

Bible_Sunday

Isaiah 55:1-5, 2 Tim 3:14-4:5

In the ancient streets of Jerusalem until the advent of plastic bottles you could hear water sellers with a goatskin bag of water and a few glasses calling the thirsty to come and buy water to drink. Isaiah picks up that picture from the hot & dusty land.

Yet there is a twist in it. The water seller would only give water to those who paid. The Lord speaks through Isaiah with a warm invitation to the needy.

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.

We live in a world that is created by God and much about His existence and character can be seen in the world he has made [Romans 1:20].

Yet many people do not acknowledge their dependence on God or look to put themselves in a right relationship with Him.

Clear pure water, Rich nourishing milk, cheering wine and bread, the staff of life, are often used as pictures in scripture of that which gives true satisfaction.

In the New Testament we read the story of Jesus miraculously multiplying five loaves and two small fish to feed 5,000 men and their families.

Jesus miracle was in response to their immediate need of food. We enjoy our delicious meals but

Jesus himself is "the bread of life" Jn 6:35.

Jesus tells them;

If anyone is thirsty

let Him come to me & drink.

The essence of the Christian life is entering into a relationship with God. Jesus is saying that He Himself is the one who will truly satisfy.

It was the same in Isaiah's time. God's invitation, through Isaiah, was given to people who were looking for satisfaction and national security in the wrong places. They were in danger of forgetting that they had been called into a covenant relationship with Y'.

They were turning down the invitation of The Lord our God to come & enjoy that which truly satisfies.

They were spending their energies, wasting their affections and resources for that which could not bring lasting satisfaction: They were worshipping idols and turning to foreign nations to protect them.

The foreign Alliances would lead them into slavery to powerful Babylon.

The Lord God calls them to come to Him.

Listen to me and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of fare [Isaiah 55:2b].

What will give real satisfaction for the soul and spirit comes in Listening to the Word of God.

As Isaiah [55:3a] spoke God's word;

Give ear and come to me;

Listen, that you may live

We are created as people made in the image of God.

We are not just physical creatures, with physical appetites but also spiritual creatures with a longing to live in a right relationship with God.

We need to keep the right balance between the physical and the spiritual to find the true satisfaction, the abundant life which God promises. Are we in danger of spending our energy and resources on that which does not satisfy when what we really need is offered free?

We live in a dissatisfied, thirsty world that turns away from God's offer and looks in the wrong places to find other ways to satisfaction.

I am glad that when I was a young teenager I was given a New Testament at school. It had a reading plan with a reading for each day. I followed the readings. I wasn't a religious child. My parents weren't church goers but they sent us to Sunday School. Someone must have been praying for me.

It has been a great advantage to have been grounded in Scripture as Timothy was. Timothy had been Paul's apprentice and assistant. He has heard Paul's teaching and seen the example of his life.

The situation Paul and the early church found themselves in was bad and likely to get worse. Paul was in prison, cold lonely and bored. He expected to be executed soon.

The church was being persecuted. It was troubled by false teachers distorting the truth and out for their own pleasure [2 Timothy 3:2, 5, 13].

Timothy needed encouragement to Stand Firm Paul tells him, **"What you have heard and been taught and what you have seen lived out in my example is the same as you learned as a child from Scripture with your mother & grandmother."**

Paul had passed on the living word of God - inspired - God breathed - the sword of the spirit - demonstrated in a life dedicated to God.

What must Timothy do when Paul is gone?

Paul leaves clear instructions:

Continue in what you have learned. Timothy had learned the value of the scriptures as a child. When he heard the good news of Christ his understanding of the OT was transformed into a saving faith.

WHY ARE THE SCRIPTURES SO IMPORTANT?

Janny's testimony

Paul reminds Timothy; Its important because;

- Its source "It is God Breathed"
- Its usefulness "teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness"
- It has a purpose in our lives, "So that we can

be

thoroughly equipped for every good work." [2 Timothy 3:16-17]

The Greek word translated "thoroughly Equipped" was used in Paul's time of a ship ready with everything it needed for a voyage. Ready to face the unpredictable, changing winds. Ready whether the ship became becalmed or in stormy seas.

None of us knows what awaits around the next corner of our lives. The Lord our God doesn't give us a detailed ground plan for every eventuality.

Scripture helps us to be thoroughly equipped for every situation the Lord calls us to.

Timothy was called to be a Preacher of God's word. A preacher has to work with patience & perseverance. People often want to be told what they like to hear. Paul describes it as "itching ears". They find the truth of God's word irritating and prefer something entertaining and less demanding.

2 Timothy was the first book of the Bible I ever studied in depth. It made a deep impression on me. Studying Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy helped me see myself as a young Timothy called by God & His church to take up the challenge.

I still love the Bible & my ambition is still to be a faithful teacher of God's word.

It is because Scripture leads us to God that it is so important. It is because it helps us to know & believe the truth & live it out that the scriptures are so vital.

It is God's intention that we should find creative satisfaction in our everyday work and our service to others. But if we let work or anything else squeeze our relationship to God out then we are living out our lives for that which will not ultimately satisfy.

God has given us every good gift to enjoy but looking to any of those good gifts as our source of satisfaction will leave us disappointed.

Feeding our senses has attractions. But pleasing our bodies to try to make up for inner emptiness only distracts us from the emptiness. The bible warns us against greed, for sex or food & drink.

It is the same with **Amusement**. It is easy to pass through life following a restless appetite for new ways to amuse ourselves and pass the time.

Wealth, possessions and status promise fulfilment. We think that when I reach this position I will be happy; When I own this or that I will be satisfied. Each of these aims may be good in themselves but nothing will substitute for a right relationship with the Lord our God.

None of these human fountains can quench the thirst of our spirit. Nothing can satisfactorily take the place of The Lord our God in our lives.

If we do not take care of our spiritual life by attending to God's word we will never know the full joy of the abundant life.

But thanks be to God, there is an open offer to us all. To all who hunger and thirst for God. Jesus calls

"If anyone is thirsty let Him come to me & drink"

Prayer

Living Father, as you gave true insight to those who wrote our scriptures, make us wise for Salvation. Teach, rebuke, correct & train us, by your word that we may be ready for any good work you call us to do. You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.

Grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, That no weakness keep us from following your leading and that we may find perfect freedom in your service.

Amen