

Text: **Isaiah 55:1 - 5 (NIV)**

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.”

Theme: Come, Listen, and Behold

Today’s world is full of people who are trying to grab our attention so that we will buy their products. When you drive down the street, you see all kinds of billboards and signs. When you go to the ball game, there is advertizing everyplace, even behind home plate. It is common today for businesses to buy the naming rights of public buildings, arenas, and stadiums.

It’s interesting how advertisers try to capture our attention. Who would have ever thought of an ad campaign to sell beer in which the beer truck driver pulls beer from locations. All sorts of techniques are used to capture our attention. Our text begins with a little more old fashioned way of calling our attention. It begins with a shout! A more literal translation of verse 1 is “*Hey! All of you who are thirsty! Come to the waters!*” In our text, the promised Savior, wants to grab our attention that we come, listen, and behold.

I. He is calling the hungry and thirsty to come to Him.

Verse 1 says, “*Hey, all of you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat.*” This is not ordinary food and drink that we are hungering and thirsting for. Our Lord is calling those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. These are people who have spent a lot of time, effort and money on things that didn’t satisfy. Verse 3 says, “*Why spend money on what is not bread and your labor and what does not satisfy?*” Many times we do just that today. We get caught up in thinking that if we have the cars, games, and other products which are advertized, then we will be satisfied. We work long and hard to accumulate things. It is tempting to live by the rule that the one with the most things when he dies, wins. Life for many people revolves around their possessions, money, and investments. But those things will only leave us hungry and thirsty for more. You can design a house exactly the way that you want it, and by the time that you move in, you’ll find things that you wish that you did differently. You can buy the car of your dreams and within a couple of years, there will be something else that you want. You can buy a computer with all the newest options and within a month, it will be outdated. No matter how much money and investments you have, it will always seem like too little for the things that you would like to have. The fact is that our money and possessions will never satisfy us. Then there are the sinful pleasures. Much of today’s advertizing is meant to appeal to the base, sinful pleasures of our sinful nature. The violence, language, and the sex in many movies and television are appalling. The lyrics in much of our music is enough to make a sailor blush. Cheating at school and in business is common. Relations between men and women outside of marriage is also common. Worst of all are the addictions that

people are falling into. So many people look to drugs, alcohol or gambling with the gifts that God has given us for satisfaction. For a very short time some of the sinful pleasure do give satisfaction, but they all end up destroying us. They leave us hungry and thirsty. When we are looking to our earthly goods or the sinful pleasures for satisfaction and joy, verse 2 applies well to us, *“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* Then we have put forth our effort and spent our money on things that will either leave us hungry for more or will consume everything that we have. When we come to realize that we have been trying to find satisfaction in the wrong places, when our sins and addictions have devastated our lives, when our desire for more money and possessions has left a void in our lives, we hear this gracious invitation from our Lord. He says, *“Hey! Come here! Everything is free!”* This is similar to what Jesus says in Matthew 11:28, *“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”* When the pleasures of this world have left us hungry and thirsty for righteousness, the Lord invites us to come. He will give us the true pleasures, absolutely free.

II. Then He wants us to listen.

Did you ever find yourself saying, *“If only I had listened to so and so, I wouldn’t have gotten myself into this mess.”* Or maybe you found yourself on the other side of the coin where you wanted to help someone, but they just wouldn’t listen, so they kept getting themselves further into trouble. When you are going down the wrong paths, the Lord calls you, and He asks you to listen. Verses 2 and 3 say, *“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear to Me; hear Me that your soul may live.”* Today’s Gospel lesson is the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Everyone ate and was satisfied from five small loaves of bread and 2 fish. The people loved the miracle, but they didn’t listen to Jesus when He began to teach them that He is the Bread of Life. In John 6 by the end of the discourse, everyone except the 12 disciples, deserted Him. Jesus turned to them and asked, *“You do not want to leave me too, do you?”* Peter answered, *“Lord to whom shall we go, You have the words of eternal life.”* (Jn. 6:68)

The Lord still calls us to come and listen to His Word for He has the words of eternal life. For much of history, people would have loved to have a copy of the Bible, but it was forbidden. Many of the people who first translated the Bible into English were burned at the stake. In recent years, Bibles needed to be smuggled into most communist countries. It was even difficult for a pastor, to own a Bible. Today there are still many countries, especially in the Middle East, where possession of a Bible is a criminal offense. In contrast, Bibles abound in our homes. They are even given away free. We can also worship without fear of being arrested or persecuted. Yet, so few people listen to our Lord. While Christians put their lives in danger in other places to hear our Lord’s Word, we come to worship when it is convenient for us. While God’s Word often is in a book that lies on our shelves, many Christians who don’t have Bibles, memorize it. They have it in their hearts. I wonder how many of us could recite more than a half dozen Bible passages. The Lord is pleading with us that we come and listen to Him for He has the words of eternal life. His words will give life to our souls. After Jesus fed the 5,000 He told the crowds, *“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”* His words give life and satisfy our hunger and thirst because of what they bring us to see

III. God's Word brings us to behold Jesus as our Savior.

Vs. 4 says, "*Behold, I have made Him a witness to the people, a leader and commander of the peoples.*" The last verses of our text tells us to behold the promised Savior, who is our Lord Jesus Christ. In 2 Timothy 3:15 Paul writes, "*[The Holy Scriptures] are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.*" God's Word always directs us to Jesus as our Savior. When our sins trouble us, we are reminded that Jesus paid for them all of Calvary. He has already paid for them all in full. When we feel separated from God's love because of the troubles and hardships of this life, we think last week's epistle lesson that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:39) When we mourn or when death draws near, He comforts us with the words, "I am the resurrection and life." The Scriptures and all Christian preaching make us behold Jesus as our Savior.

That is what our faith is all about. The Lord calls all of us to come, listen, and behold. He tells us to leave our sins and our cares behind. He wants us to listen to His word, and in His words He shows us Jesus Christ and the salvation that He has won for us. The pleasures of this world will only leave us hungry and thirsty. They can never satisfy, but Jesus promises to refresh your soul. He will forgive all of your sins, be with you with His help your whole life long, and in the end He will give you everlasting life in His splendor.

May the Lord give each of us His forgiveness, comfort and joy as we come to Him, listen to His Word, and trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Amen.

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