8 – 2 – 2020 Come, Listen, Seek

Isaiah 55: 1 – 9

 *1 “Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk it’s all free!*

 *2 Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good?* *Listen, listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food.*

 *3 “Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.*

 *4 See how I used him to display my power among the peoples. I made him a leader among the nations.*

 *5 You also will command nations you do not know, and peoples unknown to you will come running to obey, because I, the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, have made you glorious.”*

 *6 Seek the LORD while you can find Him. Call on Him now while He is near.*

 *7 Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously.*

 *8 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.*

 *9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

 How do you all feel about a buffet? If you have ever had the opportunity to go on a cruise, you know one of the highlights for many people is the midnight buffet!!

 Have you ever experienced this phenomena?

They actually open the buffet line earlier than midnight

not for people to eat but just so that people can go through the line before it gets all picked over and take pictures of the food, the decorations, the ice sculptures, etc.

 Now, I know that you might think me insensitive, talking about a huge buffet when many of you are feeling the need for lunch and soon.

 But actually, our Scripture uses food and water in a metaphorical sense to refer to spiritual thirst being satisfied.

 You have to be dissatisfied with the way your life is and the way it is going, to understand how God fills that void so you can be satisfied with God.

 Sometimes we go through things and we feel like God has gone on vacation or has selective hearing.

 Israel was told to break through in praise to their God even though they were downtrodden and beaten down.

 That is a really hard thing to do when you feel you can't. God promises to Israel if they will praise Him, that He would see them through these troubles.

 God offers us a great invitation, if you have had enough of doing things your way, if you have gotten tired of trying to fill that void with everything but God, God says to come.

 Dr. Jennings, a Hebrew scholar puts it this way. "The invitation is for all who are dissatisfied and deeply feel that they are missing a vital ingredient in their life.

 God wants us to be satisfied but that satisfaction is in Him, not our manmade pleasures.

 Satisfaction guaranteed, that is today's slogan, we promise you'll like it, love it, or your money back.

 Customer satisfaction guaranteed – if you're not happy, we will make it right.

 You must understand dissatisfaction to appreciate satisfaction.

 You must understand where you don't want to be, so you'll appreciate where you want to be, when you get there.

 You must know emptiness, to prefer fullness.

You must have been thirsty, to know what quenches it.

 We can get so busy with everyday life that we miss our relationship with God and spending time with Christ Jesus.

 Come, believe the gospel, come and taste of God's salvation, come eat, drink, and know what fullness Truly is.

 God is saying you who have no money, and you who realize in yourself that you don't deserve heaven. He says come!

 Christ came to save the lost. Those who realize without Him they are spiritually bankrupt.

 In Ecclesiastes 12: 8 King Solomon who seemed to have it all, summed up life without God as, 8 “Everything is meaningless,” says the Teacher, “completely meaningless.”

 Stripped of the life-giving spirit breathed into us by God, our bodies return to dust. Stripped of God’s purpose, our work is in vain. Stripped of God’s love, our service is futile.

 Solomon learned we must put God first over all we do and in all we do because without Him we have nothing. Knowing that life is futile without God should motivate the wise person to seek God first.

 Thirst is common to all people, we understand dry times, we understand the craving for water to satisfy.

 There are two kinds of water, one is physical, and one is spiritual. Your body is thirsty you quench it by physically drinking water. If you are spiritually thirsty you come to the one who can satisfy the soul.

**I. Come**

 Isaiah 55: 1 – 2a *1 “Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk it’s all free! 2 Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good?*

God tells us to come; a call that requires action, you must move toward your destination, GOD.

 What does it mean to thirst for God? In churches today, we throw that saying around. We all know that water is essential for life. If you are thirsty for God, you take what you know about thirst and apply it to your need for God, essential.

 In Psalm 63: 1 David declares; *O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole-body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.*

 When you thirst, when your mouth is dry, you go to the source that will satisfy that need, water.

 When you spiritually thirst, again, you go to the source that will satisfy, you go to God.

 You understand that one will not fulfill or satisfy the other.

 Satisfaction begins when you realize that you cannot do it on your own. You admit spiritual poverty and redemption begins as you move forward toward Christ Jesus.

 Jesus said, in Matthew 5: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs's is the Kingdom of Heaven"

 Poverty is when you don't have something, there is poor and then there is poor to the poor. The Lord is looking for the poor to the poor, those who will admit they are spiritually bankrupt.

 The richest person in the world, money wise, without God is the poorest person spiritually. And the poorest person financially, with a vibrant relationship with God is spiritually rich beyond measure

 Jesus also says, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled"

 Human efforts will always fall short and fail. Too often, we all look to fulfill our lives outside of God for the satisfaction of our soul.

 You want to know what I found in scripture this past week, the numerous times the phrase "It came to pass" was used throughout the Bible. It is used over 450 times in the King James version. I find this to be a great verse especially when you are waiting on God to do something!

 "It came to pass" is an encouragement for what you are going through, it will not last forever, it will pass, it will move out of the way, it may hurt some, but it will not last forever.

 How do we know what God is calling us to come to?

**II. Listen**

Isaiah 55: 2b – 5 *2b Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. 3 Give ear and come to me; listen, that you 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 ruler and commander of the peoples. 5 Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for He has endowed you with splendor.”*

 When God says, "listen to me", I believe He is commanding us to be alert, attentive, listen diligently to His words. He is about to make an everlasting covenant with you, as He made with David.

 Sometimes we are incredibly good at speaking to God, giving Him our laundry list of requests, needs, as if He didn't already know what we really need. What we are not as good at is waiting, spending time in His presence, actively listening for His response.

 Have you ever been in conversation with someone and instead of paying attention and listening closely to what they are saying you are formulating a response in your head.

 Isaiah tells us to call on the Lord while He is near. God is not planning to move away from us, but we often move far from Him or erect barriers of sin between ourselves and God.

 Don’t wait until you have drifted far away from God to seek Him. Seek God now, while you can, before it is too late.

 In Psalm 5: 1 – 2 David asks God to listen when he prays; *1 O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. 2 Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you.* Doesn't God deserve the same attentive listening from us

 God is with us everywhere all the time, waiting for a response when He calls. Are you listening, do you know His voice, will you answer His call, and seek Him?

**III. Seek**

 Isaiah 55: 6 – 9 *6 Seek the LORD while you can find Him. Call on Him now while He is near. 7 Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that He may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously.*

 The Hebrew word for seek, as used here is *darash.* This word is often used in the Old Testament to describe the "seeking of" the Lord in the sense of entering into covenantal relationship with Him. The Prophets often used *darash* as they call on the people to make an about-face in living and instead "seek the Lord while you can find Him".

 This next step is easy, once you have l**istened** to the invitation from the Lord to **come**, you have to be determined to respond.

 You stop going your own way, you turn around. It is a 180-degree turn. You stop running from God, you seek Him and begin trusting Him by faith.

 *8 “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

 We are thirsty, we are restless it is a dry desert without Jesus! I am talking to Christians this morning we need to hear the voice of God calling us to come to Him!

 A little girl was in the hospital for surgery and the doctor came into see her and her parents beforehand. He was telling them all what he would be doing and that she would be put to sleep.

 The little girl immediately told the doctor that if she were going to sleep, she would need to say her prayers first. She said her simple prayer right there in the hospital bed and tears began to fill her doctor's eyes.

 He had forgotten about who he needed to put his faith in. He had forgotten that it was not all about what he learned in medical school and had been practicing for years.

 You see we forget, we get too busy, we have selective hearing, and sometimes we don't like the answer.

 Who are you seeking to quench your thirst?

 Have you ever seen on film or in real life a mirage on the desert? You're thirsty, your mouth feels like a cotton ball, and just below the horizon you see a beautiful seemingly cool body of water, only to find as you get closer more sand.

 That is the poison we have when we fill our need for God with dead stuff. If there is something dead in your water supply, your water is poisoned.

 It may not kill you right away. You may begin to be ill, maybe a little guilty, maybe you feel separated from God.

 Listen, do you want to be closer to God, do you want a fresh relationship with God?

 Do you want your freedom Back?

 Do you understand what real satisfaction with God is?

 Jesus gives living water in John 4:7-15; *7 Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” 8 He was alone at the time because His disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. 9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?” 10 Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.” 11 “But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12 And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?” 13 Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14 But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”*

 Now that is satisfaction Guaranteed!

 I will close with excerpts from Psalm 51, David's prayer of repentance and reconciliation. *1 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. 7 Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. 11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don’t take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you. 17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

Amen!