

An Invitation

Isaiah 55

An Invitation Introduction

An Invitation Introduction

- Last week we read about the Man of Sorrows, the Suffering Servant – Jesus Christ.
- This week we will see what God offers us on the basis of what Christ did.

An Invitation Introduction

- Last week God gave us an **explanation**.
- This week he gives us an **invitation**.

An Invitation Introduction

- Last week God gave us an **explanation** of what the Man of Sorrows was accomplishing through his suffering.
- This week he gives us an **invitation** to a feast – to partake of the benefits he has prepared.

An Invitation Introduction

- Underlying the message of **Isaiah 55** is this fact:
- Our own desires tell us that we were made for something bigger and better than this world.

An Invitation Introduction

The **Argument from Desire**, from Peter Kreeft:

- **Premise 1:** Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire.
- **Premise 2:** But there exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth, no creature can satisfy.
- **Conclusion:** Therefore there must exist something more than time, earth and creatures, which can satisfy this desire.



An Invitation

Introduction



If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

— C.S. Lewis, in Mere Christianity

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

- Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus pointed out that we will only find true satisfaction by coming to him.
- Listen to how he puts himself as the goal of this invitation.

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

John 4:31-34 (ESV) [Speaking to the woman at the well],
¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be
thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I will give
him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him
will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

John 6:35 (ESV) [After feeding the five thousand] ³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.””

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

John 7:37-38 (ESV) ³⁷ On the last day of the feast [of Booths], the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

- So the question is, “Will we take him up on his offer?”

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

- 55:3 Jesus presents this offer to the people of Israel as the fulfillment of a covenant.
- It is the fulfillment of a promise to David their king.

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5



As the Abrahamic covenant centers around the land, the Davidic covenant centers around the throne. The former provides the land and the nation; the latter provides a king to rule over the kingdom. Both involve literal, national, unconditional and perpetual blessings.

– Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology

I. Come to the waters. 55:1-5

- We can enter into that covenant.
- It is for the peoples (55:4), and for the nations that were formerly not connected with David or with Israel (55:5).

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9



Participation in this covenant requires an act of repentance and the abandoning of evil ways. It also seems that there is a time limit on this offer (55:6). The day will come when we will no longer have the option of turning to our Creator in repentance and receiving his help and forgiveness.

*– Edouard Kitoko Nsiku,
South African Theological Seminary*

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

- On the one hand, none of us walks with God naturally – therefore repentance is needed.
- At the same time, none of us is prevented from seeking him.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV) [David spoke to Solomon his Son],
“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and
serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the
LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and
thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you
forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

Jeremiah 29:12-13 (ESV) Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

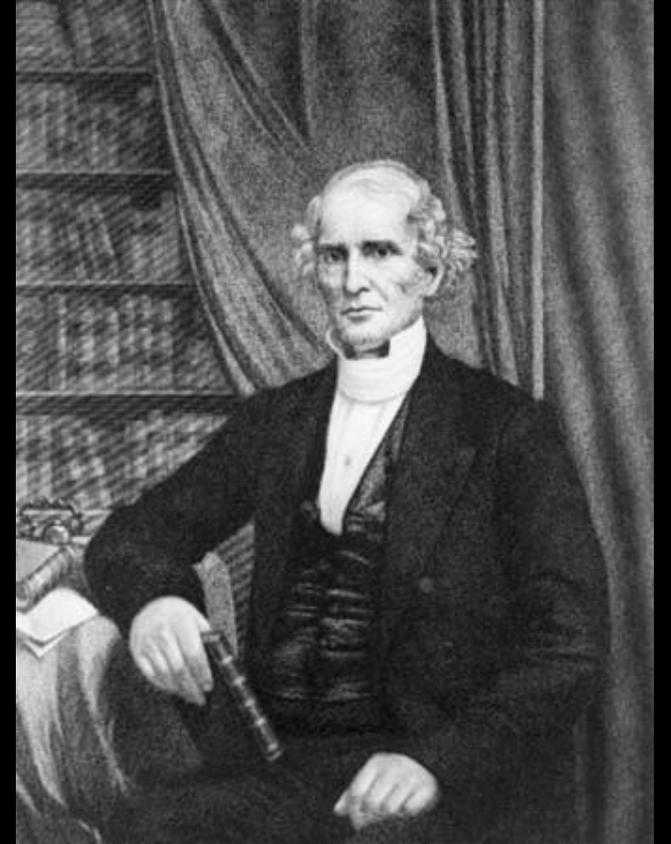
II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

- If we are going to connect with God, we have to recognize that he knows better than we do.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

The scheme which contemplated the incarnation of the Son of God; which proffered forgiveness only through his substituted sufferings, and in virtue of his bitter death, was one which man could not have thought of, and which surpasses all the schemes and plans of people. In this respect, God's ways are not, our ways, and his thoughts are not our thoughts.

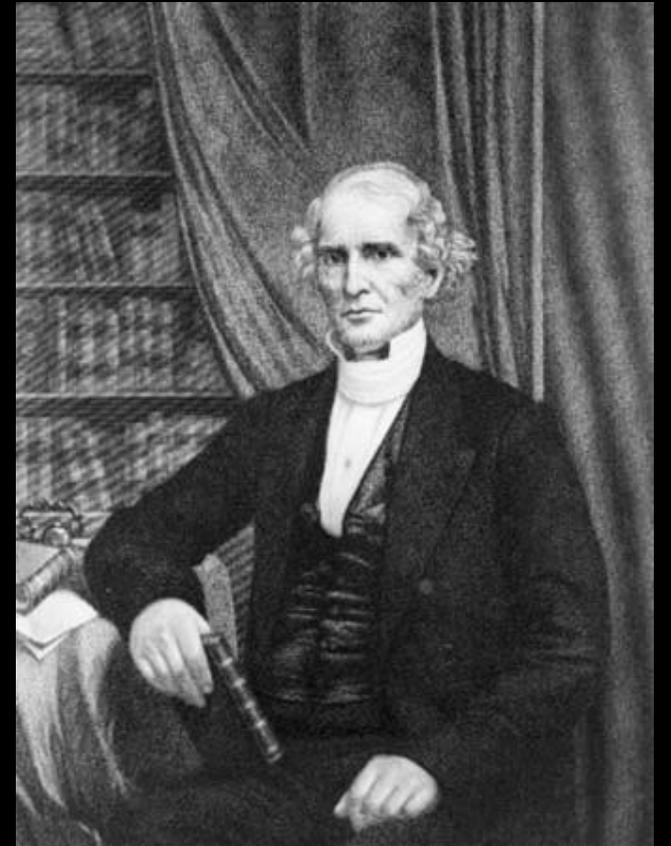
– Albert Barnes (1798 – 1870)



II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

But at the same time this passage ... is also true of the ways of God in general ... He has plans for accomplishing his purposes which are different from ours, and he secures our own welfare by schemes that cross our own ... He leads us in a path which we had not intended: and secures our ultimate happiness in modes which are contrary to all our designs and desires.

– Albert Barnes (1798 – 1870)



II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

- Like children who don't know any better, we think we know what we want.
- We have to admit that God knows better than we do, or we will be robbing ourselves of blessings.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

Psalm 37:3-5 (ESV) ³ Trust in the LORD, and do good;
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

⁴ Delight yourself in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him, and he will act.

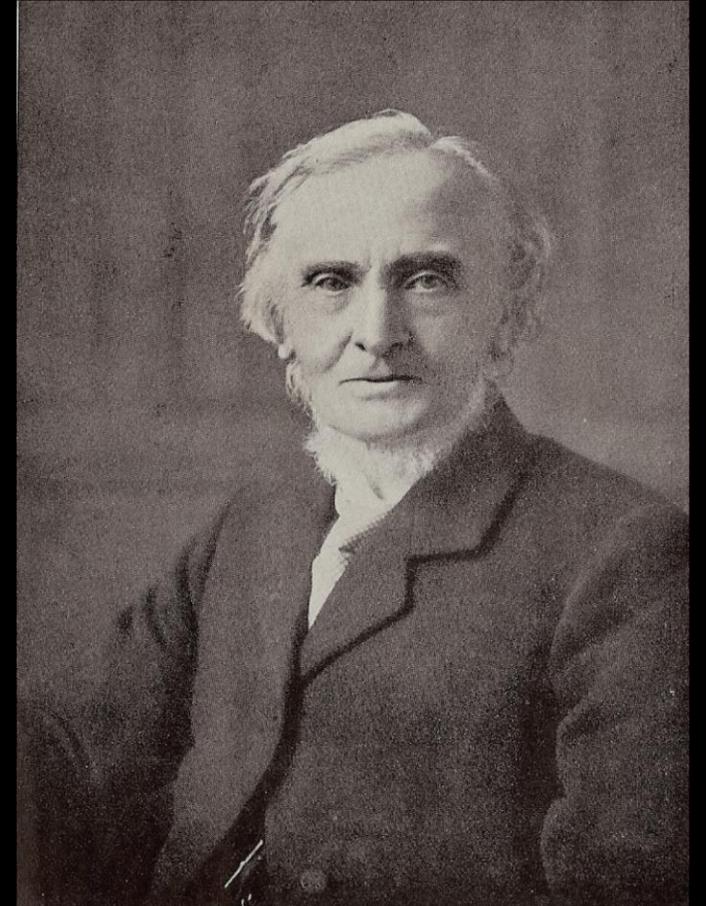
II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 (ESV) ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ ... ¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

The true state for each of us is that we should, as the great astronomer said he had done in regard to his own science, 'think God's thoughts after Him,' and have our minds filled with His truth and our wills all harmonised with His purposes, and that we should thus make our ways to run parallel with the ways of God.

– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)



II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

- If we are willing to admit that God's ways are better, then we are going to benefit from the blessings he has for us.
- If we are willing to seek him diligently, we will find him.

II. Seek the Lord. 55:6-9

- In finding him we will learn that he is all that we have ever really desired – and more.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

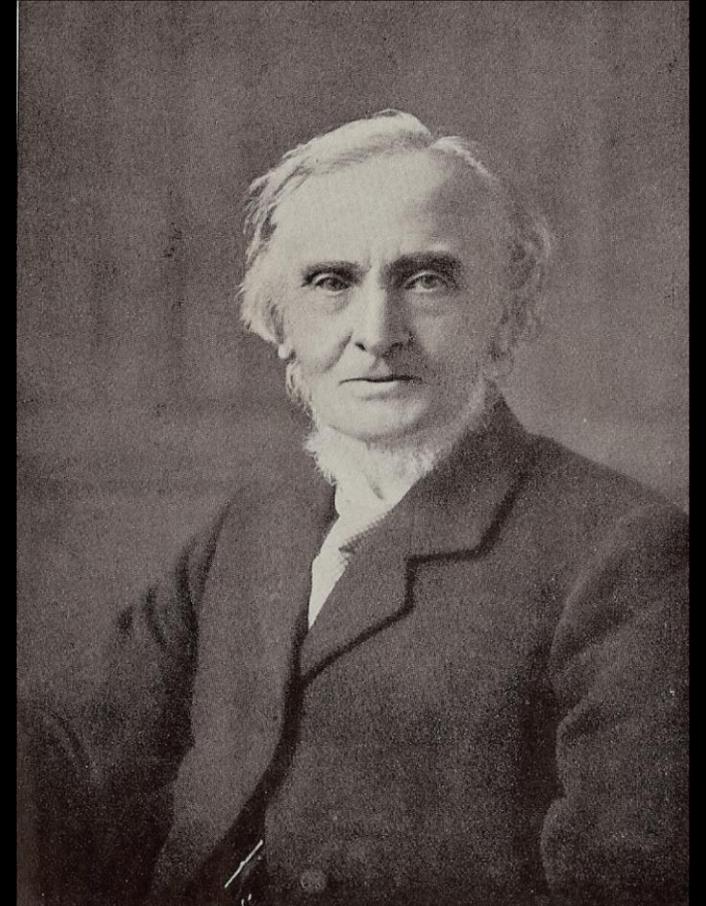
III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

- The most important desire we can cultivate may be an appetite for God's word.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

So does God's word come down from His throne ... So does it quicken undreamed of powers of fruitfulness in human nature and among the forces of the world. ... No complicated machinery nor the most careful culture can work what the gentle dropping rain effects. There is mightier force in it than in many thunder-clouds.

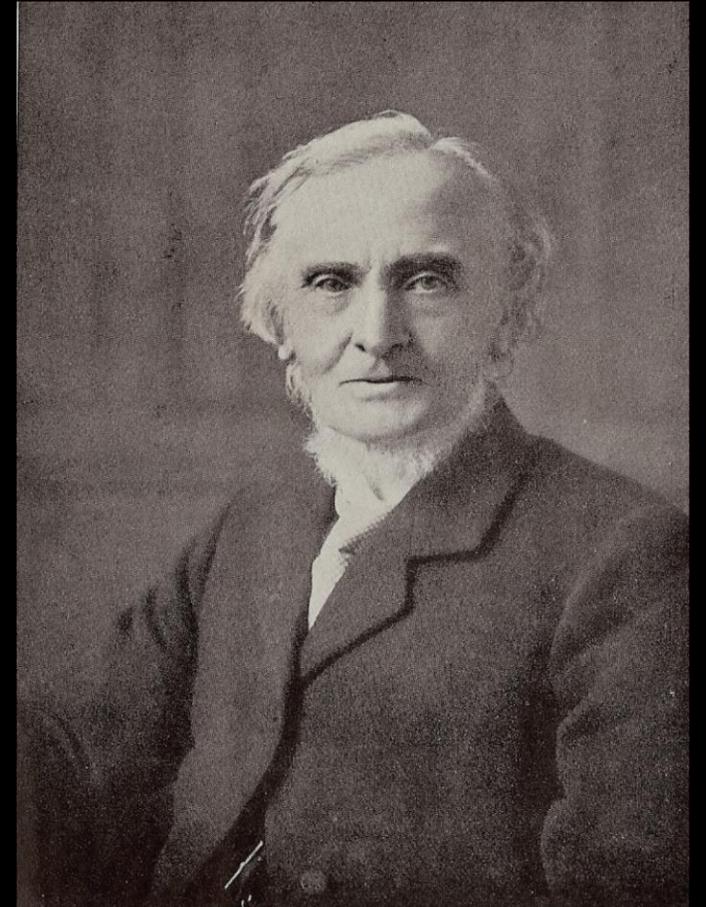
– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)



III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

The gospel does with ease and in silence what nothing else can do. It makes barren souls fruitful in all good works, and in all happiness worthy of men. Therefore the summons to drink of the springing fountain and to turn from evil ways and thoughts is recommended by the assurance that God's word is faithful, and all His promises firm.

– Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)



III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

- God's word is reliable.
- It is sure and certain and will certainly be effective.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

- This is why we should be:
 - Readers of the word
 - Hearers of the word
 - Doers of the word
 - Students of the word
 - Messengers of the word
- We need to let God's word do what it can do and then stay out of its way.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11



Man does not work his way up to God by some Tower of Babel effort, but he receives God's revelation which comes down from heaven like rain. The rain causes the earth to become fruitful.

– J. Vernon McGee (1904 – 1988)

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

- If we want our lives to be fruitful in the things of God, we must be sure that we are constantly under the influence of God's word.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

Deuteronomy 8:3 (ESV) And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

Matthew 4:3-4 (ESV) ³ And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

III. God's word shall succeed. 55:10-11

- Once again:
- The most important desire we can cultivate may be an appetite for God's word.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

- These verses describe the absolute joy that awaits those who make God the object of their deepest desires.
- They accept the invitation to make Jesus their Lord.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

Proverbs 13:12-13 (ESV) ¹² Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

¹³ Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

- Many people have believed the lie that God is keeping us from enjoying life – or enjoying what he has made.
- It's as if we are in competition with God.
- If God wins, we lose and vice versa.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

- Nothing could be further from the truth.
- Peter Kreeft explains it well.
- Thomas Aquinas actually explained it first, but Kreeft is a 21st Century American, so he is easier to understand.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

Here ... is a powerful aid to obeying the first and greatest commandment. It is the realization that every finite perfection we love and seek in the creation is to be found in an infinitely perfect form in God. What are we seeking in human love, in nature, in creativity, in thought? It's desirable only because it's a little like God.

– Peter Kreeft



IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

There, and there alone, in Him, can we find everything we are seeking in them. The reflections of His perfections in the mirror of creation should send us away from the mirror, not into it. And when we run into the mirror, seeking our happiness there, the mirror breaks and our happiness shatters. All that we love in creatures is a reflection of the Creator.

– Peter Kreeft



IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

- And in the end, creation itself will rejoice with us, declaring the glory of God.
- We have to apply these verses figuratively now.
- Their ultimate fulfillment is coming later, when the fullness of Christ's kingdom finally arrives.

IV. You shall go out in joy. 55:12-13

Romans 13:11-12 (ESV) ¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

An Invitation

Conclusions

An Invitation Conclusions

- We spend money on food, on pleasures, on things we believe will satisfy us.
- We set goals that we feel we need to achieve.
- None of these can provide a permanent solution to our longings.

An Invitation



Conclusions

If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

— C.S. Lewis, in Mere Christianity

An Invitation Conclusions

Matthew 5:6 (ESV) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

- We have to consider what it is that we really desire.

An Invitation Conclusions

John 6:35 (ESV) [After feeding the five thousand] ³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

An Invitation Conclusions

[E]very finite perfection we love and seek in the creation is to be found in an infinitely perfect form in God. What are we seeking in human love, in nature, in creativity, in thought? It's desirable only because it's a little like God ... All that we love in creatures is a reflection of the Creator.



– Peter Kreeft

An Invitation Conclusions

Jeremiah 29:12-13 (ESV) Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

An Invitation Conclusions

- God has sent out an invitation and it is open to anyone.
- Will we come to him and be forever satisfied?
- Or will we go our own way and continually long for something more?

An Invitation

Conclusions

Matthew 5:6 (ESV) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.