

# Come to the Waters

Preached at A Grace Place

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Summary: Soul thirst is discomfort in your emotions that make you desire something to satisfy the appetite. When your soul is uncomfortable, it will run to whatever it considers food and drink. God is the only true food and drink, and everything else is bread that won't satisfy, and it is unfaithfulness to God to seek satisfaction from those things. To be satisfied, come to God, buy the food (by trusting him to be satisfying), and eat by paying attention to him (his Word and his works – especially when he directs an attribute toward you).

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**Isaiah 55:1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, 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 spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.**

## Introduction: Soul Thirst

In Psalm 63:1 David makes kind of a strange statement. He says “**My soul thirsts.**”

**Psalm 143:6 my soul is like a parched land.**

What does that mean? If you walked up to someone this week at work and said, “Hey, how are you doing?” and he said, “I’m OK. My soul’s just a little thirsty,” – what would that mean? What does it mean for the non-physical, immaterial part of you to be thirsty?

This is an important issue because many people – maybe you, are experiencing sharp, emotional pain that won’t go away, and it is because your soul is thirsty and you don’t even realize it. It’s like a baby that is tired but doesn’t know why he feels uncomfortable, so instead of just closing his eyes and going to sleep, he cries. I would urge you to consider the possibility that some of the internal pain that you feel may be due to soul-thirst.

## The Meaning of Thirst

The reason I bring all that up is because today's passage is an invitation that God extends only to the thirsty.

**Isaiah 55:1 Come, all you who are thirsty.**

## Physical Hunger and Thirst

So let's see if we can figure out what soul-thirst means. We'll start with this: what is literal thirst? Let me offer this as a definition: hunger and thirst are forms of discomfort that drive an appetite. Most forms of discomfort are not tied to any particular appetite. You have a sore knee, or a headache, or chest pain, those forms of discomfort don't drive you to consume anything. They just make you want pain relief. Thirst and hunger, are different. When you get really thirsty, it's uncomfortable, but you don't think, "Oh, I'll take an aspirin to take the edge off this discomfort." You don't want aspirin or morphine or codeine or anything like that – you just want water. It's form of pain that makes you want to drink. Thirst is a discomfort that is synonymous with a desire for water.

## Soul Hunger and Thirst

That's what physical thirst is; what about the thirst of the soul? What kinds of discomforts do you sometimes feel in the non-physical part of you that makes you desire something? How about sadness? That is a form of discomfort that makes you crave something that will make you happy. Or discouragement? That's a form of discomfort that makes you crave something that will bring you encouragement. Discontentment makes you crave something that will bring a feeling of contentment. Hopelessness makes you crave something that will bring hope. Those are all forms of thirst. The thirst of the soul is when you feel discouraged, or hopeless, or abandoned, fearful restless, agitated, irritated, frustrated, weary, weak, wounded, worthless, confused, distracted, empty, bored, lackadaisical, unmotivated, unhappy, unable to enjoy the pleasures of life. Those are all different kinds of soul-thirst.

### *Drives you to Drink*

And whenever those painful emotions come, you will always go to whatever your soul thinks is water. You will run to whatever your soul thinks will satisfy the craving and take away the discomfort. If your soul thinks entertainment is water, then when you get to feeling lonely, or sad or anxious or bored, you will put on a movie or a game. For other people, they think music is water. For others, it's hanging out with friends. For some it's alcohol. They get uptight, and so they have a glass of wine to calm down. Or they smoke some pot. For many of us, it's the refrigerator. We try to deal with the thirst and hunger of the soul with physical food and drink. "Comfort" food. Some people think vacations are water. For others, it's sex or fitness or work or shopping or Facebook.

This is a really important question to ask yourself – what does your soul think is water? Where do you go when your soul dries up? What well do you drink from when you experience those negative emotions?

## Two Possibilities

There are two possibilities. One is that you go to where there is water and food.

**Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!**

The other possibility is in v.2.

## **2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?**

So you can go to where there is real water and bread, or you can run after fake bread. Fake bread looks like real bread, but it doesn't satisfy. So what is the real stuff that works and what is the fake stuff that doesn't work?

## **God is Food and Drink**

The answer is very simple: the real water is God. In v.1 there's the metaphor of the food and water, but then in v.2 he drops the metaphor and tells us exactly what it is we are being invited to come to:

**2 ...Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me**

**6 Seek the LORD ... call on him ... 7 ... turn to the LORD, ... and to our God**

There's no question – the real water and real food that we are being invited to is none other than God himself. God is the food and water. In Jeremiah 17:13 God says, "I am **the spring of living water.**"

**John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life.**

This is an attribute of God. This church is in the midst of a study on the attributes of God. If you are not familiar with that term - an attribute of God is anything that is true about God. So it is just another way of saying we are studying what God is like. What is God like? He's like food and drink. That's his nature. What water is to your parched, dry mouth, God is to your parched, dry soul. One of the physical properties of water is that it quenches thirst. If you're dehydrated, your mouth is dry, you can hardly swallow. One of the properties of water is, it will take away those symptoms. If you apply hand cream to your dry throat, it will not solve the problem. If you pour some gasoline on it, that won't help. If you blast it with air, it will only get worse. Cream, air, gas – none of those have the physical properties needed to solve the problem of thirst. But water does. And God is like that. One of the properties of God's nature is that it satisfies the thirst of the human soul. Which means, it is impossible for a dried up, thirsty human soul to encounter the presence of God and come away unsatisfied, because God is like water.

And not just like water, but also like milk, wine, and food.

**1 come to the waters ... Come, buy wine and milk 2 ... eat what is good**

And each one of those widens our understanding.

## **Water**

Water is what you drink when you are dry and in need of refreshment. If you have worked several hours in the hot sun without anything to drink, and you are just dying of thirst, you don't want a glass of wine. You want water – cold, clear, refreshing water.

## **Wine**

Wine was more of a festive drink – for times of celebration and joy, like at a wedding reception. The wedding celebration in Cana was going to be a big bummer until Jesus turned the water into wine.

## **Milk**

The third beverage God offers in v.1 is milk. Milk was a luxury. When God wanted to describe the Promised Land as a paradise, he called it a land flowing with milk and honey. If you wanted to treat

someone like a king you would serve him milk.<sup>1</sup> It was connected to luxury and pleasure – and also nourishment. You give milk to babies so they will mature and grow.

### **Proverbs 27:27 You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish**

So the metaphor of milk calls to mind that which is nourishing, strengthening, and pleasurable.

## **Food**

So those are the beverages, and then in v.2 he switches to food.

### **2 Why spend money on what is not bread ... eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.**

That phrase translated **richest of fare** refers to really good food. Other translations say, *the choicest of foods*, or *fine food*, or *the richest of foods*. Literally it's **the fatness of your soul**. You get the idea? We're not talking about celery. Or some dry piece of turkey breast. When you read about the fat portions of meat in the Bible, it's talking about the choicest cuts. Ribeye. Porterhouse. The good stuff. It's stuff you can't have on Weight Watchers.

He also mentions bread. God is like bread. You know the aroma when some homemade bread or your favorite dinner rolls are just coming out of the oven? And the butter just melts on it, and you put it in your mouth, God is inviting those who are starving and dehydrated to a lavish banquet with unlimited food – like the way they eat on a cruise ship – the most expensive kinds of foods, unlimited amounts, and no charge. That is what God's presence is like to the human soul. His presence brings refreshment, life, strength, nourishment, joy, pleasure, happiness, comfort, fullness, delight, and satisfaction. That's the effect this attribute of God will have on your emotions when you experience it – guaranteed.

### **2 Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.**

## **It Always Works**

When you experience God as food and drink, you come to him hungry and thirsty and walk away full and satisfied. You come to him discouraged. Discouragement is a miserable feeling because discouragement is thirst. It's your soul all dried up, thirsty for something. So you come to God discouraged, drink in the water-likeness of God, and walk away encouraged.<sup>2</sup> You come to him in despair and walk away full of hope.<sup>3</sup> You come feeling lonely or abandoned and walk away feeling attended to and cared for.<sup>4</sup> You come feeling discontented and restless, and you walk away contented and satisfied.<sup>5</sup> You come agitated and all worked up; you walk away with peace and calmness.<sup>6</sup> You go from being fearful to feeling safe.<sup>7</sup> You go from being tired and weary to being energetic and invigorated.<sup>8</sup> You go from confusion to clarity,<sup>9</sup> from feeling empty to a full heart,<sup>10</sup> from weakness to strength,<sup>11</sup> unmotivated to motivated,<sup>12</sup> wounded to healed.<sup>13</sup> You go from pain to pleasure,<sup>14</sup> sad to happy.<sup>15</sup> depression to joy,<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jdg.5:25. See also Gn.18:8, where, when Abraham wanted to prepare a lavish feast for his guests, he killed a choice calf, had his wife bake some fresh bread, and served it with milk to drink

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor.4:16.

<sup>3</sup> Ps.62:5.

<sup>4</sup> Ps.8:4, 10:17, Jn.14:18.

<sup>5</sup> Php.4:12,13.

<sup>6</sup> Jn.14:27, Zeph.3:17.

<sup>7</sup> Ps.23:4, Ps.36:7.

<sup>8</sup> Ps.19:7, Isa.40:31, 2 Cor.4:16-18.

<sup>9</sup> Ps.19:8.

<sup>10</sup> Ps.4:7.

<sup>11</sup> Ps.18:32.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Cor.5:14.

<sup>13</sup> Hos.6:1-3.

from being irritable to being in a good mood,<sup>17</sup> Those are the effects that the presence of God has on the human soul when you drink it in.

And again, this is everywhere in Scripture. In Psalm 36 he is the storehouse of food and river of delights that satisfies both high and low among men. In Isaiah 58 he is the feast that fills those who call His holy day a delight. In John 6 he is the real bread and real drink that satisfies the souls of all who come to him. In Proverbs 9 he is wisdom's banquet that is so superior to folly's banquet. In Luke 14 he is the food of the great Messianic banquet that satisfies all His people for all eternity. In Psalm 63 he is the richest of foods that satisfies David's dried up soul. In Jeremiah 2 and 15 and Psalms 1,42,63, and 143 he is the spring of living water that satisfies so much more than the broken cisterns and that never fails, and that supplies our roots and makes us flourish, and that David longed for like a thirsty deer.

In Psalm 34 he is the delicacy that my soul will crave if I just taste and see. And here in Isaiah 55 he is the milk and wine and bread offered for free that satisfies so much more than the bread that is not bread. This is God's nature.

## **Fake Bread**

So that's the real bread – what's the fake bread? What is the bread that isn't bread and that doesn't satisfy? It's everything else in the world. God is the only real bread – everything else is fake bread and fake water.

This world is a dry, barren wasteland for our souls. It's a desolate wilderness – which is why our souls constantly keep drying up. And as we make our way through this desert, there are mirages everywhere. They're everywhere, and they look exactly like real springs of refreshing, cool water.

I mentioned some of those mirages earlier: entertainment, friends, alcohol, food, vacations, sex, shopping... When you see those mirages, it really does seem like they are real water that will cure your thirst. People have anxiety and worry, and they see mirages called psychotherapy, or anti-anxiety medication, or a glass of wine, or an insurance policy or a security system or a lot of extra money in the bank. And they put their trust in those things to quench that anxiety thirst. When people have hunger for meaning – their life feels empty and pointless, there's a mirage called career. Another one called marriage and family. But none of it is water. None of it satisfies.

### ***Candy***

It seems to, at first. You tell people the things in this world won't satisfy and they will say, "Oh yes they do!" Let's face it, some of those things really are pleasurable. But they are like candy when you need food. Candy is sweet, no question about that. Most food can't compete with candy when it comes to the instantaneous, momentary pleasure of a sweet taste. So if you ask a little child, "What do you want for supper? You can have anything you want." they will say, "Give me candy!" "You want candy for breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day?" "Yes!" And if you try to tell that kid that a diet like that wouldn't be satisfying, they won't believe you because their experience is that candy has been wonderfully satisfying, and green beans aren't even in the same ballpark. But once they get some freedom and they over-indulge in candy, they learn pretty quickly that a meal of candy when your body is hungry for food - you don't come away satisfied. The momentary thrill on your tongue turns into a painful gut ache when you're done, and you find you're less satisfied at the end than you were at the beginning.

One of the most important things you can ever learn in life, and one of the most difficult, is this simple truth: God is the only spiritual food and drink in existence. All the appetites of your soul are appetites for God – nothing else. In the insanity of our fallen nature, we get confused so that our cravings don't match our actual appetites. We get hungry and crave things that won't satisfy that hunger. One of

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<sup>14</sup> Ps.16:11.

<sup>15</sup> Ps.23:5, Php.1:26.

<sup>16</sup> Ps.89:15.

<sup>17</sup> Ps.3:3.

the biggest tasks in the Christian life is getting our cravings to match up with our appetites. To learn that when our souls get thirsty, it's God and God alone that we're thirsty for.

## **For Unbelievers: Come to the Banquet**

So how do you get the real food and drink? You have to buy it. In order to eat and drink from God's table, you have to buy a ticket to the banquet "I have to buy a ticket? Well how much does it cost?" Nothing - It's free.

**1 ...come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.**

If it's free, why does he say you have to buy it?

## **The Transaction: Trust Enough to Eat**

Because there is still a transaction that's required. It's like when I get my free download once a month from Christianaudio.com I still have to put the item in my shopping cart, then go to check out – the whole process is just like a normal purchase - except when I get to where I would normally put in my credit card number, instead, I type in the coupon code for that month. Then it gives me a link to download the book, and it sends me a receipt that says zero dollars. I think that is something like what God is talking about here. The food and drink is zero dollars. It's free. You could never obtain it with your own resources. In fact, if you think you could, you're disqualified because this passage only invites people who are thirsty and have no money. You have to be both thirsty and broke, otherwise you're not invited. So you definitely can't buy it with your own resources, but you still have to make a transaction.

## **Trust**

So how do you do that? The answer is very simple – if you buy it with the only commodity you have – your thirst. You make the transaction to get into the feast by simply trusting God to be your food and drink. From the beginning of the Bible to the end of the Bible the answer to the question, "How do I approach God?" is always the same. It's always through faith. And in this passage, we get to see exactly what faith looks like. You can tell you have true faith when you trust God to be the only food and drink that will satisfy your soul. And here's the rub - you trust him so much to be your food and drink, that you let go of any other food and drink. You can't go to any other water source.

### ***God is the Only Water***

God is forcing a clear choice – come to him, the true water, or spend your money on what is not bread. You can't do both. You have to give up the fake bread in order to be allowed into God's banquet hall. Trying to fulfill longing of your soul through other sources is actually idolatry, because you're putting some earthly thing in the place of God, because God alone is the spring of living water. Only God deserves that title of water. Trying to satisfy the cravings of your soul by things in this world – good things or bad things; it doesn't matter – doing that is like being married and trying to fulfill your sexual desires outside of your marriage – it is unfaithfulness. Your sexual desires belong to your spouse alone, and your soul-thirst belongs to God alone.

**John 7:37 Let everyone who is thirsty come to me**

**Psalm 62:1 My soul finds rest in God *alone***

In Proverbs 9 you can read about two banquet halls – God's and this world's, and both are inviting you to come in and feast. But you can't sit at both tables. You have to forsake one to go to the other one.

**Jeremiah 2:13 My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.**

If you are trying to drink from broken cisterns, then you are not trusting God alone to be your spring of living water.

## **Repentance**

So any time you are trying to satisfy the thirst of your soul by anything other than God, you are in sin. And any time you are in unrepentant sin, you totally forfeit your access to God as food and drink. That's why in the next section of Isa.55 he calls us to repentance.

**Isaiah 55:6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.**

When you sin against God – when you decide to do the opposite of what God said is his will, whenever you do that, you are walking away from the banquet hall. And in the desert of this life, the moment you walk out of his presence, your soul starts to dry up like a shriveled, dead leaf. In Psalm 32 David looked back on that period of time when he was continuing in unrepentant sin, and this is how he described it:

**Psalms 32:3 ... my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 ... my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.**

This is why most people in the world never make it in to the banquet – because they aren't willing to let go of their other sources of happiness and trust God alone. They take the only “money” they have (namely, faith), and they spend it on some other bread. And in v.2 God asks, “Why do that? It's fake bread – it doesn't even satisfy.”

So, how do you satisfy a thirsty soul? Start by realizing what it is you're really thirsty for and where that water is found. If you're bored or depressed or anxious or empty – make sure you understand that nothing will satisfy those appetites other than experiencing the presence of God. All the pills in the world – vacations, money, sex, workouts, friends, music – it's all candy when you need a full meal. That's the beginning point – buy a ticket to the banquet by trusting God enough to rely on him alone as your food and drink. Trust him so much that you let go of all other banquet tables.

You may be here today and realizing, “Wow – I thought I knew God. I thought I was a Christian, but now I realize, I've never really let go of the world. I've never trusted God to be my only food and drink.” If that's you, I urge you – stop running after fake bread and come in to the real feast.

## **For Believers: Eat Your Dinner**

So step one in finding satisfaction for your soul is buy the real water. Become a Christian by placing your full faith and confidence in Jesus Christ. Trust him to be the only food and drink for your life. But then what? Most of you have already made that transaction. You are already Christians, and you are in the banquet hall. Most of you have purchased a ticket, you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are already Christians, and yet, still have areas of thirst. You have some dry spots in your life that are going unsatisfied. Your soul is still really dry in some areas. Why does that happen?

## **Eat and Drink**

It happens because even after we get inside the banquet hall, we tend to wander away from the table. So the call for believers is the same as for unbelievers – come to the waters. Go to God with your thirst, not the mall. Not the Internet. Not the DVD player. Not the refrigerator. The Christian life is a constant battle to walk away from fake bread and look to God alone for the satisfaction of our appetites.

And how is that done? You say, “I want to go to God with my depression or anxiety – but how? What action do I need to take in order to get this food and drink inside my soul, so it’s not sitting there on the platter or in the glass, but it gets inside my bloodstream and I start getting the joy and hope and satisfaction and all the rest?”

## **How to Eat and Drink: Pay Attention to God**

If you want to know what God means by the metaphor of eating and drinking from his table, just look at vv.2,3. Listen for the commands that surround the command to eat and drink.

**2 ...Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.**

He tells us to listen 4 times in 2 verses. **Listen, listen to me ... give ear ... hear me.** You don’t even have to go to college to get the point there. The way to eat so that your soul delights in the richest of foods is to listen, listen, incline your ear, and listen! In other words, pay attention to God. If you want to eat and drink from God’s table, it won’t happen if you’re not paying attention to God.

### *Listen to What God Said to Everyone*

That means if you want to eat and drink, you have to go to God’s Word.

**Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul ... giving joy to the heart. ... giving light to the eyes. ... they are sweeter than honey**

If you want to eat and drink the rich, delightful, pleasurable, satisfying food and drink from God’s table, you can forget about it happening if you neglect this book. If you want to know what God has to say to you personally, as an individual, you have to start with what he said to everyone in the Bible.

Psalm 1 paints a dramatic picture. It compares the people who love the Bible to those who don’t. The person whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on it day and night – he will be like a tree planted by streams of water that flourishes and grows and bears all kinds of fruit. But the people who don’t delight in God’s Word are like the dried-up chaff that the wind blows away.

God’s Word gives very specific instructions about how to satisfy each of the various kinds of thirst of the soul. And they all have to do with experiencing one or more attributes of God. You can think of each attribute of God as a different kind of food or drink. If you have the thirst of depression, or fear, or irritability, or lack of motivation in life – each of those are different thirsts that call for different attributes of God. You remember the saying, “There’s an app for that”? Whenever you have some kind of emotional pain you can say, “There’s an attribute for that.” So you look over the buffet of God’s nature, and pick out what you’re hungry for. When you are anxious, you need to reach for the platter full of God’s peace. It’s his nature to have peace in his heart, and if you experience that attribute, you’ll have peace in your heart. When you’re sad, you need to reach for a pitcher of God’s joy. When you’re confused, take some big bites of God’s wisdom. When you’re afraid, you need to enjoy a casserole of God’s power and goodness and wisdom and love, with a large side of God’s trustworthiness and faithfulness. After about 10 bites of that, your fear will be gone. If you have the hunger and emptiness of feeling like you have no meaning or significance in your life, you need to chow down on some hot, fresh baked will of God, right out of the oven. That how Jesus satisfied his soul when he got hungry. In John 4 the disciples brought Jesus some dinner.

**John 4:31 his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something." ... 34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."**

That’s the only thing that can satisfy the hunger of the human heart and give real meaning to your life – doing the will of God. (And by the way – the work of God that Jesus had just done was to tell a Samaritan woman about how to satisfy the thirst of her soul.)



The Bible gives very specific instructions about how to take in each different kind of food. I mentioned eating from the platter of God's peace. How do you do that, exactly? This Saturday I'm starting a Bible study on Philippians 4. In vv.4-9 Paul gives very specific instructions on how to satisfy the thirst of anxiety by feasting on the peace of God. You do that by praying a certain way and by thinking a certain way. If you pray about your anxieties the wrong way, it can just make the anxiety even worse. But if you do it the way he describes in that passage, the God of peace will draw near to you, and the peace of God will guard your heart from anxiety, and you'll have peace that is beyond understanding. The thirst will be satisfied.

That's just one example. The Bible is loaded with specific instructions on how to satisfy specific different kinds of soul-thirst.

### ***Listen to What God Says to You Personally***

So go to God's Word. But when you do that, don't be content just to know what God has said to everyone. Start there, but also listen for what God is saying to you personally, as he guides you and enlightens you through his Word about your situation in your life right now.

And to do that, you have to be paying attention to God. Now, that may sound obvious at first, but think about it for a minute – how much time do we spend actually paying direct attention to God? Some Christians think they are paying attention to God when they are talking about God. Think of how silly that is. If someone is talking about you, that doesn't mean they are paying attention to you – they probably aren't. You can read your Bible for two hours straight and never pay attention to God once. You can even say prayers without paying attention to God. Eating and drinking from God's table requires paying direct attention to him.

### ***Watch for Expressions of Love***

And that requires being alert to what God is doing. Pay attention to what God is doing, so you can drink in what God is by enjoying what God does. When you keep an eye on what God is doing, then you not only see his attributes, but you are alert to when God turns the firehose of one of those attributes directly on you. For example, one of God's attributes is his wisdom – God is wise. You can enjoy God's wisdom when you look at the mind-boggling things he's done in creation, or the amazing brilliance of what he has done in human history, or in day to day providence. If you take the time to enjoy that, that is food that will feed your hungry soul. But the real feast is when he turns that wisdom toward you by giving you guidance or enlightenment or insight. You finally understand some passage of Scripture, or you get some new insight from a sermon, or God opens your eyes to know what to do in some hard situation in your life. When that happens, that's God taking a drop of his wisdom and putting it right inside your heart as a gift. Most of the time when God does that, we are oblivious to it. We just think we figured it out on our own, and we totally miss what's going on because we are not paying attention to God.

Another example – God's beauty. If an atheist sees a spectacular sunset and he's blown away by it, is he experiencing God's beauty? Sort of, but not in a way that enables his soul to eat and drink, because there is no personal interaction with God.

If someone walks a few hundred feet ahead of you and drops \$100 bills every so often so you find them, but you never see that person – you just think you're having good luck, will that make you love that person? No. You have to be aware that the gift is a gesture of that person's love to you in order for it to increase your love for that person. God gives us 1000 gestures of his love every day, and 99 to 100% of them we miss completely. We see them as good luck, or as coming from some human source, or whatever. God enables you to really enjoy your breakfast, and you miss the fact that it's a special personal gesture of God's love. You just think, "Oh, I guess I was really in the mood for waffles." Something fumbles out of your hand and you catch it, and you totally miss the fact that that was a special, personal gesture where God was saying, "Hey, I love you." You just think, "I'm amazing – I wonder if anyone saw my cat-like reflexes." You get a phone call and you think it's going to be bad news, but it's not. You think through some problem and the answer finally comes to you. The car next to yours in the parking lot

got keyed, but yours didn't. Your neck was hurting yesterday, but now it's better. Someone says something encouraging to you. You have a satisfying day at work. A thousand times a day God says, "I love you. Here's a little gift for you. Here's a token of my love. Here's another one..." And all day long, we just act like all those things are expected. The lights should be green, and my car shouldn't get keyed, and my neck should feel better – the ball should bounce my way every time," and we get so we don't even notice those things. All we notice is when they don't happen. Then we freak out like something's wrong. We have it backward. We think we're already in heaven and we're shocked when things are painful or difficult. We need to realize that we live in a fallen, cursed world, and the norm is for everything to go wrong, and when something doesn't that is God stepping in and saying, "Hey, don't forget, I really love you a lot." But we miss it because we're not even paying attention to him.

The more you pay attention to what God is doing so you can enjoy his attributes, the more your soul will be nourished, fed, and satisfied.

## Conclusion

Someone here is really thirsty. You've been going without water in some area for way too long, and you're close to the breaking point. Someone else isn't in such desperate condition – you just have this nagging, low grade hunger in the background. It's not crippling your life or anything – just dragging you down and sapping your strength. Someone else is here who is still like a little kid. You keep thinking that candy will satisfy, and you can't figure out why you feel so crummy all the time. Or maybe you're here and you realize you have never had the food and drink of God's presence at all. You thought you were a Christian, but now you are realizing, you don't really even know God yet. Maybe someone is here who really does love the Lord, but you can't figure out why you have such a hard time with your prayer life. It's a chore. It seems so pointless to tell God things that he already knows. But now you can see that prayer is not some empty ritual of saying words to God. Prayer is when you say, "I am dried-up and I need a drink. I am malnourished and if I don't get some food and drink soon, it's going to cause 100 problems in my life today. I need a meal" Whichever category you are in, God brought you here this morning – he made sure you would be here today, because he wanted to say this to you:

**Isaiah 55:1 "Come, you who are thirsty, 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 spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. ... and you will go out in joy and be led forth in peace.**

## Application Questions

- 1) Of all the various kinds of soul-thirst or hunger, which tends to go unsatisfied in your soul most often?
- 2) In what areas do you tend to run to earthly food and drink rather than to the presence of God for satisfaction?
- 3) In what areas have you experienced the greatest satisfaction for the appetites of your soul through enjoying God's presence?

**Benediction: Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.**

