

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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July 31, 2005
11th Sunday After Pentecost
Isaiah 55:1-5
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Isaiah 55:1-5
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 42-43
Second Lesson: Romans 8:35-39
Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

Eat and Drink With Your Ears

When you sit down to a nice dinner, what senses do you use? Well, sense of taste, of course. You are going to eat something you like the taste of. If it all tastes like broccoli, you probably aren't going to eat a whole lot of it, right?

What about the other senses? The sense of smell—doesn't it kind of get the anticipation going when you walk into a house and can smell the food cooking, or you walk into a house where cookies are baking or bread is baking—you use the sense of smell.

The sense of touch—if you cut that steak and you take a bite and it is the consistency of a milk shake; it isn't going to be quite the same, is it? You use the sense of touch as you eat, and it enhances your dining pleasure.

Sight—the way the meal is presented. Did you ever throw a fit as a child, or you children here ever throw a fit because your corn is touching your mashed potatoes or they got mixed in somehow and now it just doesn't look right, so you can't eat it—the sense of sight.

What about hearing? Do you think about using your sense of hearing to eat a meal? Maybe the person next to you is chewing too loud, right? It's annoying. It's not helping the meal. Maybe sometimes you might use the sense of hearing if you hear bacon frying or something like that I suppose. When I think of all the senses, the sense of hearing is probably the one we think of the least in connection with the meal. And yet, that is exactly the picture that the Holy Spirit has Isaiah use in Chapter 55 in the verses that we are looking at this morning. He talks about hearing a meal. He encourages people to, "*Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good*". That's not the way we talk at all, is it? But he is using the picture of a banquet, and there are a couple of things specifically about this banquet to teach you and me truths about our salvation. Because the banquet that he wants us to come and eat at is the banquet of God's free and full undeserved love. And he says to us, "Come, buy and eat, and eat with your ears."

So this morning we consider eat and drink with your ears. As we think about this banquet, we see that this banquet is completely and absolutely an offer of God's undeserved love—it's grace. Then as we also consider this banquet that we are supposed to eat with our ears, we see also that it is a banquet that is for all people—every last person that ever has lived or ever will live is the person that God wants to eat and drink with their ears at this banquet table.

It's still an amazing thing that it says—*“Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live.”* He is clearly talking about this banquet feast as something that we eat, something that we devour with our ears. But he paints it for us as the picture that is completely and absolutely all God's doing, not our doing.

The picture that the Holy Spirit has Isaiah use here is a picture that would have been very familiar to the people that Isaiah was writing to. The picture is a market place. You are walking through the market place into town and you have got all kinds of people at different stands that want to sell you different kinds of things and they are saying, “Come. Come here. Try this. Taste this. Look at this. Listen to me. Listen to me. This is the best you can get in this whole market.” They are calling out and trying to bring people over and telling them what a bargain they have. But here it is a little different. Of course, our God acts a little differently than we as humans do, doesn't he?

Look at what our God says, *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters”*. It sounds pretty straight forward. That's about what you would expect. But listen to this, *“and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!”* Now we are walking down a different path. Buying, eating, without money? Purchasing something without cost? That doesn't sound right. *“Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy?”* He is talking about earthly things that don't satisfy because they can't take away our greatest need, which is being right with God. He is talking about coming and buying and eating without cost and without money—God's undeserved love for us in the Messiah.

Two Chapters earlier he had used a different picture—the picture of a servant who would be punished in our place. Remember that in Isaiah 53? *“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* (Isaiah 53:5) Seven hundred years before Christ was born talking about what Christ would do in our place because you and I are sinners and we need our sins taken away. You and I can't take them away. The only thing that we could offer to God to take them away is an eternity in hell. You and I don't want to offer that. God doesn't want us to have to go through that. So he says, *“come, buy and eat...without money and without cost”*—because you and I cannot offer to God ANYTHING to take away our sins.

Didn't we see an incredible reminder of that this morning? What did Isabella do to pay for any of her sins? Did she even wake up yesterday and say to her parents, “Hey, you ought to baptize me tomorrow.” Before she could even communicate, God brought her to that font, and God did all the work through the water and the Word that is attached to that water. God—without money and without cost on our part—washed away Isabella's sins.

That is what our God does for us. Without money and without cost, without our efforts, he takes away our sins and yet, sometimes you and I get confused about that. We are not used to that. We can't think in those terms, so sometimes we look around and we

see how we serve the Lord and we maybe see how others are not serving the Lord, so we think our God must love us more. Our God must appreciate what we do more because we are doing A, B, C and D or whatever the case might be.

On our death beds, our confidence dare not be that we have served our God. Our confidence needs to be that God has offered to us fully and freely his grace and his love that took away our sins through the life and death of Jesus Christ. In response to what Christ has done for us, we live to serve our God and we rejoice in serving our God. But don't get it switched around. **GOD ACTS FIRST and HIS LOVE COMPELS US TO ACT** in response. His love towards us is undeserved, unearned and it is not something that we give to him that we might receive. God's Word offers us grace. We eat it and drink it with our ears. You and I are privileged to eat and drink it not just on a Sunday morning or a Thursday evening or a Wednesday morning at a chapel in a school, but each and every day of our lives. As we are driving, we can put a tape or a CD in and hear our God speak to us what is on his heart as we listen to his Word. We can pick up our Bibles and read what our God wants us to know. Our God speaks to us frequently and fully of his amazing grace.

One of the great truths about our God's grace that is so amazing is that it isn't just that it is without cost, but that **IT IS WITHOUT COST FOR EVERYONE**—not just a chosen few. Not just to us, not to just us in our area or us in our country, but to the entire world—to every last person who looks different, dresses different, smells different than you and I do. Christ died for them all. We are reminded today that he wants that salvation offered to all of them because he speaks of the everlasting covenant he made with David. That he would have a descendant of David as king who would rule on David's throne forever. David's earthly throne has come and gone, but the eternal throne of David's greater son, Jesus, continues forever. And through the proclamation of Jesus, God has made him a witness to the peoples—a leader and a commander to the peoples so that when we proclaim the message of Jesus, we summon nations that we knew not. Nations that don't know us will hasten to us because of the Lord, our God—the Holy One of Israel who has endowed us with splendor. The splendor isn't us, the splendor isn't this building, the splendor isn't our efforts—the splendor is who Jesus is and what Jesus did.

There are a couple of phrases in here that I think are interesting. He would be a *“witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.”* It doesn't sound like much to us—or to the nations he also says—but when I was growing up, I had a great uncle, my father's uncle, who was a Christian. To the best of my knowledge he died as a Christian. But when he was born and raised, he was raised Jewish. All of his life he still used a lot of the phrases he had learned in his childhood. When you would get talking with him, he would tell you, “You're mashuga.” (You're nuts.) He would tell you, when he disagreed with what you were saying, or someone else that he didn't think much of, he would call them a “goy”. “That goy doesn't know anything.” I don't know if you have ever heard anything like that. I heard that all the time when I would go to his house. I don't think he even knew what he was saying anymore. It was just what he had always heard and it was a phrase that he had always used. But “goyim” is the peoples—the nations.

Many Jews used that word as a derogatory term for other people because they thought of themselves as the chosen nation and everyone else was less than them. So here is our God saying to the people of Isaiah's day and the people of all time that God wanted all the goy to know who Jesus is and what Jesus had done—all the people that you and I might use a disparaging term for today—Jesus died for every last one of them. He wants them to be attracted to the Gospel message because of the splendor that is attached to it that they see in us.

You and I have that privilege to grow beyond our own prejudices and share the Gospel with those that need it—which is every last person in this world—because GOD'S WORD IS FOR ALL PEOPLE. The more we eat and drink with our ears, the more we are going to want to share that banquet with others.