

Living in the Presence of God  
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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.

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.

[Come: Hebrew {yalak}, meaning to go or proceed.]

[Satisfy: Hebrew {sobah}, meaning 'satiety'- the state of being satisfactorily full and  
unable to take on more.]

[Listen, give ear, hear: Hebrew {shamea}, meaning hearken.]

[Seek: Hebrew {darash}, meaning inquire.]

[Call: Hebrew {qara}, meaning to call or name.]

[Forsake: Hebrew {azab}, meaning to leave or leave off, associated freely with the breaking of a covenant.]

[Freely (abundantly): Hebrew {rabah}, meaning "to make many".]

Isaiah 55 depicts God...

- Summoning us to something amazing and satisfying for free.
- Asking us to hear him.
- Showing visible evidence that his claims are good and true.
- Telling us why it's far better than where we are now.
- Isaiah 55 I the invitation and the doorway to an amazing gift. What is this thing? Himself...his presence.

- The whole canon of scripture points to us walking in the presence of God, from the beginning (Genesis 3:8 & 4:13-14) to the histories (Exodus 33:14) to the Psalms and prophets (Psalm 16:11 & Hosea 6:2) to the gospels (Matthew 28:20) to the letters (1 John 3:19 & Jude 1:24) to the end (Revelation 21:3)...the ultimate destiny of man us to dwell with the living God.

Some reasons you wouldn't cultivate the presence of God in your life:

- Too time consuming: What about the song "This is the Air I Breathe"? When you run out of time for breathing and eating talk to Jesus about being too time consuming (Psalm 63:3-5). Or do you believe that Jesus is not as important as those things? Either be with him or stop singing. Just like worship through giving opens the door for God to bless you financially, practicing the presence of God allows your time to be maximized.
- I don't feel him near me that often: Will you depend on temporal (flesh) senses to discover the presence of a spiritual being? Would you use a metal detector to find cookies? Will you follow your feelings or believe his words (2 Cor. 4:18 & Hebrews 11:1)? That is a very real choice that we make consciously or subconsciously every day.
- "That's not how our relationship looks": If being immersed in the word (Col. 3:16) and seeking his presence in prayer (Col. 4:2) isn't how your relationship with the Lord looks, you are ignoring his commands: Jesus made you a unique creation and offers you many ways to connect to him, but to ignore these two is similar to saying 'I sleep standing up' or 'I eat with my left ear'- that's not satisfying, that

causes insomnia and partial deafness. What would those two look like in a spiritual sense?

- Sometimes I need a break: Again, eating and breathing. Resting apart from the Lord isn't rest, it's waste. Why spend money on what is not bread? Ultimately taking a break from God's presence is a waste of his time and your time, and will eventually be burned (John 15:6).
- It just doesn't occur to me: If food, air, my wife, my accountability partner, or traffic signals didn't occur to me, I would inherit several troubling issues. God commands us to 'waste our time' thinking of him and him alone (Psalm 35:28 & Hebrews 12:2). Every hair on your head occurs to him!
- It's not fun; This is simply not true: If you've ever watched something funny unfold that was even funnier because you knew what was about to happen, you have an idea of what it's like to live next to an all-knowing being who has everyone's best interest in mind. And by the way, when you chose to follow Jesus...it became not about you and your fun. If you prefer other things to Jesus, work on your preferences, not your theology.

Some reasons you would cultivate the presence of God in your life:

- It is to your advantage in virtually every way: Life would improve in every way! prayers are answered daily, blessings are noticed and acknowledged more often, circumstances make more sense, I treat people better, and Jesus puts his fingerprints all over every relationship in your world. Even being slain as a martyr becomes an improvement, because guess what your reward is? The presence of God! (Romans 8:28-39)
- You now have proper expectations for eternal life: The best thing about heaven is that Jesus is there (Matt. 28:20), so get used to that ultimate blessing now.
- The glory of God is revealed: God appears bigger and bigger when we give him more room in our world (2 Cor. 3:16-18)...again, don't we sing about these things?
- I truly know God: Everyone deserves a certain level of respect, but as a rule we want people to earn our trust with time. Living in the presence of God means we know him and his desires, and grow to trust what we know. We don't have to cling to rules ["God says I can't"] (Col 2:17) or tout our Christian freedoms ["God said I can"] (1 Cor. 8:12-13) to feel close to him, because we communicate with him personally all the time (Luke 5:16).
- Priorities become clearer: When we place our lives in the presence of the Lord he is able to shake out what doesn't matter and highlight what does matter (Micah 6:8). If it matters to him, literally stop what you're doing and pay attention.
- Sin is utterly minimized: Living in the presence of Christ and in his identity means that sin flees, light is cast into our deepest wounds, and we can experience authentic healing (Romans 6:10-11).
- You get to actively experience God's love: The statement 'Jesus loves you' is set ablaze; his love is so evident when he bears with us at all times (1 John 1:9), guides us at all times (Romans 8:26), blesses us with his closeness (Psalm 91:1) and quiets our fears in his arms (Psalm 46). God's love language is quality time.

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.  
7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.  
- Revelation 21:6

\*\*\*challenge: as soon as you and your family get into your car, pray for each other out loud for a few minutes. Invite Jesus into each others lives.\*\*\*