

WHOLESOME THINKING.

TEXT: Isaiah 55:1-5.

THEME:

Let us do some *wholesome thinking* by getting back to God's word and keeping it.

Grace, peace, and mercy, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you free from worry or are there things bugging you? What are the main thoughts/worries/woes that play on your mind all the time? What is constantly sitting there that you can't get rid of?

Is it, family problems? Too many bills? Worries about the Future? Cares of the world? Car needs repairing? House problems? Your best friend has hurt you and doesn't want to be your friend anymore? Someone has

died and you miss them? You are lonely? Money problems; you've got too much of it? The world is screwed up and nothing makes sense any more!

These are just probing questions, let's dig a bit deeper! What actually keeps you going? What is real to you? What keeps you ticking and sane? Perhaps the things I rattled off as problems are the same things that keep you going?

In today's world there is a big grey area attributed to life and issues in general. No longer are things clear cut; either black and white, right or wrong, there is this big grey area that can justify both sides of the story so that every wins! For an hour or two you watch the TV in the evening and you view shows such as **Friends or Two and a Half Men, etc.** The messages they send through blur the lines; even though it may be worth a few laughs.

They tell you that it is okay to bend the rules just a little! The message is coming through loud and clear that it's okay to have sex outside of marriage, etc. a lot of people watch this show because the characters are someone they can identify with and they go out and do the same thing.

Speaking of the TV, some adverts clearly tell you that you need all the modern gizmo's to make your life complete. For instance, the Ab-buster will get rid of all your unwanted flab, give you a Vee shaped body everyone will admire, perhaps it could make a difference to my mid section, but God loves me just as I am!

All these things cost money, everything these days has a cost attached to it, nothing is free. You pay through your nose just to keep your head above water [food is becoming dearer all the time].

So let's compare it to what our Old Testament reading is telling us. The opening sentence invites the hearers to

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters".

There is beauty in that statement; a pure and simple, straight from the heart invitation to quench your thirst. The Lord himself is holding out his hand to anyone who hears this, to come and get what is freely given with no strings attached. When you look at it in its proper context, everything we have in life is a gift from God. Who gave you life? A healthy body? Good functioning brain? Where did it all come from in the first place?

A lot of freebies given out today have some sort of catch to it, nothing is given for free. With the Lord it is a completely different matter, he owns all creation and everything in it, and more importantly, he is willing to give you absolutely everything including eternal life if we but accept his gifts; and then with a humble heart.

As you know life can get us down! Why does it get us down? It gets us down because of many reasons, but

more so, because we don't give God the glory and honour for what he has done for us.

Continuing on from the second part of the verse I just read, it goes on to say: 'and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost'. That may be a tricky one, because of the world we live in today, money is a commodity that we need to obtain and purchase things. We need it to buy a house [if you can afford it], car, food, petrol, etc, etc; without it, we will struggle to live. Ideally, you purchase things and take care of it; and it will take care of you, i.e. house, car.

Remember not to idolise what you have or let it possess you. Sure, we can take things for granted because it is ours, but we don't make it the only thing in our lives. A lot of people think, what I slaved for I own, and it is all MINE, and [by crikey] no one can take it from me. Let me stretch you, take for instance, a marriage; two people

want to be together they love each other and want to be together forever. What they have to recognise first, is, they don't own each other.

Once they are married, the husband shouldn't think that now that we are married and she is MINE then I can do whatever I like with her. And a lot of husbands think and have thought like that, and that's where abuse begins. And once that happens, dreams are broken, injuries and murder happen, marriages lead to divorce. And the same situation applies to the wife, she is not his, but a gift to be treasured, she is not to nag him to death. It goes both ways. Everything we have is a gift from God and all that we have come from him in the first place and if we share what we have then God's kingdom can continue to grow. Remember, we don't take anything out of this world with us.

The best thing we can do in this day and age of many voices trying to take our attention: is to get our thinking

straight, and to filter out all the negative things that are being aimed at the selfish parts of our minds and the core of our vanity. That's where the media and Satan are making their attacks. They want to get you to believe that you deserve to let your hair down and think solely about spoiling yourself and not on others; after all, you deserve it. Think of number one first and to blazes with the rest of them. Don't get me wrong there is nothing wrong in being spoilt, but if you exclude everyone and take everything out of your life, then it will become a sole existence.

Christians are meant for fellowship in all that we say and do. Things are always done better together, such as worship, praying, meeting, encouraging and sharing lives and meals with each other. After all, it is God's design that we are all going to spend eternity with each other, forever. We may as well get used to that idea in this life, rather than later. When we meet, communicate and fellowship, we find that we are not strangers to each

other but that we are family. When we get to heaven it is going to be full of people, and the best thing is that we won't be alone, but be with people who have the Lord in common with each other. He is our unifying factor.

Verse 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.' We know the story of David, which should give us all hope. The covenant that God made with David held firm because God made it. There was a time when David was far from God, living with the enemy, the Philistines. He was going to fight against his own people, but was sent back because the Philistines didn't trust him.

When he went back to ZiKlag [1 Sam 30] where he was dwelling; enemies [Amelakites] raided the place and took the women and children. So when David and his men came back and saw the ruination his men became poor in spirit, and wanted to stone David there and then. What a

situation he was in: he was on the run from King Saul who wanted to kill him, his wives and his men's families were kidnapped, his men were hating him wanting to stone him, and in his heart, he was far from God [didn't call upon his name]. Yet, God made a covenant with him to be king and eventually when all was said and done, it came to pass that it was so.

Even though David wandered far away from God, God forgave David of his sins when he repented; and we know some of the things that David done were absolutely horrific and terrible. But when God forgives his own they are forgiven; which means that when we ask for forgiveness and receive it; let us believe that we are truly forgiven and to live that reality. God knows who you are and that you are really worth it to him. Remember he sent his Son from heaven to show his love for us.

Most of all, God wants us to keep our thinking wholesome, straight and upon him at all times. As I've

stated, there are many voices out there. It is the wilderness and playground of those who want to lure you into believing that they have the solution to what is best for you; right now. They're telling you to forget about others and indulge yourself to saturation point in what they've got to sell you. After all you only live once and you should make the best of it while you can.

On the other hand: the final word is that God is inviting every one to come to him; freely and willingly; and his promise is; he will satisfy and keep you in this world and in the next. We can believe that voice with wholesome thinking. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.