Refers to God making an everlasting covenant with those who come to the waters. It is to be “according to the faithful mercies show to David.”
 - c. This passage is quoted by Paul in Acts 13:34-39. There he says it is fulfilled in Christ through whom are proclaimed the blessings of remission of sins and justification for all who believe.

II. The N.T. connections of the invitation to come to the waters.

- A. There is no greater N.T. connection to this invitation than that in Acts 13:34-39.
 - 1. Paul specifically quotes the passage as he is reasoning in Pisidian Antioch about the risen Christ.
 - 2. He says, “Through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.”
 - 3. What is Paul’s invitation? It is to come to the waters of life. Be forgiven through the one God has raised from the dead.
- B. His message is consistent with what Jesus himself said.
 - 1. At the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, the last day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (Jn. 7:38). John said he spoke this of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive. Cf. Isa. 44:3; 58:11; 55:1.
 - 2. In Jn. 4 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and he would have given you living water . . . whoever drinks the water that I give

him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

3. What is this gift of God? The Spirit (Jn. 7:39).
 4. Read Acts 2:38; 3:19. Note the parallel here.
 5. In Matt. 5:6 Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.”
- C. Who brings about this satisfaction? God does.
How does he do it? With the sacrifice of the suffering servant for sins.

III. What are the conditions necessary for accepting the invitation?

- A. Listen carefully to the Lord. Incline your ear and come. Listen that you may live (Isa. 55:2-3). This is reasonable. Who can respond to an invitation without having heard it and believed it (Isa. 53:1)?
- B. Seek the Lord. Call upon Him, forsaking the wicked way (Isa. 55:6-7). Repent. Return to the Lord (Acts 2:38; 3:19).
- C. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- D. 1 Cor. 12:13 says, “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
- E. “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5).

Conclusion:

1. Will you “come to the waters?”
2. Are you hunger and thirsting for righteousness?
3. Every one who thirsts, come to the waters. Come with no money. God has provided for you, a well of living water springing up to eternal life.
4. Will you come?