

“Come, Everyone Who Thirsts”

“A New Things” Series, August 29 & 30, 2026 | Isaiah 55:1-13

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Has anyone ever offered you something for nothing?

One time, I signed up for a travel club that sounded too good to be true.

A telemarketer called offering me a watch and two free airline tickets to anywhere if I paid a small, one-time fee. I was twenty-something and severely gullible, so I paid the fee. The watch was a piece of garbage, the airline tickets were impossible to use, and the deal sounded too good to be true because it was.

Most of us now live every day on high alert for scams.

Some of you may have received email messages from someone claiming to be me, asking you to call me or to buy a bunch of gift cards. But we have all received so many false emails, text messages, and phone calls that we aren’t fooled.

God invites us to come to Him to buy what we most need and want.

God says to come to Him if we’re thirsty or hungry. **Isaiah 55:1** begins,

“Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.”

After air to breathe, water and food are the most fundamental things of life. But God isn’t opening a Big Y and asking us to stop for groceries on the way home. He’s saying, “Come to Me for your deepest longings.” He’s implying that He has what our souls need and is willing to give it to us.

What He offers us is priceless, but we’re penniless, so we’re suspicious.

We thought we were talking about the price of a loaf of sourdough bread, and now it turns out that we are talking about the cost of our soul’s deepest longing. What God is offering is “without price.” That means it’s priceless. God acknowledges that we have “no money” but we can come and have the treasure our souls long for most anyway. It sounds like He’s saying that we can have two tickets to anywhere and a Rolex for free. Naturally, we’re suspicious.

But this isn’t a scam because someone already picked up the tab.

The bill got paid back in Isaiah 53. The Suffering Servant died to pay the price we couldn’t pay. So, the bill is already paid. This isn’t a scam. It isn’t free. It is priceless. Precious. God is offering what our souls most long for. To me. To you.

God wonders why we keep settling for bad bargains.

God tells us that we keep buying things that don’t satisfy us.

He asks us why in **Isaiah 55:2**,

“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.”

Again, this isn't God extolling the benefits of eating swordfish versus French fries. He is pointing to something much deeper—our deepest longings and how we try to get those met.

This echoes God's repeated warnings about idols.

Repeatedly, God chided His people for their idols. In Isaiah 44, God said that people plant a tree, watch it grow, cut it down, burn part of it, cook their food over it, sit in the warmth of the fire, foolishly make a god out of the part of the tree that's left over. It makes no sense! In **Isaiah 44:9** God says,

All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. ...

It's not just a bad investment financially. It's something more. It's wasting our lives on something that can never satisfy the deepest longing of our souls.

We spend astounding resources on idols and illusions.

We chase after sports as though succeeding on the field were the key to respect. We pursue politics with the illusion that we can force the kingdoms of this world to become the Kingdom of God here and now. We crave a week on a beach in Tahiti as though it will cure our emptiness. We make good things into ultimate things. But they aren't. And when we make good things into ultimate things, we're making them into idols. The blessed life isn't found in idols.

Dolly Parton spent her life dressed in rhinestones, but she knew they were an illusion.

Country Music legend Dolly Parton died this past week. We'll never forget her music, but it will also be difficult to forget her style. She was always dolled up in massive wigs with makeup piled on with a trowel. She would go through 300 custom costumes a year, as many as 10 in a day. It was all part of being an entertainer. Part of the job. Something that made her feel confident and kept people's attention. But it never defined her as a person.¹ Underneath, Dolly knew that she was always just another person. That may be why so many people loved her.

Chasing idols and illusions leaves us spiritually destitute.

God invites us to stop spending our lives chasing them. Instead, He invites us to a new life with Him.

He offers us a new covenant that makes us new people with a new mission.

God promises a new and better covenant.

Isaiah 55:3-4 is difficult to sort out exactly. But what it's saying is that God looked at David. The Bible calls him a man after God's own heart. God made a covenant with David and promised that David's Son would reign over God's people forever. It's an unconditional covenant. Here, God is saying that He is going to make a new covenant with His people. It's like the one He made with David, but it is expanded. This New Covenant God is making with His people applies to you and me through Jesus.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/26/style/dolly-parton-fashion-style-legacy>

This new covenant transforms us into new people.

Isaiah 55:5 says,

“Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.”

Notice how it ends. God has glorified us. Something has changed in us because of the New Covenant He will make with us. That’s pointing to the transformation that happens in our lives after we come to faith in Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit. **2 Corinthians 3:18** says,

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

God is transforming us. His Glory is filling us. And it changes our life’s purpose.

The new covenant gives us a new and world-shaping mission.

That was the main thrust of Isaiah 55:5. God’s people, transformed and filled with His glory, will draw the nations to Him. Judah, submitted to God, could draw the nations to God. The Church, God’s New Covenant people, are the nations coming to God and drawing more people to Him! A new covenant shaping a new mission inside of a new people. That’s a lot of newness.

But we know that new isn’t always good.

In the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, many shoe stores were equipped with fluoroscopes. They used X-rays to take pictures of feet inside shoes. The hope was to provide a better fit and check feet. New idea. Sounds good, right? But that meant hitting people with radiation every time they bought shoes. By the 1960s, concerns about the radiation involved led to regulations and the end of the fluoroscope.² New isn’t always good.

So, we may resist new—even when it comes from God and is for our good.

God comes to us with a new and better covenant. He offers to make us into new and improved people. And it comes with a new and world-shaping mission. It’s what He was offering when He said,

“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters ... come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk ...”

It’s not just that we don’t want to fall for a scam. We’re not sure we’re ready for all that newness. We’re not sure we’re open to all that change. Even though it is exactly what we’ve been chasing all our lives. Even though it is the deepest longing of our souls. Sometimes, we think we’ll just wait and see. But God is urgent about this offer!

God declares that He is near and the time is now.

God is near and on the move.

Isaiah 55:6 says,

² <https://www.orau.org/health-physics-museum/collection/shoe-fitting-fluoroscope/index.html>

“Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near ...”

This upends the picture of God I think most of us have of Him. I think that when most of us picture God, we picture Him as being “up there”... almost in a galaxy far, far away. We’re not classic Deists exactly, but our picture isn’t that far off. We think of God as someone who made the universe, set the rules in place, and walked away to let it run itself. But Isaiah 55:6 blows that picture away. God has come near. We know this when we think about Jesus. He is God with us. We know this if we think about the Holy Spirit. He is God within us. But this reminder is still important. God is near us. He’s on the move in the world and in our lives, working. That’s mind-blowing!

God always breaks out of the bubble wrap we try to put around Him.

When I say that we put bubble wrap around God, I mean that we try to restrict Him. We’re somehow protecting Him. And we’re protecting ourselves. We want Him to be predictable and understandable. But God won’t be wrapped in bubble wrap. God surprises us, which is what He is saying in **Isaiah 55:8-9**,

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

He is closer than we imagine. He is more merciful than we dream or fear.

God’s Word is active and moving in our worlds and hearts.

In **Isaiah 55:10-11** God tells us that His Word is out there, doing something:

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

God’s Word is the Bible and His active, shaping power. It’s out there in the world, moving people. That’s part of what it means that God is near and why now is the time to respond. The Word of God is speaking to us, and it is going to get the job done.

This is happening right now! People are coming to faith in Jesus in our day.

I don’t know if you realize it, but new people are coming to Valley almost every week. Their stories are all so similar. They have simply felt that there is something missing in their lives and that they have a nagging notion that they need God in that place. They are hungry, but they have so many questions. That may be you today! If that’s the case, please know that you are not alone, that you are safe here, and that God is speaking to you. And when you come to faith in Jesus Christ, the deepest longing in your heart is finally going to be fulfilled. Everything God says here in Isaiah 55 is going to happen to you.

No wonder the trees are clapping their hands.

Did you see that line in **Isaiah 55:12**,

“... and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”

In the closing verses of Isaiah 55, God says that when the Exiles return to Judah, creation is going to celebrate. But it means so much more. When broken lives are made right, the world is made a little more like it was meant to be in the beginning. When a new person comes to faith in Jesus, Heaven bursts into song. And it is all a foretaste of New Creation—what will happen when God makes the world as it is into the world as it should be when Jesus returns.

Let's seek the Lord while He may be found.

On our own, our lives are like the old video game, Tetris.

In Tetris, colored blocks of different shapes fall from the top of the screen. Your job is to arrange the falling blocks in complete rows. When a row is complete, it clears. You're fitting and clearing as many blocks as possible. Isn't that a great picture of how most of us live our lives? We're cramming in blocks—work, working out, yard work, sports, travel, hobbies. We do it for ourselves, for our friends, for our families. We're scooting stuff around, turning it over, trying to find a place for it all to fit. More and more and more stuff. Hoping that we're going to win. But that's the problem with Tetris. At some point, stuff is going to start falling so fast that you can't keep up. Eventually, your screen fills up and you lose. That's true with life, too. If life is all about fitting more and more stuff in, at some point you are going to lose. Seeking the Lord stops the Tetris game.

Seeking the Lord starts with genuinely turning from sin to God.

Isaiah 55:6 said,

“Seek the LORD while he may be found ...”

It went on in **Isaiah 55:7** to say how,

“... let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD ...”

That's repentance—naming our sin, regretting our sin, turning away from our sin, and turning to God. Then it added why,

“... that he may have compassion on him ... for he will abundantly pardon.”

God is more merciful and compassionate than we have reason to expect. He will pardon us. It all starts with repentance. What is your sin? Are you ready to name it and turn away from it? Next week when we gather to worship, we will start with a time of confession and repentance as we take Communion together and get ready to kick off our 50th Anniversary celebration a few days later. Think and pray about it this week and come ready next week.

Seeking the Lord means choosing Him as my first loyalty.

That takes the chaos of a Tetris lifestyle and brings peace to it. Yes, I work. But I work for God's glory. Yes, I have a family life. But my family is a sanctuary where God's presence is my first and overriding concern. Yes, I have hobbies and interests. But God is my first interest. God brings order to every area of our lives.

Seeking the Lord means knowing and being known by our Creator.

God is not giving us a list of things to do. He's inviting us into a relationship with Him. To know that He loves and forgives us in Jesus. To rest secure in the fact that we are His adopted sons and daughters. And to love Him in return.

Seeking the Lord brings us to Jesus.

We started with an offer from God that sounded too good to be true,

"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

An offer like that can be true only with God, and it becomes true in Jesus. He is the Living Water, freely offered to cleanse us. He is the Bread of Life, freely offered to give us new life. That's the real invitation. Come to Jesus.