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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
August 16, 2020
11th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Romans 8:35-39, Matthew 14:13-21

Hymns: 742; 377:1,3,6; 307; 377:10

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

Sermon Text: Isaiah 55:1-5

“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.

²Why 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.

³Incline 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.

⁴Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to the people,

A leader and commander for the people.

⁵Surely 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.” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Fair booths

It's been a strange year. So many things have been cancelled. When they aren't cancelled it's still strange. No county or state fair this year. So there are a couple of the food wagons set up for this week on the old Younker's parking lot. That's not the same. It was fun to make one's way down between all the different food concessions at the fair, wondering which one or two to stop at for fair food this year. That was big part of going to the fair, a wagon or two set up in a parking lot just isn't the same. Most certainly it's not the same for the vendors either.

And then there's major league baseball. Well the teams are finally meeting and playing ball, but we can't go. You know I always maintained that if I didn't get at least one hotdog and a beer, well it just wasn't a ball game! And what about those vendors? They worked hard walking up and down those stairs hawking their fare, "Get your red hots here," or cotton candy, or peanuts! "Get your peanuts!" It's all part of the atmosphere of being at the ball game.

Well, that is about as close as we come in our society to being at a bazaar, or open market where all the sellers of goods and produce vie for the people's attention trying their hardest to sell what they've got just for you! That's the picture in our text. It's an old fashioned open market, but this one is a spiritual market, and there are lots of voices hawking their wares, their spiritual philosophy, their promise of peace, their hopes and dreams of attaining the glories of heaven, or nirvana, or that better place in the sky. Most people in the world are just agog with all that noise, thinking it must all be just a matter of choice or chance which prophet I shall hear, and we will probably all end up in the same place with the same end anyway!

We dare not be deceived! We must escape this confusion! How can we? The choice made is of the ultimate importance, for out of all these voices only one Vendor offers the truth that saves.

So the Lord calls out in our text presenting --

**THEME: Divine Guidance through this World's
Spiritual Marketplace.**

With all the distractions of this world hawking their wares of darkness, one voice stands out from the rest:

I. The Compelling Voice of the Lord.

Isaiah 55:1-2 “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.
²Why 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.

Let's start with that very first word, “Ho!” It's a simple interjection, but it is shouted out to get our attention. Whose attention exactly? The sinner's attention. The attention of the sin parched soul. The Lord is calling out to get your attention and mine!

HO! He grabs our attention because what the Lord has for us is so much better than all that spiritual junk food that our sinful flesh craves. Why, if you are truly thirsty, if you are truly malnourished, would you spend your money, your spiritual resources, on that which is nothing more than spiritual Tom Thumb Donuts, or that snow cone that is nothing more than a sugary syrup poured over some ice. Oh yes, our sinful flesh loves the ideas of this world regarding self-righteousness, or the idols of money and pleasure, that these idols will relieve me of my spiritual thirst and strengthen and renew my soul. The Lord declares that those who go to these vendors of spiritual food will fail to receive any life giving nourishment or refreshing.

The alternative is so much better. Hear the Lord's gracious invitation: “*Listen carefully to Me, He says and eat what is good,*

and let your soul delight in abundance!” (v.2) Listen. Listen carefully to the Lord. Listen diligently to the Word of the Lord. In the Word of the Lord our soul receives the nourishment, the refreshing that it needs. And it comes at no cost that is no cost to us! Only in hearing the Word will we find the grace of a loving God. Only in the Word of the Lord will we find our strength renewed day after day, week after week. Day in and day out we are submerged in the false ideas and philosophy of this world. Schools are opening soon. Some very soon. Day after day week in and week out the public school philosophy is the vain philosophy of this world. Our children are taught to learn to appreciate all that man has done and continues to do to make this world a better place. The idea that this is God’s creation and all good gifts come to us from the abundance of God’s grace and blessing, that’s not the world’s message. In the world we are not only taught to be nice to one another, which we certainly ought to do, but we are instilled with the mindset that this enhances our value and is the source of our self-esteem. The world can’t know that our true value comes to us by the sacrifice Jesus made for us upon the cross, that we were bought at price and that we are to glorify God in all that we do and say.

Every day, every single last day of our lives we are walking through this bazaar of spiritual ideas and the philosophies of this world and it is not easy for anyone to block out the thoughts and ideas and values of this world. So every day, and certainly every, EVERY Sunday we need to **listen** to the voice of the Lord that comes to us in His inspired Word. He calls out to you, “HO! You who thirst come and drink of the waters of life!” Eat the Bread of life which is Christ the Lord. It is ours, freely given to us by the Lord. Jesus and only Jesus paid the price of our salvation.

In the Word, and only in the Word we find the Lord --

II. Offering an Everlasting Covenant.

Isaiah 55:3-4 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.

⁴Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to the people,

A leader and commander for the people

What does the Lord offer in all His words? Many dismiss God's Word as being fantasy. It sounds nice and calms some people down, but it is all "pie in the sky" and has little or nothing to do with reality! The here and now! That's what we need to address! Is the Word of God empty? Or is it this world that is vanity? Isn't it the world that is passing away? Does the world have any answer to the problem of sin and death? Does the world have any hope for those who are oppressed, or those who are terminally ill? It is the world that offers empty platitudes, and baseless hopes of a better place, or Mom and Dad looking down on me from above and guiding or even assisting me in my distress. ALL vain superstitions.

The Lord says, "Incline your ear, come to Me!" (v.3) Hear what He has to say and your soul shall live! The Lord does have the answer to sin and death. The Lord in His grace presents something for us that is **not** passing away. The deal, the contract that the Lord presents to us all in His Word is an **everlasting covenant**, a most solemn deal that has its foundation, its basis in the sure mercies of David. Now, before you tune out saying, "What? Sure mercies of David? He lived like what almost three thousand years ago! What's that got to do with me?" The answer is, "Everything!" God promised David that his Descendent would rule over an everlasting kingdom. David understood that the Lord was talking about the spiritual kingdom of God's Son. David understood that this was all about the Promised Savior coming into the world. David was deeply moved by the grace of God that was revealed to him, that it would be from David's lineage that the Christ would be born. So it is that the gospels carefully draw that line from David to Joseph, the legal lineage of Jesus, AND from David to Mary, the biological lineage of Jesus. This is timeless truth. It finds **certainty** in its age.

The heart of that truth is found in the cross of Christ. Jesus was born into the world to be our Savior, just as it was announced to the shepherds in the hills of Bethlehem; "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!" (Luke 2:11) When we hear those words we are hearing about the sure mercies of David; "*What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness*

of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.” (Romans 8:3). Jesus died for us and rose again that we might have life in His name. This is the covenant that comes to us in the gospel. This is the grace the Lord calls the sure mercies of David.

Again today as we celebrate the Lord’s Supper we receive in a very special way the grace of this everlasting covenant. Recall the words of Jesus, “Take eat, this is My body. Take drink, this is My blood, the blood of the new covenant, shed for you, for the remission of your sins!” This grace brings life. This is very real indeed!

The benefit is also ours, people who live so many centuries after the Lord swore to David, after the Lord inspired Isaiah with the words of our text, after Jesus came and offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin. The Lord’s intent for you was --

III. Inclusion in the Universal Call to Eternal Life.

The Lord wraps up His pitch with a message of universal grace.

Isaiah 55:5 “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.”

The Lord’s intent was to call out from the world a people that were to be His own. Some think they understand that it was the Lord’s original intent that this was to be limited to the physical descendants of Abraham. That isn’t what the Lord promised Abraham, to whom He said, “In you in in your Seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 26:4) The Lord doesn’t speak that way in our text. He speaks of the scope of His gracious call of salvation reaching out to all the world. The Lord draws sinners of every nation to Himself through the gospel. The precocious blood of Christ was and is so precious, of such infinite worth, that it remains more than sufficient to cover our sins, and to bring us righteousness and life. Just a few chapters before our text the Lord declared through Isaiah: “*Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a*

light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” (Isaiah 49:6)

The nations run to Jesus because the Lord has adorned Jesus with the grace of God’s love and forgiveness. Through faith in Jesus we possess the hope of resurrection to eternal life. Even now we “*are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,* ²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”* (Ephesians 2:18-19)

So, as we make our way through the spiritual marketplace of this world, pay attention to the one voice that calls out with a true message of hope and life. Listen to the voice of the Lord. Seek His guidance and drink of the waters of life. He brings us real spiritual food that invigorates and sustains our souls through this life, and actually brings us the hope of eternal life. He is the real deal!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)