

"Come to the Banquet"  
Isaiah 55:1–7

September 18, 2005

## SERMON NOTES

### A. Scripture Reading

1. Isaiah 55:1–5 are
2. Isaiah 55:6–7 are

### B. Man in the Desert

#### 1. Man's Dissatisfaction – the Symptoms

- a. It is inborn in mankind  
(A) Luke 12:15; Loving ...  
  
(B) 2 Timothy 3:1, 4; Genesis 3:6: Loving ...
- b. seeking of fulfilment  
(A) Ecclesiastes 2:11: in ...  
  
(B) and in ...

#### 2. Man's Dissatisfaction – the reasons

- a. unrealistic E\_\_\_\_\_ caused by
- b. pursuit of F\_\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) Ecclesiastes 12:8 because in the end they are  
  
(B) Isaiah 55:2 because they do no  
  
(C) Jeremiah 2:13 because they have

### C. God Provides an Oasis

#### 1. A Satisfying Oasis providing

- a. L\_\_\_\_\_ -giving W\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) John 7:37–38 to be found in
- b. J\_\_\_\_ -giving W\_\_\_\_\_  
(A) Psalm 104:15 which makes men's hearts  
  
(B) Philippians 4:4 so we can

#### c. N\_\_\_\_\_ -giving M\_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. An Available Oasis

- a. because we can  
(A) B\_\_\_\_, making it our possession  
(B) available to all because

### D. Man's Responsibility

#### 1. the Invitation

- a. C\_\_\_\_\_
- b. L\_\_\_\_\_ to the truth which is (1 Timothy 1:15)

#### 2. the Response

- a. S\_\_\_\_\_
- b. C\_\_\_\_\_ ... when?
- c. F\_\_\_\_\_, the first step of R\_\_\_\_\_
- d. R\_\_\_\_\_, its second step

A. Scripture Reading

1. In the Bible we have the inspired record
  - a. of the words of men, though, not themselves inspired,
  - b. of events,
  - c. of the truth as proclaimed by prophets and apostles, and,
  - d. of the words of the Lord.
  
2. I sometimes have a problem with red letter editions of the Bible
  - a. these imply two levels of inspiration
  - b. as if the words of One Person of Trinity, the Son, were more important than those of the Father and of the Holy Spirit
  - c. also, it is not always clear if it is Jesus speaking, or the apostle, as for example you will find in John 3
  - d. since the original languages did not use quotation marks, such versions are rendering opinions — but this is true of all translations, so I shouldn't quibble too much about this
  
3. in our Scripture reading today, Isaiah 55: 1–7, however, it is clear that first it is God who speaks and then the prophet
  
4. God gives this invitation: 1 “Ho! Every one 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. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David. 4 Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, A leader and commander for the peoples. 5 Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, And a nation which knows you not will run to you, Because of the Lord your God, even the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you.”
  
5. The prophet Isaiah gives this encouragement: 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; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

## B. Man in the Desert

### 1. Man's Dissatisfaction – the Symptoms

#### a. first symptom: it is endemic in humankind

##### (A) materialistic – loving things

- (1) this is not new – it has existed from the beginning
- (2) Jesus said (Luke 12: 15, NAS): *“Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”*
- (3) so men and women go on amassing things in the vain hope of being satisfied, and growing less so

##### (B) hedonistic – loving pleasure

- (1) in the media, in society, in schools – wherever – the watchword over the past few decades has been “if it feels good, do it”
- (2) Paul warned Pastor Timothy this would be the case (2 Timothy 3: 1, 4b; NAS): *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ..., lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God”*
- (3) this dates back to the garden of Eden, Genesis 3: 6 (NAS): *“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”*
- (4) as Adam and Eve, we find pleasure unsatisfactory

#### b. second symptom: people seeking fulfilment

##### (A) they seek fulfilment in accomplishments

- (1) this is most evident in the arena of sports
  - (a) to break some record
  - (b) to achieve par on the golf course
  - (c) to win a championship
- (2) but it is found in the work place as well; many labour for achievement of some goal or purpose
- (3) and yet, this too is unsatisfying, first reciting his accomplishments, Solomon concludes

(Ecclesiastes 2:11, NAS): "Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labour which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun."

(B) they seek fulfilment in experiences

(1) some make the rounds of the theatre, the concert hall, the opera, in search of fulfilling experiences

(2) others travel hither and yon, from one remote land to another, seeing people and works of man and of nature, to gain satisfaction from the experience

(3) that this is so, and that the experience does not satisfy, can be seen in the fact that the Saturday papers devote a full section to travel:

(4) the appetite for experience is insatiable

c. I am sure, as you look around you will note many other symptoms people's dissatisfaction – but why is this so?

## 2. Man's Dissatisfaction – the Reasons

a. unrealistic expectations

(A) advertisements

(1) depict unbroken satisfaction with a product

(2) beautiful homes, beautiful rooms, beautiful cars, beautiful women, beautiful men, beautiful children

(3) all to arouse desire, just as Satan did when he said in the garden (Genesis 3:5): "You will be like God"

(4) so many broken marriages, because young couples get married with wrong expectations that arise from advertisements, not knowing that marriage is work, it's hard, it's difficult, it has ups and downs

(B) educational system

(1) suggest every high school student go to university

(2) often ignoring differing aptitudes and inclinations

(3) often the means would seem to be inflating the marks of the students or lowering the requirements for entrance: failure later manifests its unreality

b. pursuit of false dreams

- (A) given all that we have been saying, then it is not at all surprising that people are pursuing satisfaction in all of the wrong places and in all of the wrong ways
- (B) these they pursue – fame, possessions, achievements, experiences, and so on – throughout their whole life, only to come to the end and be forced to confess as did Solomon (Ecclesiastes 12:8, NAS): “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “all is vanity!” or, emptiness
- (C) this is what Jehovah was pointing out to His people in today’s passage, (verse 2): “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy?”
- (D) and He makes the same complaint in Jeremiah 2:13 (NAS): “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.”

3. So what is God’s solution to man’s abiding dissatisfaction?

C. God Provides an Oasis

1. A Satisfying Oasis

a. water

- (A) verse 1: “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters”
- (B) anyone who has had to work in the heat
- (C) or, who has hiked in a dry countryside
- (D) is well aware of the necessary and refreshing nature of water, perhaps with a tablet restoring salt to the body – much better than juice or pop – to keep them going
- (E) you see joggers and cyclists with their water bottles
- (F) today people carrying them even in the malls
- (G) what Old Testament Jehovah God offers His people, so does God the Son, Jesus the Christ, in the New (John 7:37-38, NAS): Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’”
- (H) Jesus meets the deepest needs of the human heart with living water; with life-giving water

b. wine

- (A) verse 1: "Come, buy wine ..." which is enlarged in
- (B) verse 2: "delight yourself in abundance"
- (C) so, here we have the meeting of mankind's second need for satisfaction: that of joy and gladness; Psalm 104:15 (NAS) tells us, "And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart."
- (D) throughout the Bible we find repeated promises for the blessings of God's people; God is not niggardly; He meets our deepest need in His purpose for us which is
  - (1) not melancholy, but merriment
  - (2) not gloom, but gladness
  - (3) not despair, but delight
- (E) if you are not convinced of this, take a few moments to read through Paul's letter to the Philippians which has this verse in its closing chapter (4:4, NAS): "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

c. milk

- (A) verse 1: "Come, buy wine and milk ..."
- (B) milk, we are all aware, is not just a beverage but food
  - (1) it is a perfectly balanced food
  - (2) most, if not all of us, spent the first number of months of our lives living solely on milk
  - (3) and, even at my age, I find that milk will, as well as refresh, take the edge of the pangs of hunger
- (C) so, God is saying that as well as meeting man's deepest needs for satisfaction in providing life-giving water and joy-giving wine, He provides nourishment-giving milk

2. An Available Oasis

- a. where do we find these three: life, joy, nourishment
  - (A) not in some expensive restaurant
  - (B) nor in some exclusive club or spa
  - (C) but "Come, buy ... without money and without cost"
  - (D) what a perfect picture of the grace of God!
- b. as Spurgeon <sup>-(2)</sup> remarks on this passage, God's command that we buy is important: because

- (A) buying emphasizes there exists a transfer of ownership
- (B) buying means you can take personal possession
- c. but, just as, or even more, important, there is
  - (A) no price that we can pay, no offering we can make
  - (B) no service we can perform, no ritual we can carry out
  - (C) no merit we can have, no goodness we can possess
  - (D) that gives us access to this life-giving water, this joy-giving wine, this nourishment giving milk
  - (E) because as Spurgeon continues, that this salvation is free is demanded because of the character of the
    - (1) recipient, man, who has been bankrupted by sin
    - (2) giver, God, whose is perfect grace and love
  - (F) for that would necessarily exclude those who did not have such price or offering or service or ritual or merit or goodness; no, it is **without money and without cost**
- d. so God's salvation is equally available to all; but, as we also see in our passage this morning, there is left to us

## D. Man's Responsibility

### 1. the Invitation

#### a. Come

- (A) three times in the first verse is the invitation, "Come"
- (B) God is saying this morning to any who may have been pursuing false dreams and unreal expectations
  - (1) stop where you are
  - (2) leave off your hopeless exertions
  - (3) Come to Him; come to Him and

#### b. Listen

- (A) verse 2: **"Listen carefully to Me"**
- (B) verse 3: **"Incline your ear ... listen, that you may live"**
- (C) this means listening to what God has said in His word
- (D) Christianity is not some abstract, conceptual religion but is firmly founded on historical fact, 1

Timothy1:15 (NAS): "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, ..."

- c. and when we come and listen, then we discover that God has an answer for our deepest need, that we have been separated from God by sin, we are sinners by our nature, we are sinners by our own free choice: a response is needed

## 2. the Response

### a. Seek

(A) verse 6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found"

(B) while it is God who initiates man's redemption

(1) the cross bringing salvation was God's plan

(2) it was God who gave His Son as a ransom price

(3) it is God the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin

(C) yet, repeatedly the Bible issues the message that God will assuredly be found by those humbly seeking Him

### b. Call

(A) verse 6: "Call upon Him while He is near"

(B) there is a prayer that God will always answer "Yes"

(C) it is the prayer of the tax collector who went to the temple and did not even dare lift up his eyes, but beat his breast and cried, "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner"

(D) and is not the implication of this verse that the time is short? that the opportunity is now? that the future is uncertain and we should not put this off any further?

### c. Forsake

(A) verse 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts"

(B) be careful not to misunderstand these words – they are not asking for you to reform before you come to God ... quite the opposite: seeking and calling come first

(C) no, this is the first step of repentance, the first evidence of faith, the reaction to our sinful state and the desire to escape from it; repentance then continues by ...

### d. Return

(A) verse 7: "and let him return to the LORD ... to our God"

- (B) having turned from sin, having sorrowed over it
- (C) if we were to stop there would mean nothing
- (D) but when we turn to Jesus Christ, and cast ourselves in faith at His feet, depending on and only on what He accomplished by bearing our sin on the cross
- (E) then we have come to the banquet that God has prepared that will forever fill the void in our lives

## E. Conclusion

1. There are many things that will keep a person
  - a. from realizing the satisfaction that God intends that they should have with His life-giving water, His joy-giving wine, His nourishment-giving milk
  - b. and we have indicated some of them in the false pursuits whereby we vainly seek satisfaction
  
2. But C. S. Lewis in his Chronicles of Narnia gives an allegory, where Aslan, the lion represents Jesus Christ; at one point in "The Silver Chair" the following scene takes place <sup>—{3}</sup>.
  - a. When Jill stopped, she found she was dreadfully thirsty... She listened carefully and felt almost sure she heard the sound of running water. Jill ... looked around her very carefully. There was no sign of the Lion; so she plucked up her courage to ... look for that running water.
  - b. "Are you not thirsty?" said the lion.
  - c. "I'm dying of thirst," said Jill.
  - d. "Then drink," said the Lion.
  - e. "May I — could I — would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill.
  - f. The lion answered this only by a look and a very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.
  - g. "Will you promise not to — do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill.
  - h. "I make no promise," said the Lion.
  - i. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer.
  - j. "Do you eat girls?" she said.
  - k. "I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said

it.

l. "I daren't come and drink," said Jill.

m. "Then you will die of thirst," said the Lion.

n. "Oh dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then."

o. "There is no other stream," said the Lion.

3. Friend, remember that there is None but Christ can Satisfy ...

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Pages 87ff, “Without Money and Without Price” Sermon V, Volume X, Spurgeon’s Sermon, Baker Books, Second Printing, 1999
3. “The Silver Chair” by Clives Staples Lewis, page 26–27, Puffin Books 1974 printing; first paragraph summary from Kerux illustrations #17243