

Jesus Alone Satisfies

by Susan Forde

Subject: Needs

Theme: Jesus meets needs

Proposition: Jesus is the only one who satisfies completely

Transitional Sentence: By considering how Jesus is identified throughout Scripture with the basic needs of Is 55:1-2, we will find that Jesus is the only one who completely satisfies.

As you know, I've been talking a lot about **change** recently. This week I'm are not going to talk about **change** so much as the **result** of the **Spirit of change** working in people, the **result** of change from the **transforming power of the Word**.

Introduction

- In Sep 09, the LA Times and the Wall Street Journal, had stories about Mexican water shortages becoming a crisis concern. Mexico felt the pinch due to lack of water, due to waste and increasing population. Mexico City had such big concerns that they shut off water to some of the city's poorest neighborhoods. With the reality of the driest years in nearly seven decades, the government was running ads with a dire prediction: "February 2010: The City May Run Out of Water."
 - The WSJ also mentioned other areas of the world that were facing seriously dry times and dwindling supplies of drinking water.
 - Type in "water shortage" in Google and you can read all about the looming crisis of water shortage predictions for the future.
- I remember also an article on the front page of the Las Vegas Review Journal last summer which spoke of Tucson harvesting rainwater as a logical alternative solution to drought. The point is that the need for water increases and the supply just seems to dwindle. Rain water is simply wasted in the sewer system.
- In addition to that bit of news, I did a little research on the odds of winning the lottery. Big lotteries use on the average 49 balls and 6 are chosen. And after some very confusing discussion on combinations and such, a web site article called "Chances of Winning the Lottery for Dummies" states that the odds come out at roughly 1 in 13,983,816. Another site called Associated Content.com said "millions of lottery tickets are purchased with only a handful of winners." They agreed, but rounded up, that only 1 in 14 million would pick 6 numbers correctly out of the 49 balls. We've all heard stories about people standing in line or traveling for distances to cross state lines to get lottery tickets. The point? People seem compelled to spend their hard earned money and, in almost every case, get nothing to show for it.
- Finally, the nationwide unemployment rate for the US is a concern as it just seems to keep rising. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics states that unemployment nationwide is 10% as of Dec 4th, 09 and Nevada is at 12.3% (Nov09). The change over the year nationwide is up 3.2%. 2009 saw pretty significant jump for Mexican unemployment too. In 08 you see an average of 3.96% and then 09 hit and you begin to see percentages

in the 5s and 6s. On a graph, it appears shocking.

All this bad news... People need water, people need money, people need work... Let's balance this bad news with some good news from the God's Holy Word. Listen to what God said to His people in Is 55:1-2.

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.

Come to the waters, come buy and eat, Come buy wine and milk without money...

This invitation is extended to people just like you and me. People who are thirsty, people who lack money to buy what they need to eat and drink, people who are looking for the fulfillment of their needs.

I am going to speak a little about the provisions in this passage, water, bread, wine and milk first giving a little background on the physical aspects in context of those days and then highlighting the symbolic or spiritual meaning.

Come to the waters

Background/physically:

- In the days of old, water supplies were controlled with wells, cisterns and irrigation. Shepherds provided wells for their flocks at great expense. Wells became social gathering places, places of rest for weary travelers. It was community property. People fought over the right to use a well. And if someone stopped up your well, it was considered an act of hostility.
- Cisterns were also used to hold water. They were dug underground and lined with clay or cut out of solid rock, which was preferred b/c it kept the moisture better than the clay cisterns.
- Hebrews practiced irrigation on a small scale by digging trenches. Fancy gardens were found in palaces which had irrigation systems but rain was depended upon for general watering of crops. If rain failed, crops failed. People needed water.

Water was so important that God used promises of water to His people to demonstrate His transforming power and His faithfulness:

Is 41:17-20 talks about the poor and needy looking for water and being so parched b/c there is no water. The Lord then promises to make rivers, springs and pools to flow in the dry places. He promises to put trees that will grow and flourish in the dry places and He wants us to know why He would do this....

Verse 20 *...so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.*

The Creator of the world who can do the impossible is trustworthy and faithful. If God says it, He can and will do it.

Water was important and things related to water took on significant symbolic meaning

Many Psalms compare thirst with a yearning for God.

In Ps 42:1-2 Psalmist writes:

¹ *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.*

² *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

What a picture this presents, after having talked about how earnestly the people needed water, we find the psalmist longing for and seeking God in that very same desperate way.

In Ps 63:1, David while in the desert of Judah says:

¹ *O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

And in Ps 143:6

⁶ *I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.*

David may have been thinking again of his desert experience, or maybe this time he was reflective of the story of the Israelites wandering in the desert and camping at Rephidim where there was no water and how God provided water from the rock.

Come to the waters...

Come, buy and eat

Our passages talks about buying and eating. One of the Israelite's main staples was bread which is mentioned in verse 2.

(Physically)

Bread was made from flour or meal and mixed with a liquid, usually combined with leaven and kneaded into dough, then shaped into loaves and baked.

(Symbolic)

Bread was so important for daily life that there were a lot of symbolic meanings attached to it.

Bread played an important role in Israel's worship.

- It was required as an offering of first fruits along with the animal sacrifices at Pentecost (*Lev. 23:17*).
- Every Sabbath 12 loaves baked without yeast called Showbread was placed in the sanctuary (*Ex. 25:30*). The purpose of the bread was to symbolize God's continual presence with and provision to His people.

- In an annual celebration called the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Acts 12:3*) the people ate unleavened bread for the week to honor and remember when God freed the Israelite captives from bondage in Egypt (*Ex. 12:8; 13:6–7*).

There are many bread discussions in relationship with Jesus

Jesus, while fasting for 40 days in the wilderness, was tempted by Satan to command the stones to become bread. He simply answered ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*’” (*Mt. 4:3–4*).

In that statement, He took a physical presentation and gave it new meaning from a spiritual perspective. Jesus did this a lot.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray asking God for daily bread, (*Matt. 5:11*)

This is another occasion when Jesus was possibly pointing to not only the physical meaning but also a spiritual meaning. Feeding the soul with the Daily Bread of God’s Word is extremely important. We feed our bodies on a regular basis, so also we should feed our souls.

In response to some questions of the religious leaders regarding Moses and the Manna, Jesus said He was the “the true bread from heaven” (*Jn 6:32*), the bread of life” (*6:34*). The manna was a supernatural provision from God that provided the people with what they needed to live and not die of starvation. Jesus was claiming to be the supernatural provision provided by the heavenly Father to meet the people’s needs to live and not die.

Jesus broke bread during the Last Supper to identify Himself with His sacrifice. By His sacrifice, Christ became the Bread of Life for His people that they may eat of Him and find forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

Buying bread “without money and without price” (*Is. 55:1*) is finding that free gift of God that satisfies spiritual needs, and also provides abundant life.¹

Come, buy and eat

Come buy wine and milk

Wine

Background/Physically

Grapes were primarily used to make wine. The wine making process was very interesting in those days:

Grapes went through much tribulation to become wine... they were trodden by foot and pressed

¹Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Rev. ed. of: Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.; Includes index. Nashville: T. Nelson.

by a machine, drained, poured into bottles and let to ferment, sometimes buried underground, and sometimes strained. Have you ever felt that way? But the wine was then used on joyous occasions of celebration, offered as refreshment when entertaining, for rejoicing before the Lord, and was medicinal when mixed with other substances, for example when wine was mixed with myrrh it was offered for relief of pain. Mk 15:23 says that this combination was what was offered to Jesus on the cross that he refused. Mk 10:34 also speaks of wine mixed with oil poured on the wounds of the good Samaritan's patient, probably used as an antiseptic ointment.

What happens to these grapes is a great picture of what happens to us to become what God wants us to be to bring joy into the lives of other people, people who may be hurting, or needing to celebrate, or just needing friendly refreshment. Can people see wine in us after the tribulations that we have endured? Have these tribulations made us sweet wine to minister to others who are also being trodden down?

Symbolically

Wine speaks of God's blessings (Gen 27:28).

Joel 3:18 says, "*In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias².*" (Valley of Shittim).

Jesus referred to the wine at the Last Supper as the new covenant in His blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:28). The new covenant spoke of God's promise of establishing a new kingdom and renewal, abundance, and blessings.

Milk

Physical

Milk was a staple in the diet along with bread. It was drank fresh and made into butter and other products. It was considered important in development of children.

Symbolically

It spoke of abundance, prosperity, richness. God promised to give to His chosen nation a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of abundance, (Deut 26:15), a most beautiful land (Ez 20:6).

In the early church, it meant elementary teaching, nourishing the soul, regenerating the mind, resulting in development and spiritual growth. (1 Cor 3:2, Heb 5:12, 13) and also was referred to as pure doctrine (1 Pet 2:2).

Come buy wine and milk

² Note: Acacia of Shittah was a 15 to 20 foot tall, hard wood tree with large thorns that used to build structures including the tabernacle. Acacia trees grew along the Jordan Valley from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea (Is. 41:19).

(Not satisfying)

But the question remains in verse 2 of our passage in Isaiah 55, “*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?*”

- In Jer 2:13, God’s people were certainly not satisfied when they abandoned God and dug their own cisterns, which God said could not hold water. “*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.*”
- Is 44:20 describes a person who puts other things before God. He is certainly not satisfied. “*He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself...*”
- The prodigal son from the story in Luke was not satisfied. (Lk 15:11-23) “*He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*” Lk 15:16

On August 14, 2003 the Daily Bread devotional read, “A hummingbird near Bingham Canyon, Utah, was seen pressing its bill against the biggest red “flower” in town. No one knows for sure how long it took for the bird to realize you can't get nectar out of a traffic light!”

It continued, “This kind of foolishness is not just for the birds.” A lot of energy is expended to feed our souls with food that doesn't satisfy. We may be left empty or we may be nearly consumed by the things we pursue. That is why the words in Isaiah 55 are so relevant. “*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?*”

“God doesn't just leave us with the question. He goes on to assure us that our heart's deepest longing can be fulfilled—in Him alone (vv.1-7).” — Mart De Haan

The devotional concluded, “There's a longing in every heart that only Jesus can satisfy.”

Conclusion

Therefore, we should know that:

Jesus our Savior Satisfies as the Giver of Living Water

In John’s gospel, Jesus stopped by a well in the Samaritan town of Sychar, Jesus engaged a Samaritan woman there in conversation by asking her for a drink of water. In her surprise that he spoke to her (not the norm), she asked him how he could ask her. He answered, “*If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.*” Long story short, Jesus said to her, “*Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*” (Jn 4:10 & 14).

In John again, Jesus was at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.*” (Jn 7:37-38).

We should also know that

Jesus our Savior Satisfies as the Bread of Life

In Jn 6:32-35

³² Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

Later in verses 47-51

⁴⁷ Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

And finally, we should know that Jesus not only satisfies our basic needs, but so much more.

Jesus our Savior Satisfies with Abundance

- 2 Cor 9:10 – "Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness."
- Ps 36:8-9 – "They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."
- Mt 11:28 – "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

So here it is The Invitation to Come:

From Rev (21:6)

He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life."

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. Rev 22:17.

In Proverbs, Wisdom also calls out ...

(Proverbs 9:5) "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed."

Jesus Christ our Savior, is the provider, the giver of the free gift of eternal life.

So, come, you who are thirsty, who have yet to drink of the water that Jesus offers. Put your trust in Him. He provides what we need for life. He came, He lived, He died for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead. He is Lord. He wants you to know that He wants nothing more than your restoration and wholeness. Only He can fill the God-shaped hole in your heart that seeks to be filled in other ways that will not satisfy for only He can satisfy you completely.

Come, also, you who desire to drink deeper of abundance. This Giver of living water, this Bread of Life has so much more abundance in store for you than you could ever imagine.