

7/27/11

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 55:1-7

(God provides food for body and soul, and is free to pardon.)

1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. **2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.**

3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. 4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. 5 Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor."

6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. **7 Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 14:13-21

(Jesus provides food for multitudes hungry in body and spirit.)

13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. **14** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." **16** Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." **17** "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. **18** "Bring them here to me," he said. **19** And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. **20** They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. **21** The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

THE SERMON

God Provides and Pardons

Isaiah 55:1-7

INTRO - Can you remember something you told your children over and over, or something you were told as a child over and over and over? As a dad I can remember things I told my kids. But as a child I had to be told over and over not to fight. I used to enjoy fighting. I was raised as one of the first generation to watch TV. The cowboys fought. I was told to stop, but I got in trouble more than once for fighting with the neighborhood kids, for fighting with in the school play yard, even for being in a fight in the classroom in first grade. It was not a good or healthy thing to do, but I did it, and so the adults around me kept telling me how to live in a better way. When someone says something over and over, it is important to them.

I. So, take out your bibles with me and turn to tonight's Old Testament Lesson, Isaiah 55:1-7.

A.. Please note with me how many verbs God uses to command or call His people to a healthy life of faith, to a relationship with Him!!

1. In verse 1 God calls the people to "Come" **4 times!**

2. In verse 2 they are called to 'eat what is good,' and to 'listen.'

3. In verse 3 the people of Israel are called to "give ear", to "come", to "Hear"

4. In verse 6 they are called to "Seek" the Lord, to "call" on him. The wicked and evil are called to "forsake" their ways and "turn" to the Lord.

B. The way I count it, that is **12 times** in 7 verses that God calls the Israelites to come to Him, to seek Him, to listen to Him, to live in a relationship of love and worship, of obedience and faithfulness with Him. IT MUST BE IMPORTANT.

II. There is a reason that God needs to say this, and we can understand it in this way. If you had a chance to eat some cotton candy, which I saw at the baseball game Monday, or a nice crisp radish, which do you desire more? If you had a chance to eat a funnel cake, or a nice piece of salmon, which desire is stronger? If you had a chance to eat some cooked spinach or some lemon meringue pie, which is your favorite? You see, there is something in us that wants the things of this world that are not healthy, more than we want or desire what is healthy.

A. So, after God has called the people of Israel to come to the waters, to come and buy wine and milk, he asks the question, **2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.**

1. Not only do we like the food and drink that may not be healthy, often better than what is healthy, but we also seek joy, and peace, and satisfaction in places other than from God.

2. The problem with chasing after things in life other than God is that God is the source of life, the source of love, the source of meaning. Why Go to something that can't satisfy?

B. Other famous Christians have pointed out our NEED for God.

1. C. S Lewis said *If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is . . . I was made for another world.*"

2. Blaise Pascal is misquoted, but said something like, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be

filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ.” (Blaise Pascal)

C. If you want satisfaction, as God says in this Isaiah verse, if you want peace, and joy, and life, there is ONLY ONE PLACE TO GO. That is God! But too often, in rebellion, in sin we look somewhere else. Why go after something that **“does not satisfy?”**

III. As a dad I have learned after many years that when I *tell* my kids what to do, even if it gets done it is done with some delay, or some resentment. “Pick up your room” has been said to more than one Rocky child, with not always the best results. But, if I ask, gently, and help the child see why the task is a good idea so they might actually want to do the job themselves, the job is often done willingly. Sometimes I don’t even need to ask again for the next occasion. Please look at the love of *God* in this verse.

A. First of all, God doesn’t tell us to eat and drink in a healthy way by saying, *“so plow the field, plant your garden, weed the garden, pick your vegetables and eat what you worked for.”*

1. God doesn’t demand that we grow the food, but He is offering the food and drink that satisfies, and free of charge.
2. Yes we are to come to God, but He is offering us His love and blessings first.
3. Please see the love with which God is asking.

B. And, while someone might think God is giving orders to us in these verses, these are really pleas from a loving Father to do what is best for us.

1. He pleads with us, rather than orders, “Come to me.”
2. He pleads with us rather than orders to “eat what is good” and “Listen” to him.
3. He pleads with us to “Seek” him, to “forsake” wicked ways that are unhealthy, to “turn” to Him.
4. Do you see the love of God as He calls us to Himself, and His love.

C. Finally, Isaiah actually points us to God’s love in Jesus as the way that God provides what we really need, and what is really healthy.

1. In verses 3 and 4 God says through Isaiah, **3 Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. 4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.**
2. The SON OF DAVID, is Jesus.
3. It is through Jesus that God makes an everlasting covenant, that He gives His faithful love.
4. It is through Jesus that God “pardons” as verse 7 says.
5. It is through Jesus that God gives love and meaning to life that really “satisfies” as verse 1 says.

CONCLUSION - Do you make a “to do list” for each day? I do on work days. What is the purpose of such a list? Well, there are jobs and tasks to be done so that life goes well. So where on your list does it say, “come to God?” Where does it say, “Listen to God?” Where does it say, “Turn to God?” Why eat something that **does not satisfy?** After all, when we seek Him and turn to Him, as God says in verse 7, **he will have mercy. . . he will freely pardon.**