

A 40-Day Journey . . .

Week #6 – Concern For The Lost
April 6-12, 2009

This Week's Scripture Focus: Isaiah 55:1-13 (NIV)

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.*

⁴ *See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.*

⁵ *Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.*

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.*

⁸ *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.*

⁹ *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

¹⁰ *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,*

¹¹ *so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

¹² *You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

¹³ *Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD'S renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."*

Monday, April 6, 2009

Please read Isaiah 55:1-7 (located on the front page of the booklet) through several times very slowly. Pay special attention to words that are repeated (e.g. come, listen, Lord, buy, you, etc.) and underline them.

Does everyone get thirsty?

What are the causes of thirst?

Are there different causes for spiritual thirst? If so, what are they?

Prayer focus:

Take a moment and ask God to show you the people in your circle of influence who are spiritually thirsty. Pray that He will show you the cause of their thirst.

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

Please read Isaiah 55:1-7 through several times very slowly. Try personalizing (insert your name wherever possible into) these verses as you read them.

Can thirst be created by abuses, neglect, unwholesome things or even wholesome things that are out of perspective? If so, identify the things within your life that are creating thirst.

How did these things enter your life? (Through others? Through choices that you made? Any other reasons?) Why are you involved in these things?

How hard would it be to eliminate these things from your life?

Prayer focus:

1. The first step in overcoming something is to admit that it should not be there. Admit to God the things that are creating unhealthy thirst in your life.
2. Declare them to be wrong.
3. Ask God for forgiveness.
4. Invite God to enable you to replace them with things that create healthy thirst.

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Please read Isaiah 55:1-7 through several times very slowly. Pay special attention to action phrases for humanity (e.g. seek the Lord, turn to the Lord, hear Me, forsake His way, etc.). Circle these action phrases; then connect them to God action phrases (e.g. He will have mercy on him, I will make an everlasting covenant, He will freely pardon, etc.). Again, use different colors, if possible.

If someone told you that they were thirsty, what would you offer them?

If you saw someone who was thirsty, what would you do?

What are the events, words or actions that satisfy (or have satisfied) your spiritual thirst?

Are you offering a thirst quencher to the world within your reach?

Prayer focus:

Spend some time reflecting on the relationships currently in your life and identify one person whose thirst resonates with your thirst experiences. Ask God to allow you the opportunity to share your thirst quenching experience with that person.

Thursday, April 9, 2009

Please read the focus verses, Isaiah 55:8-13, through several times very slowly. Then re-read verses 8-9 in a different translation.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

⁸*“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD.*

“And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.

⁹*For just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

In what ways are God’s thoughts different than your thoughts?

How are God’s ways different than your ways?

Think of someone very close to you who is a Christian. What do you see? What do you think God sees?

Think of a specific neighbor, friend or family member who is not a Christian. What do you see? What do you think God sees?

Prayer focus:

Ask God to show you His original design of that one who is a Christian and the original design of the individual who is not a Christian. Ask God to allow you to look at them in that way from now on.

Friday, April 10, 2009

Please read the focus verses, Isaiah 55:8-13, through several times very slowly As you read these verses, try to imagine, not physical change, but spiritual, mental and emotional change. Now reread verses 10-11 in different translations (some are available on the back pages).

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰*“The rain and snow come down from the heavens
and stay on the ground to water the earth.*

*They cause the grain to grow,
producing seed for the farmer
and bread for the hungry.*

¹¹*It is the same with my word.*

*I send it out, and it always produces fruit.
It will accomplish all I want it to,
and it will prosper everywhere I send it.*

The refreshing rain and the snow saturated with moisture produces two things. How are these things related and what are their final accomplishments?

What two types of fruit are produced by the Holy Spirit (the Word of God living) in and through the person who is filled with the Holy Spirit? How is this fruit related and what are the final accomplishments of this fruit?

Answer the question, “How is your soul prospering?”

Prayer focus:

Write verses 1-3 of Isaiah 55 into a personal prayer, then make this your prayer for today.

Saturday April 11, 2009

Please read Isaiah 55:8-13 through several times very slowly. Now reread verses 12-13 in different translations (other translations located in the back of the booklet).

Isaiah 55:11-12 (NLT)

¹² *You will live in joy and peace.*

*The mountains and hills will burst into song,
And the trees of the field will clap their hands!*

¹³ *Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow.*

*Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up.
These events will bring great honor to the LORD's name;
They will be an everlasting sign of his power and love."*

What are the things or events that God is using in your life that will end up being an everlasting sign of His power and love?

Do you think that the non-Christians who are close to you see God's transforming work in your life? Should they see God's transforming work in your life?

Write out a prayer that describes the nettles and thorns in your life. State the transforming work that you want God to do in your life, then express to Him how that will bring honor to His name and how it will be an everlasting sign of His power and love.

Prayer focus:

Pray this prayer.

Sunday, April 12, 2009

Read Isaiah 55:1-13 several times.

Easter is a time of new birth. Describe the new birth that you desire to have happen in your life.

Describe the new birth that you desire to have happen in your family unit.

Describe the new birth that you desire to have happen in the life of someone who is close to you but does not know Christ as their personal Savior.

Prayer focus:

Bring these three new birth desires to God in prayer. Think upon the empty tomb and the fact of Jesus' resurrection. Focus on the power and the love that made this possible.

In Other Translations

Isaiah 55:1-13 (New American Standard Bible)

¹ *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, 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 do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.*

³ *"Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David.*

⁴ *"Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.*

⁵ *"Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and a nation which knows you not will run to you, because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you."*

⁶ *Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.*

⁷ *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

⁸ *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.*

⁹ *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

¹⁰ *"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;*

¹¹ *So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

¹² *"For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*

¹³ *"Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, and it will be a memorial to the LORD, for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off."*

Isaiah 55:1-13 (The Message)

¹ *"Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water! Are you penniless? Come anyway - buy and eat! Come, buy your drinks, buy wine and milk. Buy without money - everything's free!"*² *Why do you spend your money on junk food, your hard-earned cash on cotton candy? Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best, fill yourself with only the finest.*³ *Pay attention, come close now, listen carefully to my life-giving, life-nourishing words. I'm making a lasting covenant commitment with you, the same that I made with David: sure, solid, enduring love.*⁴ *I set him up as a witness to the nations, made him a prince and leader of the nations,*⁵ *And now I'm doing it to you: You'll summon nations you've never*

heard of, and nations who've never heard of you will come running to you because of me, your God, because The Holy of Israel has honored you.

⁶ Seek God while he's here to be found, pray to him while he's close at hand. ⁷ Let the wicked abandon their way of life and the evil their way of thinking. Let them come back to God, who is merciful, come back to our God, who is lavish with forgiveness. ⁸ "I don't think the way you think. The way you work isn't the way I work." God's Decree. ⁹ "For as the sky soars high above earth, so the way I work surpasses the way you work, and the way I think is beyond the way you think. ¹⁰ Just as rain and snow descend from the skies and don't go back until they've watered the earth, doing their work of making things grow and blossom, producing seed for farmers and food for the hungry, ¹¹ so will the words that come out of my mouth not come back empty-handed. They'll do the work I sent them to do, they'll complete the assignment I gave them. ¹² "So you'll go out in joy, you'll be led into a whole and complete life. The mountains and hills will lead the parade, bursting with song. All the trees of the forest will join the procession, exuberant with applause. ¹³ No more thistles, but giant sequoias, no more thornbushes, but stately pines - Monuments to me, to God, living and lasting evidence of God."

Isaiah 55:1-13 (The Amplified Bible)

¹ *WAIT and listen, everyone who is thirsty! Come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Yes, come, buy [priceless, spiritual] wine and milk without money and without price [simply for the self-surrender that accepts the blessing].*

² *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your earnings for what does not satisfy? Harken diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness [the profuseness of spiritual joy].*

³ *Incline your ear [submit and consent to the divine will] and come to Me; hear, and your soul will revive; and I will make an everlasting covenant or league with you, even the sure mercy (kindness, goodwill, and compassion) promised to David.*

⁴ *Behold, I have appointed him (Him) [David, as a representative of the Messiah, or the Messiah Himself] to be a witness [one (One) who shall testify of salvation] to the nations, a prince (Prince) and commander (Commander) to the peoples.*

⁵ *Behold, you [a][Israel] shall call nations that you know not, and nations that do 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.*

⁶ *Seek, inquire for, and require the Lord while He may be found [claiming Him by necessity and by right]; call upon Him while He is near.*

⁷ *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have love, pity, and mercy for him, and to our God, for He will multiply to him His abundant pardon.*

⁸ *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.*

⁹ *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

¹⁰ *For as the rain and snow come down from the heavens, and return not there again, but water the earth and make it bring forth and sprout, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,*

¹¹ *So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return to Me void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which I please and purpose, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

¹² *For you shall go out [from the spiritual exile caused by sin and evil into the homeland] with joy and be led forth [by your Leader, the Lord Himself, and His word] with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*

¹³ *Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name of renown, for an everlasting sign [of jubilant exaltation] and memorial [to His praise], which shall not be cut off.*