
The Great Banquet – *free, full & forever*

Isaiah 55

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Introduction *Beloved, deep longings saturate the human soul.*

We long for splendor that we can share in rather than just look at...

We long for an uninterrupted, honest and encouraging embrace from someone we can trust...

We long for agreement that that sees truth, loves truth and learns how to enjoy truth with one another...

We long for relationship that does not break down in which mutual love abounds...

We long for others a sacrifice for that carries mercy to the guilty and sits with the downtrodden...

We long for innocence and goodness and purity...

We long for beauty that never fades and no raids will break in a take it...

We long for peace so that guilt does not crush and the conscience does not haunt.

We long for a world that is like a fertile garden pushing out constant fruit; or like a city whose streets are clean of drugs and thugs, whose walls are high and protective, whose citizens aren't judged by the color of their skin or the bank account they possess, who are unified and happy and helpful and loving and considerate and countless.

We long for full and forever satisfaction

Beloved, deep longings saturate the human soul.

Why? Why do we have these persistent deep longings that are not dulled by our pursuit of substitutes or are not quieted by the furnishings of this world or are not satisfied by our own efforts?

Our longings of relationship in which we experience uninterrupted and unfading and never-ending peace, joy, purpose, pleasure, love, are in fact by design longings for the God of creation and His son of redemption. Yet tragically, human desires corrupted by sin turn in on themselves rather than finding satisfaction from God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

This morning's message is to spread a banquet of glory before us so that our restless hearts will rest in all that God is for us in Jesus. What we will hear today can change our lives forever. We will be confronted with exquisite beauty and matchless promises that cannot be broken. We will be seated at a table on which the most succulent foods and drinks will be offered. The question for each of you is this: How do I taste and see that what is before me is the great banquet I've always dreamt to enjoy? How is each of us to be refreshed by this gospel or be converted by this gospel?

With these questions guiding us to the table of the great banquet; ***a banquet – free, full and forever***, open your Bibles to Isaiah 55 and let's pray that God will open our eyes and stimulate the taste buds of our souls <pray>

Follow along as I read Isaiah 55.

“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.

[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,

and delight yourselves in rich food.

[3] *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.

[4] *Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,*

a leader and commander for the peoples.

[5] *Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,*

and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,

because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,

for he has glorified you.

[6] *“Seek the LORD while he may be found;*

call upon him while he is near;

[7] *let the wicked forsake his way,*

and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

[8] *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,*

neither are your ways my ways, declares 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 and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
[11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

[12] *“For you shall go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

[13] *Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall make a name for the LORD,
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

(Isaiah 55 ESV)

An Everlasting Covenant – joy to the individual

v1-5

The structure of this chapter is fairly plain. In verses 1-5 Isaiah gives the reader a picture of **individual renewal**. Here in these verses we see a change from hopeless to hopeful; from thirsty into satisfaction. This amazing individual transformation is seen as **an everlasting covenant** – a covenant for our gladness!

Then if you will drop down to the last section (v6-13) Isaiah gives the reader another picture similar to but not the same as he gave in v1-5. Here in v6-13 the picture is one of **world renewal**. Here in these verses we see the curse from Gen.3:17f lifted and the whole world made new. This wonderful world-wide new creation is **an everlasting sign** – a sign of God’s glory!

In the form of a picture

v1-3a

To understand how this transformation happens we begin with v.1-5 and notice the everlasting covenant. This covenant is introduced to the reader in the form of a picture.

Of an individual

We see first an individual.

Who is thirsty, broke & foolish

In v.1 the invitation found in this chapter is extended to everyone who thirsts. The description of this individual is designed to expose the fact that every human being is destitute. Man does not have in himself what he needs to be satisfied.

He attempts to make life work apart from God. Whether this search for satisfaction runs after activities, persons or substances; things like vacations and sports and sex and hobbies and work and parties and political campaigns or children and spouses and leaders and lovers or foods and drinks and drugs and... – attempting to make life work apart from God is what Isaiah means when he says in v.2 *“Why do you spend money for what is not bread and your wages for what does not satisfy”*

Augustine, a 5th century AD theologian captured this idea well when he said of humans, *“Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee”*.

Over every effort, outside of God, that man makes to quench the soul-thirst could be written “Dissatisfaction Guaranteed”. The haves or the have nots; the rich or the poor; the well-adjusted or the misfits; they have one thing in common = dissatisfied. This is what the Lord is telling us in v.2.

Who needs to listen

The second observation concerning the picture of this person (who represents us) can be seen in what he needs to do.

Repetition is a way for authors to highlight what they want us to see. Count up the times he uses the words Come (3x) and Listen(3x).

Over and over and over again Isaiah looks at this thirsty, broke and foolish person and says come to this banquet and pay attention – obey the commands to take all of it in, eat of all of it, delight in it, drink much of it.

And what is this that is offered you?

Of the offer

Shifting our attention from the person invited to the banquet to what is being served notice what is offered. We see this in the form of beverages. There are three.

Water, milk, wine

The beverages are to communicate something of the offer. Throughout the Bible these beverages are talked about to communicate something of God’s grace and mercy. When water is talked about it usually refers to something to overcome dryness. When milk is referred to it generally reflects nourishment. And when writers discuss wine in a positive sense they are pointing to joy.

We could say that this banquet spread out before the thirsty is full-bodied, loaded with amazing taste and abounding in quantity.

Are you dry, depleted and depressed? Here before you are the beverages: water, milk and wine.

ME

In vv.1-3 he tells the thirsty to come to the beverages for refreshment, for nourishment and for pleasure. And now in v.3 notice what He says. **“Come to me”**

This is utterly significant; for it tells us that all these lavishing descriptions are not talking about God’s gifts. God is the all-satisfying gift of God’s love. The beverages are pointing to God Himself. He is not telling the thirsty to come to 12 steps to successful living. He is not telling the thirsty to go to a warmer climate. Jesus in John 7:37 cries out saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink”!

All of God’s patience and grace and mercy are a means to an end. They bring us to God Himself in whom we are to delight and experience the refreshment, nourishment and pleasure of salvation.

In the promise of the King

v3b-5

Isaiah changes his emphasis a bit and in v3b-5 explains the word picture clearly as he points to the Davidic Covenant. This is a covenant found in 2Sam.7 that gave the Israelites much hope. It promised that there would be a king coming out of David’s family who would reign over God’s people providing both protection and provision. This king was sought for by the Israelites in earthly kings. But all the kings failed. Still the prophecy held out that He would come and make right all wrongs and deliver God’s people from harm.

His position

v4

We see this promise of the King first in his position as the world-wide leader & commander. He will lead his people and as the chief officer He leads his people in the battle for victory.

His power

v5

We know this commander will win as we notice v.5 and his power. Look at his authority in this verse. He calls and people come. His voice is irresistible. His status holds sway over the nations. When his voice is heard people run to meet him.

The N.T. clearly teaches that this Davidic King is none other than Jesus Christ the LORD (cf. Luke 1; Acts 5:31; Romans 1:3-4)

An Everlasting Sign – joy to the world

v6-13

Moving now to the second section of this chapter we come to v6-13 and notice a picture of **world renewal** (cf. v12-13). The chapter moves from the transformation of an individual to the transformation of the whole earth. For our purposes this morning, I will close the message by simply echoing The Call found in this section for each of you to come to this banquet and thirst no more.

The Call – obey by trusting

The call is organized around command/promise. In v6-7 we come to the commands. This is what you must do by faith to enjoy the great banquet of salvation. And in v8-13 we see promises to motivate us to obey by faith.

To come to the banquet, to have your longings met in Jesus Christ forevermore, to be saved from your sins and be changed progressively you must:

Obey – a look at two obligations

Seek

V.6

All this figurative language of “O thirsty come, buy, eat, drink and enjoy” are commands to be satisfied in Christ. When you feel distant, when you begin to lose earnest desire for Jesus, you must not think it to be normal or natural or acceptable. You must seek the Lord; call upon Him while He is near. **O Beloved, seek the Lord.**

Repent

V.7

Next you must be a person of repentance. Notice v.7. When you are thinking wrongly and acting rebelliously, you need to repent. If your thinking does not line up with Scripture and your desires are not in cadence with the Bible you must repent; turn from your wicked ways and return to the Lord! **O Beloved, repent of your sins.**

Trust – a look at three motivations

Now notice the change in v8-13 and how some verses start with the word “for”. This tells us that we shifted from obligation into declaration. That is, the Lord now gives us three irresistible reasons for obeying v6-7. Listen to promises in which we now must trust.

He abundantly pardons

Vv.8-9

His resources are not restricted (vv.8-9). Unlike humans who parcel out forgiveness and measure out compassion, God’s ways as seen in verse 7 are infinitely higher than our way of responding to the guilty. We must never doubt that He will lavish grace upon the repentant seeker. **O Beloved, trust Him for His abundant pardon!**

His word works

Vv.10-11

Second, we too need to rest in His sovereign Word that what He promises He will do (vv.10-11). There is hope to continue drinking because He is the one whose word works in us what His word requires of us. He commands us to drink deeply of Him in a certain way. And our desire and ability to delight ourselves in Him is made possible by Him and His Word. **O Beloved, trust Him that His Word works!**

A happy future awaits

Vv.12-13

The final motivation in this chapter necessary for obeying v6-7 is found here. God’s plan for our future is seen in vv. 12-13. This joy, or transformation of a desert life, is here and now and also there and then. These verses are addressing a transformation which happens through the eternal covenant (v.3) and climaxes in the ultimate transformation of a new heaven and new earth (i.e. a total reversal of the curse found in the garden).

When we start like a desert and come away looking like the Garden of Eden look who gets the glory – “it shall make a name for the LORD” (v13). This transformation is an everlasting sign for His Glory. **O Beloved, trust Him for such a happy future!**

Conclusion We began with the statement: *deep longings saturate the human soul*. The greatness news in the universe has been heard this morning. There is no necessary tension between our desire to be satisfied and his aim to be glorified. How are these two agendas one and the same?

The gladness of our hearts and the glory of His name unite in the delight in Christ.

This union is seen when we trust and obey. Trust his promise seen in the everlasting covenant. Obey his word to seek Him and repent of your sins. Do this today. Do this tomorrow. Do this as a lifestyle for the sake His reputation and for the sake of His congregation.

Amen



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Heading

➤ Heading

Heading

Conclusion