

Come, Everyone Who Thirsts

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to the chapter we had, the book of Isaiah in chapter 55. Isaiah 55, we can look again, from verses 1 down to verse 5.

We're taking in parts of the chapter, the rest of chapter 2, but focusing on verses 1 down to verse 5, and I guess for the sake of a text, we could take verse 1 itself.

Come everyone who first, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without price and without money.

It's a distant memory, hopefully, our manic Christmas shopping, and I was laughing to myself as I was saying at the sermon today, I was thinking of an introduction and I was going to say, I hope everyone got their Christmas presents bought in time, but I actually met two people from his congregation quite close to Christmas in town with me doing their last minute Christmas shopping, so I can't even pretend that I wasn't last minute panic buying, and I was.

But just imagine again with me, it's before Christmas and you're in Stornley, and you park your car up and you're walking past the town hall. And there's a man there with a stall and he is shouting at you to come over and to see what he's got for you, shouting at you to come over and see what he has, how you can buy from him.

[1 : 29] Of course you ignore him, I'm sure most of us would, and you walk quite quickly off to get your presents and your bits and pieces. So a few hours later you're exhausted and you're dragging your bags back to the car again.

You walk past the town hall heading back to the car park, but this man is still there, the stall is still set up and he's still shouting at you to come and see what he is offering you, to come and see what great present he has that will change your life.

And you think, yeah, right, okay, I'll go and see. He catches your eye, he catches your eye, he'll have to go over now, so you go over and you talk to the man, he says, okay, what is so great, you've been here for the last three or four hours shouting and shouting at Evelyn Wayne past, what great present do you have, what great offer do you have for me that you say will change my life. And he gives you the gift, wherever it is, the box, you ask him, okay, how much is it? And he says to you, it's three. Oh, of course it's not, nothing's three, especially at Christmas time, nothing's three. How much is it? He says it's three, just take it away with you and it will change your whole life. A silly story perhaps, but also it's the image being painted for us here in this chapter.

[2 : 49] In this chapter of Isaiah, something's being offered to us. Isaiah is offering something so special to us, so incredible to us, but we'll transform our lives, something that we'll be so foolish to ignore, so silly not to listen to him, he's offering this thing to us.

Again, it feels like yesterday I was here with you and I want today to be a simple and possibly short message. I want nothing else today, but for those here who as of yet don't know Jesus as our Saviour, to listen closely to this and to see what is being offered to us in these verses.

And to the Christians here today, I want us to listen to these verses and listen to the Gospel being offered again to us as Christians and to be reminded of the great Gospel we have, the great Gospel we believe in, the great Saviour we have, the great provision that's been made for us as Christians. In some context, we have Isaiah 55 that follows on from roughly chapters 52 to 54, where we see the great coming servant of the Lord, the one who is coming to serve and to suffer, but also to reign afterwards.

The one who will come in that famous Christmas chapter of Isaiah 53, who will come and who was, he was on earth, didn't look like much, was on earth, didn't amount to much, humanly speaking, but who has come to save his people, who has come to suffer for his people, who has come to suffer so much and to then we see to reign forever, for and with his people.

[4 : 34] And that culminates, we could say, and it comes to then to chapter 55, where we see this, the work of the Saviour in the previous chapters now being applied and offered to the nations, to all who will hear.

So as we look at verses 1 down to the end of verse 5, I want to have three simple things in mind. First of all, the invitation that we have in verse 1, secondly the question in verse 2, and then the promise in verses 3 down to verse 5, the invitation, the question and the promise.

The chapter, like I said, begins with an invitation, if you have your Bibles open and if you look at the screen behind me, there is easier, please look at the scriptures, we go through it, so we're going through it verse by verse.

Verse 1 begins with this simple invitation, but it's also a command. It's a kind, gentle invitation, but also a clear and strong command.

The language being used is clear at the strong language. And this verse, chapter verse 1, it begins with a phrase that it's not easy to translate at all.

[5 : 52] One of the closest translations, or one of the closest examples we have is actually in the authorised version, the King James Version, that gives us the first word of Isaiah 55 of those here who know of our Bibles in the KJV.

What is it? Ho everyone at first. Here we have come, that word, it's the same idea. The sense is a desperate call. It's marketplace language.

The term is being used here, the sense of this first word come, it is the sense of a person in the marketplace offering his wares to those who are walking past him.

It's the same sense of the shepherd out in the hill calling for a sheep, as a crofter out in the field looking for a sheep and calling out for them.

There's a strong, strong term being used here. Isaiah is shouting at those going past him. This morning we're being shouted at from the word of God, come.

[6 : 54] It's a clear, wonderful, gentle invitation, but also a strong, strong command from God's word to us this morning.

And here we can imagine it being shouted out again and again as people pass by this market seller, and as the house has wares to Isaiah as he shouts out to the crowd, come.

To those walking past him, come. We might think this is quite direct and quite rude, none of us. I certainly don't like being shouted at and being told what to do whilst being shouted at.

But this is not Isaiah being rude, this is not God's word trying to be rude. Isaiah telling us it is, this is him showing in the simplest way possible just how desperate and how important his message is.

As we read this first word of chapter 55, God's word is telling us to listen. Listen to what's being said to us. Listen to it.

[8 : 00] Just stop our mind wandering for a second to pay attention to what God's word is saying to us. And what is it saying to us? What is the command that God's word is telling us to listen to in these first few words?

What is the command, the message that's so necessary for those passing by to hear? It's a simple, simple command invitation. Come.

Who? Come, everyone who firsts, come to the water. The word of God through the prophet is speaking to us today.

It spoke to the people around him back then as the same word speaking to us then, the same thing it's saying to us. It's calling out to you, it's asking you, is this for you? Are you here today? Are you hungry? Are you thirsty?

I spend six weeks, six wonderful weeks with you all and I got to know, I hope most of you quite well. But even then it doesn't matter because only you know where he's done with God.

[9 : 11] Only you know right now where you are in relation to him. Do you love him? Do you know him? Right now, are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Are you having that sense in the back of your mind, that constant, niggling thought of surely there's more to life than this? Surely there's more to my existence than this?

Surely I'd be made for more than what I'm doing? Surely there's more than what I'm doing right now? That hunger, that thirst, that never-ending question of why? Why am I here?

What's the purpose of my life? Perhaps you're here today and you're tired. You're tired out, you're exhausted, you're going through a situation that perhaps only you know about.

Your friends, your neighbours, no one else knows about. Perhaps you're just exhausted and you're looking for a cool, clear stream to come and sit down beside and to rest and as if yet you've found absolutely nothing.

As your life and circumstances pass you by, you're looking for some gentle, clear source of water to find and to drink from and there's nothing for you yet.

[10:30] You've tried everything this world has to offer you and yet you know there's something greater, something more going on.

If that is you today, then this invitation is for you. Perhaps you think this is all absolute nonsense. Who is that wee boy up there telling me what to think and what to say and what to do? Who's that guy coming from Gdavron this holiday to come and tell me what I think, to come tell me who I am, come tell me anything about myself? What does he know?

Are you right? Absolutely nothing. But let God's word speak to you this day, this afternoon.

This is God's living word, this afternoon coming and speaking to you and you might say that you don't need this Jesus, but you've heard it all before and you get it, you just don't care about it.

[11:34] It's not for you. It's for the poor souls who need help, not for me. I mean I struggle a bit, I'm actually okay, I'm doing quite well for myself, life is doing well, I'm doing well, I'm quite happy actually.

God's word cuts into all of that and it tells us that for all your perhaps willful ignorance of your situation, you still need it desperately.

See, the promise God is offering is for the person who knows they have nothing to offer God, the person who knows that our life is a mess, who know they are helpless, but also these verses, this offer is for the ones here who think they are sorted but who know deep down that they're not.

The ones here who think they can offer God something. God says come and you'll soon find out you have nothing to offer Him but yourself. We see that, I alluded to you in the second half of verse 1, we see this wonderful illustration, what's being offered is free, He who has no money come by and eat.

And that idea of come by and come by, you can take your money if you want but they can't do anything with it. You can take your good deeds if you want but you can't do anything with them. At the end, those who are a mess and those who think they aren't but who actually are, we all come to God's feet in the same way in the end.

[13:01] We all come to Him crying out for His help. Take all your self-importance, take all your thinking that you can somehow win the love and affection of God.

Take all your thinking that you can earn this gift He is giving you for free. Take all and come to Him either way. Who is the call in verse 1 for? Who is being called to come?

And what have we been called to come to? We're touching this more in our third point but we're being called to come to who? Well, coming to the living waters, to water.

The image should be in our minds of Jesus in John chapter 7. As he cries out, Jesus cries out, if anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink.

It's Jesus who is the gift being offered here to us in Isaiah. It's Jesus, the living source of eternal living water. It's Jesus who right now reigns and rules our universe.

[14:13] Jesus who right now is here with His people. It's to Jesus we're being asked and you're being commanded by God's Word to come today.

And who is being called? Is it like we said just the through lands of no hope? Those who have no meaning in life, no idea about their life. Is it those who know their Bible well perhaps?

Is it those who perhaps look quite good in church? Those who have no other stuff well? Is it those who have memorized their Bibles from page to page? Is it those who have come to church all their lives?

Is it those who got perfect heads since Sunday school? Is it for those who are acting the part, who look the part, who think they're almost good enough to be Christians?

No. What's the conditions on those who can come in this verse? What's the condition? Can you find me anywhere at all? We can't. Come everyone.

[15:25] You might say well, it says everyone but it can't be for me surely. I'm just not good enough that God would want to save me.

Imagine that you go walking one, it's cleaning up. This afternoon it clears up and you go for a walk behind your house out to the moor and you fall and you break your leg.

As you drag yourself back home, what do you do? Do you sit down and tad your head up and perhaps change your clothes and perhaps have a wee meal first before you think of calling for help?

Of course not. You call it for help and you cry for help. You're going to be in your hands and rescues you. Or you're wearing your boats going down and the rescuers above you and the helicopters are about to drag you up and his hands reaching down to you and say, I can't take his hand because my hands are so full of oil and so cut up and his hands, his beautiful hands are so perfect.

I can't dare touch it. He doesn't want to touch my hands as his hands are waiting to rescue you. He goes, no, it's not for me. Who is the gospel for? Who is the good news for? Who is Jesus for this morning?

[16 : 39] It's for everyone who is listening. That includes everyone here today. Without exception. Without qualification.

It's a gentle invitation, a loving invitation, but also, like we said, the language, it's the language of command. It's a gentle invitation, come, but also it's a command of a king to come.

He has made you, he knows you. He is your Lord, whether you serve him or not. He's your king, whether you worship him or not. His command to you is to come. Come to Jesus even this morning. Whoever you are, whatever excuse, whatever reason you think you can't come, they all mean nothing in the light of this verse. No expectations, no qualifications, no any reason you can find. We all are amazing at coming up with excuses. We all know that. We all love to shift to blame and to shift the thinking on someone else. This is all great, Donald, but surely it's with person beside me or behind me or in front of me.

[17 : 46] It's for you. Come. So that's the invitation. It's for all who are listening here just now in Carly. To come to Jesus, to come and to receive life from him.

Verse two actually begins in a similar way. As verse one began, strong, strong language to come. Verse two begins with a strong language. The question, the wording of the question is quite strong language.

From the strongest language, I can be used in this context, in the Hebrew here. What's being asked in verse two? Who's being questioned in verse two?

Well, in verse two, we're being questioned. It's the ones who are hearing verse one, who are walking past this person who is offering eternal life.

The one who's telling us all to come. And in verse two, God is asking. What's he asking us? He's asking us why? Why in the light of the great offer?

[18 : 59] Why as you just heard that Jesus is for you, but his salvation is effective for you if only you believe in him.

That's sufficient for you if only you believe in him. Why in the knowledge that there is Jesus who has paid the price necessary for your salvation? Why is spending and wasting your money and your time on that which is not paid?

Wasting your life for that which does not satisfy? Look how simple the question is. We can so easily and so quickly pull the wool over our friends and our family's eyes.

Again, we can dress the part, we can look at the part. I've said this before, I'm sure plenty of time is here, but it's so easy for us not to come out to church and to get all decked up and to look at the part and to dress the part and to do the Sunday thing, but to forget that this is real.

And this question in verse two, it cuts right through all that pretending we might be doing to the very core of who we are. If you are not yet serving Jesus, then why are you wasting your time and your money on things which are not real, which will not last?

[20 : 16] Verse two is not kind of money advice for us, it's not money management Isaiah is offering us. Verse two, Isaiah is offering us the chance to question ourselves.

This morning, if you're not following after Jesus, why are you wasting your short time and my short time here? We have a short time on earth, why are you wasting that time looking for and going after and searching for things which will not ultimately help you, will not ultimately satisfy and will not ultimately save you?

We praise God that it's not just pointing out the bad things and then stopping, but verse two doesn't just stop after satisfy. If it did, we'd have no hope, but God shows us what's wrong with our lives and then he gives us an answer.

He says, look what you're doing, why are you doing this? Instead, do this. Instead what? Instead, listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food. Listen to God in this verse. He is offering you so much more than you can ever manage to accrue or do for yourself in your whole life.

[21 : 46] The question we have to ask ourselves in light of this verse, how am I spending my time, my short time here on earth? Am I spending it well in God's eyes?

Or am I doing it well in my own eyes? Am I making the most of Jesus who has been given to all who believe? Or as of yet have I not cared at all enough to think about it or to act on what I've been hearing again and again in church?

We all know find who's short our lives on. Going by the statistics, I'm 25, in 50 years the chances are I'll be gone, in 100 years most of us here will be gone.

100 years after that most of us here will be long since forgotten. If the building still here is doing well, this question cuts right to the centre of our lives.

As we spend our lives doing the best we can, are we doing what God is telling us to do? Are we turning to Jesus? Are we accepting the gentle invitation of command of verse 1 to come to Him?

[22 : 58] And if not, why? And if not, how long will you wait before you do come? He offers us this rich food and instead we are happy with just bits of crumbs.

Who is welcome to eat off the good food God offers? Who is welcome to come and to delight yourselves in the rich food He offers? It's everyone who's here.

Who's the gospel force for everyone? Who's the building force for everyone who'll come and listen and believe in Jesus? Every, almost every second day I walk home at a different route to keep things exciting for me, walking home from college.

And I walk past the Edinburgh Dungeons. I'm sure everyone knows, for those who don't know, the Edinburgh Dungeons are a museum slash theme park thing in the middle of Edinburgh.

And on the door of Edinburgh Dungeons, what does it say? What is their slogan? What is their logo at the door of the Edinburgh Dungeons? It says, sinner, welcome.

[24 : 04] For them, that's a marketing ploy, of course, it's a dungeon, it's for a sinner reason, all that. I always laughed myself as I walked past. They have no idea what they're saying, no idea what their marketing is saying.

But that sign outside that building, which is just a fun sign for them, that's a sign that should be carved into every church and every place Christians come together.

Sinners, welcome. Who's the offer for? It's for you. Who's the question for? In verse 2, it's for you.

And friends, I say friends meaningfully here in Carlyway, I really do. This is a question I ask you this afternoon, and only you can answer it truthfully. How do you answer the question? How do you spend your short time here on earth?

Are you spending up Jesus with the living one who has come to give you life? Are you spending it wasting your time over dirty water and a few crumbs that won't last?

[25 : 13] Before you leave this building today, before you close your eyes tonight to sleep, our prayer as a congregation is that you'd come to know Jesus. You'd come to cry out to him.

You'd come to ask him to give you this water of life that only he offers. That takes us quickly and finally down to the promise.

In verses 3 to verse 5, we see God changing focus here. Isaiah is now talking about something greater, somebody greater.

But again in verse 3, even in the change of tone, in the change of topic perhaps, we still cannot escape Isaiah's constant call to come, to come.

Verse 3, in crying your ear, God is saying again, listen to me and what? And come to me. Why? Here that your soul may live.

[26 : 23] Again, why am I here? Why is any preacher, any passing minister, why is anyone here to give you this message? Hear the word of God so that your soul may live.

We see in verse 3 and verse 4, verse 5 also, the idea that the promise that God has made to David, the promise God made to King David, that from his throne, from his lineage, from his people, that one day a king would come who would reign forever, that one day one would come who would be the final and perfect king.

The promise we know is fulfilled in Jesus and this time of year, I'm sure that verse we've heard quite often, the angel speaking to Mary in Luke chapter 1 verses 31 to 33 and the angel says to Mary,

behold, you will conceive your woman, bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of God of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end. This promise fulfilled in Jesus, the promise here Isaiah speaking about fulfilled in Jesus.

[27 : 57] Isaiah prophesied about it, he talked about it, but here today in Caraway we have this promise fulfilled completely. Isaiah is pointing towards the one who's going to come, well he has come.

And our time together we looked in Micah and all that was about the coming saviour, the coming king, the coming promise. He has come, his name is Jesus.

We read these verses having the chance to see the completed promise, the completed promise of our king.

The promise made David, but Jesus now is king. He is now as the angel told Mary, he is the awful land of David. And his kingdom is forever and forever.

Now if it's kingdom there is no end, but right now Jesus is reigning as king. And that's where we come back to verse 1. For right now the king of the universe is saying to you through his word to come to him, to receive living water from him.

[29 : 26] Verse 4 and 5, Jesus as leader, as commander of his people. The good news is that God kept his promise to David.

And now that greater and perfect king reigns over the universe. He reigns over you and he reigns over me this day. He's no longer that baby and a manger. He now reigns forever, fully God and fully man.

And right now we all stand before this king prophesied in these verses, either as his servant and his friend or as his enemy. Either as those who love him or those who are still fighting against him, as those who accept his offer in these verses or those who again reject this offer.

Again, I'm just passing through. If nothing else today, please, please go home again and read these verses yourself.

Go home again and read John chapter 7. See the offer of Jesus to you. In him and in him alone, he is offering life and life eternal.

[30 : 43] In him and for him alone, he is offering you the chance to come and never first again. Take the free gift that's being offered to you. There's nothing you can do but take it.

Take it and receive it and believe in it and come last. You have time last. We have the chance here today. Let's close that award of prayer. Our Lord God, we come before you. We thank you again for the privilege we have of a short time together to read your word together, to study your word.

Lord, you have forgiven me for anything said that was incorrect. We give you praise that power is not in the preachers here. The power is in you and in your living word.

Lord, you glorify that word and Lord, you would make that word truly meaning for someone here this day. Through your word this day, you speak to someone here, but to many here who still as if yet don't know you, or transform lives, change hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. We pray for our brother this evening who is leading the services, give him the words to say Lord, give him your word that he would speak with power and with boldness and he would proudly declare your truth to your people here. Help us to become the singer.

The final item of prayer is to do so of hearts and minds full of joy, full of understanding. That's just how great you are. That's all the things in and through your precious name.