

Rooted 2021 Student Devotional:

When we look back upon the last year and a half – full of political divisions, racial unrest, health crises, online school, and so much more – perhaps the best summary is simply to quote the great Ricky Bobby: “That. Just. Happened.”

But now what? It may feel like so much has changed, but life hasn’t stopped to let us catch our breath. If you’re like me, you’re probably exhausted, anxious, and desperate for some good news.

In the midst of all the craziness, you may have found yourself praying something along the lines of, *God, what the heck do I do here?* Or maybe, *God, I’m just restless and bored and something has to be missing here.* Or even more simply, *God, I need Your strength, and I need it now.* Maybe you felt like God answered this prayer, or maybe you felt He didn’t. But here in Isaiah, God meets us with His Word:

*And the LORD will guide you continually  
and satisfy your desire  
in scorched places  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail* (Isaiah 58:11)

In the midst of God calling His people back to Himself, urging them to take responsibility for their actions and to care for those around them, He offers several remarkable promises. On its own, this is a beautiful verse, and one worth memorizing. But when we take a closer look, we see a few specific truths that will rock your world.

First, notice the enduring nature of these promises. God isn’t a one-time energy drink to give you a caffeine jolt; He *will* guide you *continually*. We *shall* be like a watered garden, and those waters will never fail. These promises are present, future, and ongoing. We need only to need Him, and He promises to meet us in our desperation.

Second, notice the present, physical reality of God’s promises. When we come before Him in prayer, He *will* answer us and guide us (Jer 29:13)! Moreover, He wants to satisfy us, strengthen us, and fulfill us, not just in heaven, but here on earth today.

It’s so easy to over-spiritualize God and forget that He wants to dwell in you (more on that later) and bless you here on earth. Even through the deserts and droughts of life – the broken friendships or missing the team or online school or parents who push you too hard – God promises to satisfy you, especially in your moments of greatest need. He’s not going anywhere, and He alone can satisfy.

Third, with the peaceful imagery of a watered garden and a spring of water, Isaiah makes a stunning prediction. Throughout the Old Testament, water symbolized the presence of the Holy

Spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27; Zech. 14:8). Later, Jesus declared, “if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37-38). John tells us that this “living water” is actually the Holy Spirit, who fills up and lives in followers of Jesus (John 4:10-14; 7:39). In other words, God Himself will dwell in you, quenching your deepest desires and satisfying your longing soul. How can anything else compare to that?

Finally, Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the renewed Christian life. When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we’re united with Christ. And when we live in union with Christ, God promises that we will live a transformed life. Yes, we will still walk through the scorched deserts, but we will not be alone. Because the Christian life is a guided life, a satisfied life, a strengthened life, and a sustained life. Like a fresh garden, the Christian life is fragrant and fruitful. And like a never-ending spring of living water, the Christian life is outward-focused and a blessing to others. In Jesus’ words, “Whoever believes in me... ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:38).

So as we get back to school, no matter what the past eighteen months have looked like, and no matter what emotions you’re feeling right now, hear God’s promises today. He will lead you, satisfy you, and strengthen you with His Spirit. You may not always feel like a spring of living water, but you are His, and He is for you. Nothing can ever change that.

**Commented [HA1]:** This paragraph is so beautiful wow. I love this.