

SERMON FOR AUGUST 2, 2020

ISAIAH 55: 1-5

THEME: FREE FOOD!

“Come, everyone who thirsts,
 come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
 come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
 without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
 and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
 and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
 hear, that your soul may live;
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
 my steadfast, sure love for David.
Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,
 a leader and commander for the peoples.
Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,
 and a nation that did 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.

In the name of Jesus:

Luann and I have been members of Costco for a few years now. If you are not familiar with Costco, Costco is a store which can be classified as a warehouse club. You join Costco to buy things in bulk, and in joining Costco

they pass on monetary saving to you as a member. One of the interesting aspects of shopping at Costco on the weekend is that the store places vendors at strategic locations on the food market side of the store, and these vendors will quietly and subtly offer to the passerby a sample or two of their product, all in an effort for you to buy the product. In other words, they give away free food. You can go to one vendor and try a chicken entree, another may offer some type of pasta, still another will offer a desert such as a piece of pie or a small slice of sheet cake. As a consumer, you can't satisfy your hunger by consuming what is offered, they only offer a sample, but that doesn't stop some in the store to visit a vendor two or three times in an effort to get more free food.

In our text for today, God, like a vendor, is offering free food, through His prophet Isaiah. That is why Isaiah writes: "'Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.'" Come, says Yahweh, come and receive free food, the provisions that you need to live! Come and get water, come and receive wine, milk, grain without any cost to you! Yahweh is the Good and Gracious Giver, He wants to give to His people what they need to support this body and life. Now if He is the Good Giver, and He send rain upon

the just and the unjust, why is He inviting and calling people to receive what they need from Him, seeing as He gives to everyone?

He calls people to come to Him because they have rejected Him. In Isaiah's time, the people of God didn't turn to God to receive His gifts, they instead turned their back on God and sought the blessings of idols. In worshipping idols, God's people relied on Baal and asked Baal to increase the fruitfulness of their crops. They would reject God and turn to a false god called Marduk who they believed provided them with wine, grain, and water. They forgot the First Commandment, where Yahweh said that they were to have no other gods besides Him, and that He, Yahweh, was a jealous God who would not give His honor and glory to a man made idol.

That was then, but this is now. No, you and I don't worship Marduk or Baal, but we do forget about the blessings of God that come to us without any cost to any of us. To come to God to receive His blessings at without cost to us means to rely on God's grace. What you and I need are things that will keep us alive now and forever. We need food for eternity. The things of this world, and no other god can provide what our God provides! Jesus says: "Man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3 and Mt. 4:4). Jesus goes on to say that you and I are not to work or

live for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life. In others, you can't serve God and material things. You will either love the one or hate the other. If you pursue the things of life at the expense of what God offers in Christ, you will not be satisfied in your life and you will continue to, in Isaiah's words: "toil and work for that which does not satisfy." And yet, isn't this what we have a habit of doing? Some attribute what they have to luck or good fortune. Some will work so hard to accumulate the stuff of this world that they forget about God. You remember the old saying, "you can't take it with you." Sadly, that is how many live their lives, working to store up for themselves the material things of the world that don't last forever.

That is why God offers to you Something that will last forever! He says: "all who are thirsty, come to the waters of life." God is giving away Free Food that will give you eternal life. And it is for all and it is without cost to anyone! This is unheard of! Who does this? Who would ever give away anything so precious for free? This is who Yahweh is and this is what He does. God the Father picks up the cost for that which is He giving away. He, in love, sent His only Son, Jesus, the One who is called by Isaiah the Suffering Servant. He was despised and rejected by men, He was a man of suffering, who was pierced for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Like a Lamb led to the

slaughter Jesus went to the cross and rose from the grave to pay the price to make you His own so that you would belong to Him all the days of your life.

Jesus reveals Himself to be the Bread of Life. The One who comes to Jesus will never hunger, and the one who believes in Jesus will never thirst. Yahweh provides for you and for everyone a Savior. You have tasted and you have seen that the Lord is good! You have been made His child in the waters of Baptism. You have heard God's love proclaimed to you, you have received Christ's forgiveness and eternal life in receiving His Supper. Now what are you to do? You are called to be His witnesses.

Like a vendor at Costco who will invite others to taste the goodness that they offer in their sample food offerings, you are now called to do what Isaiah does, and that is to point others to the love, forgiveness, and salvation that Jesus alone gives. We who will receive the Bread of Life, Jesus, in the Lord's Supper now are called to show others in our words and actions the love of Christ.

One thing I noticed as I have shopped at Costco during the weekend, when someone is walking around the store with a sample in their hand that looks particularly pleasing to the palate, other shoppers will go up to that person and ask the question, "Say, where did you get that?" And the customer

who has already visited and is enjoying the free gift from the vendor will answer: "Well, I got this over there. You can go and get it too!"

Luther put it this way, mission work or evangelism is simply one beggar telling another beggar where to get a loaf of bread. That is why you and I are here. This is our calling. This is our purpose, our mission in life. We who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, are to live our lives so that others will ask: "Say, where can I get the joy, the love, the hope that you have?" And then all we need do is point them to Jesus. Jesus, the Bread of Life, the One who has the Words of eternal life. Amen