

God's Odd Market Place

When I have **traveled overseas**, especially to Israel, I really **enjoyed visiting** the market shambles, the city bazars, and the open markets of these countries. Very different from our **over-sterilized**, corporate box stores. I get a **mental picture** of these places when I read this passage in Isaiah that is our Old Testament text.

"Come, everyone who thirsts, come buy my pure waters; come, buy, and eat. Come buy wine and milk." ¹

What Isaiah is doing here is **mimicking** the market place of his day. But there is **something different** about this market place. There is **no price**. Money is not needed in this open market. And **this hawker** of goods is especially inviting the person who has no money. "Listen to me carefully: Come eat what is really good and delight yourselves in this rich food and it is **all free**." In this **irony**, God wants us to see there is something more than **mercantile trading** (the exchange of goods and services) going on here.

God wants us **to ponder** this strange open market for a while and then **God says**, "Why are you spending so much effort, time and money, when the irony is **those things do not matter** in the eternal scheme of things."

In this strange ironic market place **bread is not bread**. What is the real bread? Jesus said to them,

"For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ²

Who comes down from heaven? Jesus says,

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." ³

That **thirsting** takes us to the first verse again,

¹ Isaiah 55:1.

² John 6:33.

³ John 6:48.

"Come, everyone who thirsts come to the waters." ⁴

The ironic food we are talking about here is **eternal bread. Spiritual food.**

And Satan came and said to Jesus to tempt him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁵

You're starving to death, Jesus, let's get you feed and satisfied with some "real bread."

But Jesus answered, "It is written," 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " ⁶

So we begin to see the bread that God has for you – is completely, **absolutely for free. And** it is the **Words** from Our God. The words of God that **you are listening** to right here, God wishes us to incline our ear and come to Him – how? By hearing the Word. And as we hear the words of God, God says **your soul** will live.

Interesting in the **Gospel reading** we see a similar approach to God's generosity in the picture of the **Wedding Banquet**.

"See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, and my veal has been made ready and table is set. Come to my son's wedding feast." And the Lord's servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good." ⁷

And when you listen to the Word of God – God says he will make **an everlasting covenant** with you. Okay, what is that all about another covenant? Here he brings up the Davidic Covenant – what does that have to do with me?

What is the Davidic Covenant?

- **Dynastic covenant** that was to be a blessing to Israel
- But when **Zedekiah** died – all hope was lost – how is this an **everlasting covenant?**
- Some try to keep the perpetuity alive in the kings **of England**

⁴ Isaiah 55:1a.

⁵ Matthew 4:3; Luke 4:3.

⁶ Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4.

⁷ Matthew 22:4, 10.

- David's reign will be perpetuated forever in the **Son of David**

But then our passage says if you will listen to God as spoken in His Word, I make an everlasting covenant with you, like my steadfast love for David. David was a **leader and commander** for his peoples. Because he had the Spirit of God and stood before the people, he was **God's example**, He was a witness to **God's way of life** before the people.

God is promising in this everlasting covenant that you too are to be God's witness. **Not before the Israel**, but before **a nation**—your nation, wherever you live. People will see your witness **shall be drawn** to you.

But Pastor Kaiser, I do not do a **good job at witnessing** to others. **Illustration:** I like historical markers as I travel.

Just being a Christian and **doing what you do**, you are a witness to the world. As has the world gets **darker**, your witness gets **brighter** and brighter. Now that you have this **eternal spiritual life for free**. Now that you can be a **witness to a nation**. What does God desire of you as His witness?

- **Seek the Lord**
- **Call out** to Him in prayer
- **Forsake** the god of this world - the way the world thinks of as how to sustain our lives does not sustain us for eternal life.
- Each one of the excuses of the **original guests** in our gospel reading had to do with the physical distractions of this world.
 - One had to attend **his farm**
 - Another to **his business**
 - Another said he **just got married**
- God is a very **forgiving God** when it comes to our shortcomings.

“Let him or her that has slipped return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him or her, and return to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

- From this **odd open market** we learn the ways of God are not the ways of this world.

So, what does this all have to do with the Reformation?

God has a very **unusual gospel store here**. We can purchase salvation for no money at all. It is free. It would be like being able to go through a grocery store, filling your cart, no care in the world what expensive things you put in your cart, rich and wonderful things. (You are so used to buying the economical store brand to save money) but now anything in the store is yours. And you walk through the register aisle and just wave at the clerk and she says goodbye. And out the store you go. But **this goes against our grain**, I have to pay for it, right?

*“By grace are you saved through faith in Christ.”*⁸

But this goes against our grain. There has **got to be a catch**. Someone already **picked up your tab**. It is that **half-naked fellow symbolized** over there on that cross. Not with gold or silver but with his precious blood – holy blood – God’s blood.

But still there has **got to be a catch**. Even the church during the Middle Ages was **having a problem** with that. And Dr. Martin Luther had to bring it back to basics.

*“By grace you are saved through faith in Christ alone, it is not of yourselves.”*⁹

The twentieth Sunday after Trinity

Isaiah 55:1-9; Ephesians 5:15-21; Matthew 22:1-14

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⁸ Ephesians 2:8.

⁹ Ephesians 2:8.