

SERMON FOR AUGUST 6, 2023

TEXT: 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. **2** 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 are good, and delight yourselves in rich food. **3** 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. **4 Behold**, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. **5** 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:

What is your favorite meal? Turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes with gravy, and a slice of pie served on Thanksgiving? What is on the table for your favorite meal?

The prophet Isaiah speaks of salvation and the gifts of God in terms that we can understand, using the imagery of food. Isaiah says: “Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. **3** Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;” God has gifts for you that, in terms of food, is beyond our expectations and wildest dreams! God is the One who provides, He is the One who prepares, He is the One who sets the table, He is the One who serves you. God has done all that is necessary to make certain that you have a relationship with Him that lasts for eternity, in

that God in love sent His one and only Son to bear your sin and be your Savior. Jesus came to, in the words of Isaiah later on in his book, bear your sin, your griefs, and your sorrows on His cross so that by His death you might be forgiven. His forgiveness is shared with you in a special Meal called the Lord's Supper. Here in this Supper God dines with you to give you a peace that surpasses all understanding.

The word peace in the Bible has a rich meaning. Humanly speaking, we tend to think of peace as an absence of war. But in the Bible peace is so much more than that. It not only means a cessation of strife between two warring parties, but it also entails a satisfaction, a contentment, a wholeness that comes about when all is well and right in a person's life. God's peace comes is given to you in Jesus Christ, so that, as a result of believing in Jesus there is a sense of wholeness about you.

At Thanksgiving Americans like to decorate with a horn of plenty. It is a long basket, small and closed at one end, with a larger opening at the other end. Within this horn of plenty there are all sorts of food stuffed inside of it, so much so that it is overflowing. It is a symbol of being blessed in life, so much so that your blessings are overflowing.

That is the way it is with the believer in Jesus Christ. God has blessed you in life to the extent that His blessings are overflowing in your life. You

have forgiveness of sins, a clear conscience before God and your fellow human beings, you possess all of the good gifts of God that you need in your life so that you don't want for anything, for God is on your side, and He has given you His peace which affects how you look at life, how you treat people, and the way that you live your life. It is much like the satisfaction or feeling you may have after eating a great meal with family and friends, you know that God blesses you and you rejoice not only in the food that you eat but also in the relationships you have around the table.

Sadly, life isn't always like this. As a sinful creature you aren't usually satisfied with what you have in life. You don't look at the blessings that God has given, you instead look at what others have that you don't possess, and this produces jealousy and you become discontent and unhappy with what you have, and it plays out in how you live your life.

Just look at our first parents, Adam and Eve. Blessed by God with everything that they could possibly imagine, they were not content with being creatures of God. Satan planted seeds of discontentment, telling them that they could be so much more than creatures of God, if they would only take matters into their own hands and eat the forbidden fruit, their eyes would be open and they would become like God.

It was an illusion to think that they could become God like, and once

they ate Adam, Eve, and their ancestors became disillusioned. Then, and now, life has become one of broken hopes and shattered dreams. Adam and Eve began to live their lives apart from God, sin and death entered their world and the words if only began to define their lives.

If only are two words filled with so much hope and much emptiness. Satan today tempts you into thinking and believing that your life would be oh, so much better, if only.... If only you had more money, if only you had more stuff, if only that which you pinned your hopes on for a better job or a more lucrative career would have worked out, if only you had more, or something better, life itself would be better. But it isn't. But that doesn't stop you from believing things could be better if God would bless you. And so you think that if you only lived a better life God would bless you. Surely there is something you can do to achieve the peace that you want. But try as you might, there is still an emptiness, a void in your life, something telling you that something is missing. So you try harder, work harder, but still feel unsatisfied and unfulfilled. You seek the blessings of earth, but these blessings still leave you craving for more.

God has a better way. He tells you to turn away from these thoughts, to repent from thinking that there is something that you can do to achieve contentment, peace, and satisfaction. The reality is you can't. It is a gift of God

in Jesus Christ. This is why God says in our text, “Come, “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” God has already made the arrangements, He has already paid the price. Jesus, the very Bread of Life, gave of Himself in His life, death, and resurrection so that all who believe in Him will live and have the blessings of God in abundance. God gives to you what you need in Jesus Christ: full and free forgiveness, joy, wholeness, contentment, and a certainty that God is on your side, He is your Savior and He will never let the righteous fail. God loves you and provides for your every need in Jesus Christ. If you have Christ in your life, you have everything!

This invitation is for you and is for all! No one is excluded. At important dinners for heads of state, only the important, or self-important people can attend. Most everyone is excluded. If the President were to hold an important dinner, not one of us would be invited; no one here would be able to go. But not so with God. He isn't impressed by political power or party affiliation. Money, fame, power and prestige does not sway God's opinion of you nor does it influence whom He invites to His banqueting table. Jesus' invitation for eternal life and salvation is for all: ““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.” God's love and salvation doesn't

depend on you, your ability, your influence, and your potential. All are invited, no one is excluded. Status, power, fame and fortune don't count when you are feasting with Jesus. You come invited, without cost. Salvation is free. Jesus paid the price; all you need to do is receive what God has prepared.

But, sadly, not all of the places at God's table are filled. People remain absent from Church. Some don't see God as a priority. Others don't know about God's offer of free forgiveness and His promises of eternal life. Yet God doesn't want you or me to wring our hands and lament and complain. No, there is another way, a better way. God wants us to go and invite those who are not here to come here to receive God's gifts. God wills that all be saved.

Jesus tells a wonderful parable to that end. He says in Matthew 22: "And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, **2** "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, **3** and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. **4** Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'" But many ignored the invitation, but that didn't deter God's will, for the parable continues: **8** Then he said to his servants, 'the wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. **9** Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the

wedding feast as many as you find.' **10** And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests."

God wants all to feast with Him and celebrate His gifts. Those who trust in Christ receive His gifts in abundance. And so God, who has invited you, now wants to use you to extend an invitation to another who is not here. God has given you life in Christ that you might share the life of Christ with another. So invite a friend to church, share God's love with those who need to have love in their lives. God offers all to feast on His love and live in His peace. Who will you invite?

Amen.