

Isaiah 55:1-13
Where is contentment to be found?

There is a story told about a multi-millionaire entrepreneur on holiday by the sea and he comes across a fisherman, sleeping lazily by his boat.

“Why aren’t you out there fishing?” he said.

“Because I’ve caught enough fish for today”, the fisherman replies.

“So why don’t you catch more fish than you need?”

The fisherman thought for a minute. “What would I do with them?”

“You could sell them. Earn more money. Buy more nets. Catch more fish. Make more money. Buy more boats. Employ more people. Get really rich, like me.”

The fisherman thought for a minute. “What would I do then?”

“You could sit down, relax and enjoy life”, said the entrepreneur

The fisherman said, “What do you think I’m doing now?”

It’s difficult to find contentment.

We seem to always want what we haven’t got. We seem to be always striving for more: more money, more success, more things, more stuff. Why do we allow ourselves to be programmed in that way? Why do we fill our lives with attachments?

It’s the question the writer asks in verse 2 of our Isaiah reading: “Why spend money on what does not satisfy? Why spend your wages and still be hungry?”

And, of course, it’s a metaphorical hunger that is being spoken of here. No matter how much we achieve, no matter how much we possess, we seem hungry for more.

Craving feeds craving.

Too often, we are looking for contentment in the wrong places.

Our possessions, even our relationships, are only temporary.

We must cultivate a spirituality where we can enjoy our things and enjoy giving and receiving in our relationships without trying to possess them or hold tightly to them: without developing attachments that are unhealthy.

We are entering Holy Week today, and this is the ideal time for us, perhaps the most important time for us in the Christian calendar to focus on our own spirituality, and re-focus ourselves on what is important in life.

Certainly, as we hear the story of Palm Sunday, with Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, we get the impression that the crowds were focused on their spirituality; that they knew what was important and they understood how Jesus Christ was the answer to all their needs. We hear them crying out, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” It seems that the Palm Sunday crowd had it all sorted.

But we know how the story ends and we know how fickle they were in their faith and how, within a few short days, they had turned their back on God’s Messiah.

For a short moment, they thought that contentment could be found through Jesus Christ. But very soon, their previous attachments had caught hold of them again and they moved away from Christ back to their old way of living.

That is a temptation for all of us, isn’t it? To burn bright for God – but only for a short season. To engage with church ministry – but only for a short season. To feel passionate about church and faith – but eventually to grow cold and less engaged. The pull away from God is slow – but steady. And we must constantly be examining ourselves to ensure that it isn’t happening to us.

The truth is that it is only in God, only in a relationship with Jesus Christ, that we can find true and lasting contentment: a contentment that is eternal.

We must focus our lives in the one place where we will find true liberation and freedom and contentment. As God says through Isaiah in this passage, in verse 3: “Listen now, my people, and come to me; come to me, and you will have life.”

When we turn to God, and learn to live in his presence reliant on his provision – it is only there that we will find true contentment.

So what does God provide for us? How do we find contentment in him?