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Sermon Notes

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God's Glorious Invitation to a Holy Banquet

Isaiah 55:1-5

The most glorious banquet in history... and you are invited!!

The initial images of Isaiah 55 are of a rich, lavish, satisfying banquet...

Not the gluttonous banquets of earthly potentates:

In 485 B.C., Persian King Darius held a lavish feast: 1000 animals slaughtered, including oxen, zebras, gazelles, stags, Arabian ostriches, geese, gamecocks and camel (smoked camel hump a favorite Persian dish); also served rice pilaf w. meats, nuts, spices, and fruit; shish kebabs of mutton, fish, poultry, and vegetables seasons with special yoghurt sauce; the guests even enjoyed sugar brought by caravan from distant lands and too expensive to serve to anyone but royalty

There the guests would stuff their faces with over-rich foods until they were glutted and groaned... such is the way the worldly feast

God spreads a perfect banquet for the world... a holy banquet of the richest blessings we can imagine

Isaiah 55:1-5 "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.

Context: Isaiah 53-54

Isaiah 53... the atoning work of Jesus Christ

Christ our substitute

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ⁵ 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. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Christ's atoning death

Isaiah 53:8-9 he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Christ's resurrection

Isaiah 53:10-11 though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many

This perfect finished work is the centerpiece of the banquet... ultimately, it is Christ who is being offered to thirsty, hungry, destitute, dissatisfied sinners

Christ is the one making the invitation to come to Him

Christ is the reviving water of life

Christ is the nourishing milk for our souls

Christ is the joy-producing wine that will have us reveling in holy celebration for all eternity

Christ is the BANQUET... and YOU ARE INVITED!!

Isaiah 54: The grand missionary enterprise... a tent enlarged, many people included

Isaiah 54:2-3 "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. ³ For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

William Carey's "deathless sermon" based on that... a call to world-wide missionary endeavor... the exponential growth of the children of Abraham through the evangelization of the Gentiles

I. Who Are Invited? Destitute, Dissatisfied Sinners

Isaiah 55:1-3 "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.

A. Two Kinds of People Invited

1. The gospel invitation understands the different condition people find themselves in
2. Not everyone experiences the same thing in life...
3. But everyone is needy, truly, deeply needy
4. Just some people know they are needy more than others
5. First, the thirsty and destitute... people with nothing to offer
6. Second, the self-sufficient but dissatisfied strivers... people who still have resources, options, trying stuff... but it never satisfied

B. The Thirsty and Destitute

Isaiah 55:1 "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

1. God is inviting deeply thirsty people who are dying... withering in life... but they have NO RESOURCES WHATSOEVER... and they know it
2. They look at their lives and it looks like a field of dead weeds... like a cornfield in November, with dead stalks swaying in a freezing wind... the picture of barrenness
3. Life has dashed all your hopes and dreams... everything you've tried to bring meaning to life has ended up fruitless
4. You are depressed and discouraged... your soul feels like you are crawling through the Sahara desert and if you don't get to water soon, you will certainly die
5. But you have NO RESOURCES WHATSOEVER... you are poor, needy, and you know it

6. You have nothing to offer the Lord, no bargaining position, no “ace in the hole”... you’ve reached the end of the line and you have nothing in your hands you can trade
7. The text says you are exactly the person the Lord is calling!! You are exactly the one whom Christ came to save!
8. You are the “spiritual beggar” of Matthew 5

Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven...”

“Poor in spirit” = “Beggars” in the Greek = totally destitute, nothing to offer

9. Jesus is standing before your soul right now and calling to you, O poverty-stricken sinner, to COME TO HIM

C. Second... the Self-Sufficient but Dissatisfied Strivers

Isaiah 55:2 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.

1. Perhaps very few of you feel you are in that first category... you may think of such a desperate person who has nothing left to live for as a loser; you may feel superior to that person
2. You still have options, you still have resources...verse 2 is for you
3. You have money to spend, and you are spending it... you are BUYING
4. You have energy by which you are laboring, and you are spending it... you are WORKING every day to better your lives, your souls
5. BUT the text calls on you to BE HONEST... you are spending your money on what does not satisfy...
6. You are achieving, earning, working, accomplishing... but honestly nothing satisfies

John Piper: “He is still spending and still working, dreaming, chasing, searching, experimenting – different job, different city, different car, different house, different wife, new computer, new boat, new books, new bike, new grill, new season tickets, new diet, new looks – there's still a lot of looking around left in this person. But still no pot at the end of the rainbow. No fountain of youth. And every triumph peters out. The applause fades. The boat is boring. The style passes. Everything new gets old and the options get fewer and fewer.

When you are honest, you know there is a canyon of need and longing on the inside no matter how self-sufficient you look on the outside. And God knows even better than you. He has you in mind when he says, "Why do you spend your money for bread which is no-bread, and labor for dreams that do not satisfy?"

D. Everyone Here Fits in One of those Two Categories Apart from Christ

1. Either totally destitute, with no hope at all
2. Or filled with resources, but honestly dissatisfied because you know it is not satisfying
3. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THE LORD IS INVITING RIGHT NOW!!

But... what is He offering? What benefits does He pour out on you if you should come?

Amazingly, three beverages!!

II. What Is Offered? Water, Milk, Wine, Bread

The text spreads out an amazing banquet for our souls... in verse 1, it speaks of three beverages, each representing something different

Isaiah 55:1 "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.

In verse 2, it implies food that truly, richly, deeply satisfies where nothing else ever has

Isaiah 55:2 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.

Let's focus on the beverages first: water, milk, wine

A. Water that Brings Life

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters

1. The first image is water, and for me that means LIFE... what is essential simply to exist
2. Water means LIFE

Illus. Amazing book, then movie... "Unbroken" about Louis Zamperini; Olympic distance runner, WWII bombardier on a B-24 bomber... crashed in the Pacific, survived the crash with two others... floated in a life raft for 47 days... they had to fend off multiple shark attacks and were strafed by a Japanese plane, but by far the greatest threat to their lives was thirst... surrounded constantly by undrinkable seawater, they were in imminent danger of dying from thirst... a rainstorm came they captured as much rainwater as they could store and this saved their lives

3. So Isaiah 55 invites people who are spiritually DYING to come to Christ and receive the life-giving water that He alone can give

Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well:

John 4:10-14 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?" ¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

B. Milk that Gives Nourishment

Isaiah 55:1 "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.

1. Though wine is mentioned next in the verse, I'll talk about milk second after water
2. Milk is different than water in that it refers to NOURISHMENT, nutrients...
3. Think of how a nursing baby gets everything he or she needs from his mother's milk... all the amazing vitamins and nutrients
4. God is calling on us to come to Him day after day for the milk we need for health and strength
5. This is linked directly to His word:

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

6. There is a richness to the image of milk

The consistent description of the Promised Land:

Exodus 3:8 a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey

7. God is calling on us to drink water to live and to drink milk so we can flourish with health and strength

C. Wine that Gives Joy

1. The third liquid image is wine... a symbol of joy, celebration, vitality,
2. Though we are well aware of the danger of drunkenness and though Baptists have rightly been concerned about the damage alcohol has done to the lives of so many, yet any Bible reader knows that wine is usually spoken of as a blessing from God related directly to JOY

Psalm 104:15 [God lavishly gives] wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

John Piper: "Wine corresponds to the need for exhilaration. We want to live and not die. We want to be strong and stable instead of weak and wavering. But that is not all we need in life. No matter how stoic, unemotional, phlegmatic, laid-back, or poker-faced we may seem to others, there is a child inside of every one of us that God made for exhilaration – for shouting and singing and dancing and playing and skipping and running and jumping and laughing."

The JOY of a celebration... what makes a feast a time of delight... this is why Jesus changed the water into the highest quality wine at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee

Many see the fulfillment of this in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who brings the exhilaration of unbridled joy, but with no drunkenness or dissipation:

Ephesians 5:18-20 And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled with the Spirit: ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace

D. Bread That Satisfies... a Feast for All Eternity!!

Isaiah 55:2 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.

Isaiah 55:2 (KJV) hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

1. The verse speaks of a bounty of the best possible foods
2. It challenges us not to eat bread that doesn't satisfy, but to find the TRUE BREAD that does satisfy
3. It goes beyond this to point to a banquet with the "RICHEST OF FARE"... the best possible delicacies, exquisitely selected and perfectly cooked by the greatest chef in the universe... the Hebrew is literally "FATNESS"...
4. This banquet will DELIGHT YOUR SOUL...it brings eternal joy and deeply satisfies like no earthly feast could ever do
5. I can't help but go back to Christ again
 - a. First to His body being the true bread from heaven

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Jesus' body, dead on the cross, completely pays for our sins in the sight of Almighty God... we will feed spiritually on this bread for ALL ETERNITY, and it is deeply and richly satisfying

- b. But the phrase "the richest of fare" points to the banquet of joy that God spread for the human race by the defeat of death at the resurrection of Jesus

Isaiah 25:6-8 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines. ⁷ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

III. How Do We Receive these Gifts?

A. A Series of Commands... Twelve in All

All you who are thirsty, come to the waters [#1]; and he who has no money, come [#2], buy [#3] and eat [#4]! Come [#5], buy wine and milk [#6] without money and without price. 2) Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Hearken diligently to me [#7] and eat what is good [#8], and delight yourselves in fatness [#9]. 3) Incline your ear [#10], and come to me [#11]; hear [#12] that your soul may live

B. Boil It Down to Four

1. Come
2. Buy
3. Eat
4. Enjoy

C. We Are Not to Be Passive Here!

1. We must OBEY this amazingly rich and generous command!
2. We must DO WHAT IT SAYS!!
3. Come to Christ!!
4. Don't turn away in unbelief!!

D. The Mystery of Buying Something Without Money

1. The text says we should do something amazing:

Isaiah 55:1 you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

2. How do we BUY something when we have no money?
3. And the text says it's free anyway?
4. I think the answer is that the salvation God is offering in Christ is EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE and not one of us could afford it... but the price has already been paid

1 Peter 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

5. Also... God gives you what you must give Him... but you still need to give it
 - a. God requires you to give ear and listen... but He's the one who gave you the ears to hear
 - b. God requires you to give faith... to believe in the message; but that faith itself is a gift from God
 - c. God requires you to repent of your sins... but repentance is also a gift from God

We begin this process with NOTHING to offer... but then God equips you in your acting with everything you need to procure the rich food He is giving for free

E. The Free Gift Cannot Be Purchased By Us... Only Received

1. This is so difficult for us... we are so prideful! We want to earn this salvation
2. But God requires that we buy without money and without cost
3. God requires that we accept it as a fully-paid gift from Him through Christ

Charles Spurgeon, preaching on "Justification by grace"

Romans 3:23-24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Christ is willing to take your rags, and give you his righteousness, to be yours forever. "Okay, fine... but how do I obtain it?" someone asks. "Must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace;" "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By his grace," because it is not of our deservings. "But," you say, "I have been praying, and I do not think God will forgive me, unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, friend, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Evangelists Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair; he noticed the merchants selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," said he "find a great

difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine."

So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you for a gold coin each, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not begin the journey tomorrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?" Yes, friend, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is "freely."

IV. The Reality Behind the Imagery: The Kingdom of Christ (vs. 3-5)

Isaiah 55:3-5 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."

A. Jesus is Everything!!

1. Jesus IS the drink and the food of this eternal feast of joy!!
2. Jesus IS the water that saves our dying souls and gives them eternal life
3. Jesus IS the milk that nourishes our growing souls and gives them energy
4. Jesus IS the wine that gladdens our celebrating souls and gives them joy
5. Jesus IS the bread that we feed on by His death on the cross
6. Jesus IS the feast that is spread for all eternity by His resurrection victory

B. The Text Ends with the Clear Connection to Jesus

1. In verse 3, He mentions an everlasting covenant with you (plural)... He is speaking to all who will obey the twelve commands of verses 1-3... to Christians!!
2. He is drawing us individually and collectively into the NEW COVENANT made with "David"... a faithful love promised to David
3. This is a clear connection to Christ!
 - a. The Davidic covenant came about in 2 Samuel 7, when King David wanted to build a temple, a house for the Lord

b. The Lord made an eternal promise to David, saying “I will build a house for you, David!”

c. Here is the amazing promise:

2 Samuel 7:12-13 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

4. Psalm 89 picks up on this promise, though it was written LONG AFTER DAVID WAS DEAD:

Psalm 89:3-4 You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ⁴ 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'"

5. Jesus is fulfillment of these words

a. Jesus is the one with whom the New Covenant was made... the New Covenant in His blood

b. Jesus is the “Son of David” who will sit on David’s throne forever!

c. And if we obey all these twelve commands in verses 1-3, we will find eternal security in the promise God made to Jesus as the Son of David... we will enter His kingdom and live in it forever!

i) If we

come to the waters [#1]; we who have no money, IF WE come [#2], buy [#3] and eat [#4]! Come [#5], buy wine and milk [#6] without money and without price. ... IF WE listen diligently to him [#7] and eat what is good [#8], and delight ourselves in fatness [#9]. IF WE incline our ear [#10], and come to Him [#11]; IF WE hear [#12] that our soul may live

Christ will welcome us into His Kingdom and be our Savior

C. Christ is a Witness to the Nations

1. Christ came to testify to the truth

John 18:37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

2. Christ calls to the nations of the earth to listen to Him as He bears witness to the truth of God, of our sin, and of His salvation

D. Christ is a Leader and Commander of the Nations

1. Christ is the King of kings and the Lord of lords...
2. The nations are His because God gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth

E. We Are Called On to Witness to the Nations

Isaiah 55:5 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. "

1. The end of this section calls on us to take this glorious message to our near neighbors and distant nations
2. We are to be SUCCESSFUL... not merely faithful... and God will make the church successful... the elect will most certainly hear the gospel and be saved
3. As the Lord makes the church glorious and beautiful, as we love one another and let our light shine and live openly joyful lives in front of the lost people of the world, the nations that don't know us and don't know Christ will HASTEN to us and follow Christ!!

V. Applications

A. Dear Lost Friend... Do What the Text Says...

1. Listen to the word
2. Delight in its good news
3. Come to the Christ who is calling to you
4. Buy and eat... without money and without price...
 - a. Repent of your sins
 - b. Trust in Christ
 - c. Delight in the good news that you have eternal life

B. Christians... Do the same thing you have been doing all along

1. We are to continue to "taste and see that the Lord is good"
2. We are to stop living for earthly food and drink... laboring for what doesn't satisfy

3. We are to drink daily from the Holy Spirit and feed richly on God's perfect word
 - a. Practically, are you daily in God's Word?
 - b. Do you have a pattern of feasting your soul on its promises? Feeding your mind and your heart on its truths?
 - c. How many days per week or month do you have a time of feeding on God's Word?
4. Are you finding delight in Christ? Are you feasting on Him and embracing all that He is for you?
5. Christians: think about the water, milk, wine idea
 - a. Water: are you revivifying your souls daily with the basic truths of the gospel... that your sins are forgiven by simple faith in Christ
 - b. Milk: are you drinking deeply at the milk of the word, growing up into maturity by taking in its nutrients
 - c. Wine: are you rejoicing in Christ by the filling of the Spirit? Is there a pattern of JOY in your life? Do you fill your heart with how rich you will be in heaven in Christ? Or are you acting like someone who is spending your money on what is not bread and your labor on what does not satisfy?
ARE YOU CHARACTERIZED BY CHRISTIAN JOY in the Spirit?

Isaiah 55:2 Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

I fear that many Christians are so gloomy and worldly because they are not obeying this simple command... listen to Christ beckon to your soul and find supernatural delight in Him

C. Christ is a Witness to the Peoples... and We are to Be Witnesses for Him

1. The text says that God has made Christ a witness and a commander for all nations
2. As the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus has sent us
3. How faithful are you in sharing this kind of good news with your co-workers? People in restaurants? People in downtown Durham? Neighbors? Are you developing relationships with people to bring them to this kind of joy
4. Imagine explaining these words to someone:

Isaiah 55:1-2 "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.

D.

E.

VI.

A.

B.