

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us this evening is found in the book of the prophet Isaiah the fifty-fifth chapter beginning at the first verse:

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David. ⁴ Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. ⁵

Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you."

Heavenly Father, sanctify us by the truth. Your word is truth. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

In the book of Second Kings we have an example of the abundance of God's grace and mercy towards His people. In Second Kings chapter four a town is getting ready to eat some stew and unbeknownst to those in attendance and to the man preparing it, he had gathered some poisonous wild gourds. Thus when they try the stew, the people cry out to the Prophet Elisha, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" So Elisha took some flour, sprinkled it in the stew, and made it okay to eat. Just after that a man

comes and brings twenty (20) loaves of bread to those eating. Elisha commands his servant to hand out the bread at which time the servant replies, “What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?” doubting the prophet and ultimately doubting God; however, Elisha corrects the man and tells him, “Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the Lord: ‘They shall eat and have some left over.’”

What began as a story of death and destruction ended up with many great miracles of God being performed. Not only had He made the stew edible and not poisonous, but now He had made sure that all those would receive bread. Sort of reminds you of the feeding of the 4,000 or the 5,000, doesn’t it?

And it is just like our text for today. God is inviting everyone to come to His meal that He is preparing. He wants everyone in

attendance and He is offering them food and drink, yet we know that many will not attend this meal.

And still, more than 2000 years later, well after Isaiah is dead and in heaven, this message of God is being called out to all people. God is still pleading with all people to come to His meal and be filled. Dear friends, I pray that we would heed God’s word and thus ***God will fill our souls with delight in His abundance.***

God begins this message through Isaiah with a very apt picture to draw people in. God is inviting all people who thirst to come to the water. Now, while I have not been to Israel, after reading the Bible and talking with people who have been, you will not last too long without water in a place like that. While there is vegetation and trees and such, often times water is not the most abundant.

Consider all of the patriarchs who had to constantly dig wells for their animals. Think of all the times in the Old Testament that we are told of droughts and famines in the land. Remember that one time God withheld the rain for three and a half years from the land of Israel... Thus, those living in the land of Israel would indeed pick up on the message and understand to whom God is calling... everyone.

The same could be said of the woman at the well that Jesus spoke to. Jesus was asking this woman for water and He told her that had she asked Him for water, He would have given water to her and she would have never thirsted again.

So if you have ever been thirsty, if you've ever been parched, if you've ever had a tickle in your throat... then this message is for you. Those who are thirsty, should come to this meal... and maybe those who are

thirsty for a different reason need to listen also.

As the Prophet Amos tells us (8:11),
“Behold the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.’ Maybe this is the famine, the drought, the lack of water... the thirst that we should be truly paying attention to. Maybe it is not about the water that quenches a thirst, but about the lack of the Word of God in our lives.

In fact, God does ask us, through Isaiah, why we are spending money on things that are not bread and why are we toiling for things that do not satisfy? And why do we do this? It is because the word of God inside of us is not sustaining us. Instead of trusting in the word of God and all that it provides we turn to money, or friends, or family, or houses, or

land... you name it and we spend money and we toil on things that are not God's Word.

Instead of honoring and loving God and His word, we abandon Him. We put so many other things in His place on the throne of our heart. Instead of God's word, maybe sitting on your throne is pleasure, maybe it is honor of men, maybe it is 'peace of the world,' and maybe it is yourself. None of these satisfy, none of these things can give us what we ultimately need... but we sure do try to fill that hole within us with them, don't we. And so we are parched, we are thirsty for the word of God... but so often we don't want to make the effort to hear it or read it or even to know it.

This is the kind of life that is before us, when we live for and by ourselves. And yet, God still calls out to us, that we would hear His voice. That we would come to Him and eat what is good and fill our souls with what

we need, and that is Jesus Christ. He is the one thing that we need. This is, quite literally, the 'bread' that we all need, the one "Bread of Life," Jesus Christ. And this is bread that cannot be purchased with silver, nor can it be obtained in any other way than as a free gift. Given by God. Given without cost. Given to all who need it. And Jesus, the true eternal and heavenly water, that quenches all drought and dryness in our souls. God gives this to us, freely. And He constantly calls us to this one, Jesus Christ.

For God tells us, ***"Incline your ear to me, and come to Me. Hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you - the sure mercies of David."*** As Luther notes, ***"Come, as if to say, 'You are always looking, listening, and going elsewhere. But I say to you, unless you incline and come in this direction, you will die of starvation.'"***

Yes, God promises us many times in His word that He will take care of all of our earthly needs... but so many more times, He tells us that only He can take care of our heavenly needs also. When we incline our ear, when we listen to Him, when we come to Him... then He will make a covenant with us.

In fact, God's part of that covenant is already fulfilled. God sent His Son Jesus Christ into this world to live a perfect life, perfectly fulfilling the old covenant, perfectly fulfilling the law of God. Jesus Christ also died for us, because we do not fulfill the old covenant, we have failed many times at keeping just one article of the law. However, Jesus did not remain dead. Three days after His death, Jesus Christ rose from the dead to proclaim that His life and His death were sufficient payment for all sin of all time. And now, through faith in all that Jesus has done, we know that heaven is ours. We know that

the banquet that God is calling us to in this text is ours and we know that His covenant is in effect over us.

As Pieper says, ***“The covenant of David, as it applies to the gentiles, is called an eternal covenant as distinguished from the temporary covenant made with Israel on Sinai, a covenant that has its end in Christ. This is the first and last, there will be no third.”*** God's covenant, His new covenant was enacted when Christ took bread, broke it and gave it to His disciples telling them to “eat.” God's covenant, His new covenant, was enacted when Christ took wine, gave thanks, and gave it to them and told them to “drink.” For by this eating and drinking we are receiving the very body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all of our sins... in this meal which Jesus calls His ‘new testament,’ His new covenant.

And so much of that new covenant is spoken about in this meal. God tells us to come and drink wine and eat bread. He tells us that when our ear is inclined to Him, when we come to Him we will live. And it is through this meal, through this believing that God will “glorify you.”

Dear friends in Christ, another meal that God is inviting us to that foreshadows that great meal that Christ has instituted. This meal is given out freely, as Isaiah says, ***‘without money and without price.’*** God’s wants all of His faithful children to know that when we come to Him, He will provide all that we need on this side of heaven and He will provide the only way that will assure us of our future heavenly home.

Thanks be to God that He has continued to call me, even though there is often a drought of His word in my life. Thanks be to God that He has prepared this feast that He gives

out freely to all who hear His voice. And thanks be to God that He has filled our souls with delight in His abundance.

Thanks be to God. Amen.