

## The Great Invitation Come! Drink! Eat! Live!

**Texts: Isaiah 55:1-9**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (Series c. 3<sup>rd</sup> of Lent) Ps. 63:1-8**

**Gospel of Luke 13:1-9**

### Prayer:

Since the beginning Covid-19 pandemic, we haven't had our usual Bible study. So, this morning we will attempt to delve into the Hebrew Scripture for the fun of it and do some exposition of this passage of Scripture. I believe the Lord is going to use Isaiah 55 to satisfy our spiritual quest.

Those of you at home please take your Bible and read Isaiah 54 and 55 as I begin by saying God is a Very Inviting God: And what I want us to see in this message based on *Isaiah 55:1-3* is that God is a very inviting God. The word "*inviting*" has two meanings, doesn't it? You can say, "*This spot, or this church is inviting.*" And you mean that it is pleasant and attractive and that you feel drawn to come here.

Or, you can say, "George is inviting us to come to his house on Friday." Which means something special is happening, and he wants you and me to come. The great and wonderful thing about God is that God is inviting in both these ways. No text in the Bible shows this more vividly than *Isaiah 55:1-3*.

### The Work of Redemption Foreseen in Isaiah

Let me put it in context for you. Back in chapter 53, Isaiah described in amazing detail 700 years ahead of time how Christ would come and suffer and bear the sins of God's people and die in our place and rise again.

In Isaiah 53:4-6: Surely, *he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

The picture here is pretty clear There is the great substitution: Christ in our place, taking our sins on himself. So, in chapter 53, we can say that the prophet Isaiah sees the work of redemption as accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ 700 years in the future.

### **Great Blessings as a Result of Redemption**

Then in chapter 54, Isaiah foresees some of the great blessings that will come to God's people because the Messiah has overcome the problem of guilt and sin (described in chapter 53). Let me just show you one of these that will lead us to our Great Invitation in Isaiah 55.

On Wednesday, May 31, 1792, William Carey, about to become the father of modern missions, preached a sermon to his fellow Baptist pastors from **Isaiah 54:2–3**. He argued that this text is a great missionary text and that the point of it is that God wills for his people to expand until all the peoples of the world are included.

*“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.”*

In other words, one of the great blessings that would come to the people of God because of Christ's *death* and *resurrection* is that all the nations would be touched. Christ's redemption is not just for Jews. It's not just for us. It is for all the nations.

And this leads us then to ***The Great Invitation*** in Isaiah 55. If redemption is accomplished, and God's will is that the blessings of this redemption spread to all the nations, then it does not surprise me that God comes forward with a *Great Invitation* not just for a few, and not just for those who can pay their way, but for everyone.

Three Questions posed in Isaiah 55:1–3

- Who are invited?
- What are they offered?
- What are they told to do in order to get it?

**Who Are Invited?** The answer is, there are *two kinds* of people. The first kind is described in verse 1, “*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.*”

*The Thirsty and Broke:* The first kind of person that God invites to come to him is thirsty people who can't pay for what they need. Two things: thirsty, and can't pay. So, let me say a word to those of you in this category.

You have come this morning with thirst in your heart. Your heart feels like the brown grass in your backyard in the middle of summer. It hasn't rained for a long time. A lot of old hopes have dried up.

Dreams have waited and almost died. Dead-end streets again and again. Empty. Unfulfilled. Dissatisfied. Knowing there has to be something more to life. But now everything that looks good is out of reach. No money. No strength. No motivation.

But at least a longing in your heart. A *thirst*. And the Lord says, You're just the candidate I am after: *Come, everyone who thirsts and has no money — no resources, no bargaining position, no track record, no power, no prestige, no pull, no friends in higher places.* God is inviting you and me this morning to enjoy the banquet of salvation.

*The Self-Sufficient:* But there is a second kind of person whom God invites. And I'm glad because I think that the rest of us who don't feel like we are in that category will fit into this one, if you are honest. This kind of person is described in verse 2.

*“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?”*

In verse 1, God said, "*He who has no money, come!*" In verse 2, he talks to someone who has *money*, who has the *strength* to labor. The first kind of person is spiritually bankrupt and knows it. They are thirsty and broke.

But the second kind of person isn't there yet. He's got money and he is spending it as if there is no tomorrow.

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He's got strength and he is laboring. But what's the result? Frustration. He's not like the other guy — burnt out, at the end of his rope. He is still spending and *still working, dreaming, chasing, searching, experimenting — different job, different city, different car, different house, different wife, new computer, new boat, new books, new bike, new grill, new season tickets, new diet, new looks* — there's still a lot of looking around left in this person.

But still no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. No fountain of youth. And every triumph fades. The applause fades. The boat is boring. The style passes. Everything new gets old, and the options get fewer and fewer.

If you are honest, you and I know there is an emptiness and longing on the inside, no matter how *self-sufficient* we look on the outside. And God knows even better than you and I. He has you and me in mind when he says, *Why do you spend your money for bread which is no-bread, and labor for dreams that do not satisfy?*

So, two kinds of people are invited by the Lord: *the thirsty who are broke and cannot pay*, and *the thirsty who think they can pay and work their way to satisfaction*. I think everybody in this sanctuary would have to admit to being in one of those two groups, if we were honest with ourselves.

*The Benefits of what is being offered:*

In verse 1, we are offered water, wine, and milk. "*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.*"

Don't these three beverages correspond to deep needs that every one of us has? Water corresponds to the need for refreshment. When you are most thirsty and most desperate, most dehydrated, it's water that you want, and nothing else. "*He*

*leads me beside still waters. He restores [refreshes] my soul” (Psalm 23:2–3).* God invites you and I this morning to receive refreshment, restoration, reviving, a new beginning.



Milk corresponds to the need for ongoing nourishment. When someone is gasping for life, you give them water. But when you want a little baby to grow day after day, you give him /her milk again and again. God invites us not only to come alive with water, but also to be stable and strong with milk.

Wine corresponds to the need for happiness, joy. But that is not all we need in life. No matter how indifferent, unemotional, composed, laid-back, we may seem to others, there is a child inside of every one of us that God made for excitement — for shouting and singing and dancing and playing and jumping and laughing.

So, God is willing to revive us from the heat of Death Valley with the miracle of his water; and make us strong and healthy and stable with the miracle of his milk; and then give us endless and ever-fresh happiness with the miracle of his wine.

The water is good and it's plentiful. The milk is good and it's plentiful. The wine is good and it's plentiful. He gives what is best and it never runs out. Jesus said, *“Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14).*

This means that, when we come to God, God binds himself by an unbreakable oath to pursue us with goodness and mercy all our days right into eternity — with ever-refreshing water, and ever-strengthening milk, and ever-enjoyable wine, forever and ever! Which brings us to a final practical question.

### ***What Are We Told to Do to Get These Benefits?***

There are **12 imperatives** in these verses — the most pleasant, most inviting 12 commandments you will ever hear. I'll point them out as we read it together.

*“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters [#1]; and he who has no money, come [#2], buy [#3] and eat [#4]! Come [#5], buy wine and milk [#6] 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 [#7], and eat what is good [#8], and delight yourselves in rich food [#9].*

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*Incline your ear [#10], and come to me [#11]; hear [#12], that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.”*

So, I urge you, my sisters and brothers in Christ as we close, take heed how we hear. Are you leaning into God’s word? God pleads: don’t let the advertisements for the world drown out this *invitation* to heaven! Then all the rest of God’s bidding fall into four steps: *Come, Buy, Eat, Enjoy*. And this is what the Bible means by faith. Amen.

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**Prayer concerns:** *Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Shirley Walker, Hanne Bourgeoise, Sven Berg, Astrid Hylland, Ellen Eriksen, Euclide & Ellen Dahal-Lanteigne, Karen Abazio, Pastor Timothy, the dire tension between Russia and Ukraine, Protectors at various places in Canada, Covid -19 patients, essential and Frontline workers, Note: of thanks to God as the Covid-19 virus is easing off and more restrictions are being lifted, and finally Families of departed souls in recent weeks and months.*

**Prayer:** O Jesus, our Christ, blessed are You who comes to gather us as Your own brood, not as enemies of Your Cross, but with willing, faithful, and trusting acceptance in our citizenship of heaven, this day and always. We ask through the Holy Spirit, our Advocate; and our Creator, Most High; who together with You are One God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

**Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:**

- **Oh, Love, How Deep# 322**
- **I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say # 332**
- **O Living Bread from Heaven #542**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*n/a*

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

*n/a*

March 20, 2022