

23-55-01-The Feast of the Blessed
invitation, spiritual hunger, nurture, grace
Isa 55:1-2

Only the hungry and thirsty poor can dine at the Master's table.

INTRODUCTION:

–The Bible is a **best-seller!** Why does this old book stay so popular?

Text: “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. 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.” The Bible is still popular because of *what it **Author** has to offer!*

–Isaiah prophesied in the days when Israel had been enslaved by Assyria and Judah was soon to go into captivity to Babylon. It was a time of *confusion* and *poverty*. God uses times of economic turmoil and financial depression to whet our spiritual thirst, because **HOM.idea.**

I. Who Are Invited? (“Come, all”)

- A. All are **poor**, but not all **realize** it (a major obstacle diagnosed by God in Rev 3:17-18 (ESV), For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.
1. [My **dad used to say**, “It’s no shame to be poor; it’s just not handy.” But in Bible times, it was a *shame*. A beggar’s *nakedness* was a *shameful sign of poverty*; and if you were well-off enough to have two garments, Jesus said to give one to the poor and cold man or woman who was *naked on the street..*]
2. We need to recognize our **poverty**: we are “poor, blind, and naked,” and God wants to clothe us in His righteousness, heal us of our blindness, and make us “rich” with “gold refined by fire.”
- B. All are **starving**, but not all **sense** it. [An eating-disorder website had a picture of a naked girl with anorexia standing in front of a mirror seeing a *fat body, not her bare skin and bones.*] (Spiritual obesity isn’t the problem: it’s anorexia: people starving spiritually without knowing it.)
- C. All are **welcome**, but not all **believe** it....

TRANS: This is the great tragedy of the *human condition*: our Creator is out there, wanting to meet our soul’s deepest need, and people **don’t**

even believe He exists, or they have strange ideas about what He’s like. But if we realize our state of poverty and starvation, we might believe His invitation and be qualified to **dine at the Master’s table....**

II. How Do We Qualify? (two **qualifications**)

- A. **1st:** “all you who are *thirsty*” For what?– Mat5:6a, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness...**” (Thirst can be stimulated.)

1. [A **thirst-whetting song** I heard riding across the desert by car... *cruel!*...]

<p><u>“Cool Water”</u> All day I've faced / A barren waste Without the taste / Of water, cool water. Old Dan and I / with throats burnt dry and souls that cry for water, cool, clear water. // The shadows sway / And seem to say, “Tonight we pray / For water, cool water.” And way up there / He'll hear our prayer And show us where There's water, cool, clear water. //</p>	<p>Keep a movin', Dan, Don't ya listen to him, Dan, He's a devil, not a man, And he spreads the burnin' sand with water. // Dan can ya see / That big green tree Where the water's runnin' free And it's waiting there for you and me? Water. Cool, clear water. (Anybody thirsty yet? There’s more verses that I forgot---lucky for you...)</p>
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2. God uses *natural needs* to speak to *spiritual ones* (This happened with woman at the well– John 4:13-14, Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 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.”)
- B. **2nd:** “*you who have no money*” Earthly gold isn’t divine currency! We have all been spiritually bankrupt since *the Depression* (not the one in the 1900s, but the Big Crash back in the Garden of Eden!)

TRANS: We all qualify! So, how do we access God’s bountiful supply of spiritual food and drink? He says, “come to the waters.” Isa 48:21, They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out. (explained in 1 Cor 10:3, They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.) – Jesus identifies Himself as the spiritual source of that water supply in John 7:37-38, On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

III. What Is God Providing? (*waters, wine & milk: all spiritual metaphors*)

- A. He **first** mentions “*waters*” which not only quench thirst, but purify the soul and gives us new birth (symbolized by *water baptism*)
- B. **Next**, He speaks of “*wine*,” symbolic of the Holy Spirit– Eph 5:18. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (Unlike celebrating with physical wine, God’s spiritual wine brings us real joy that lasts through the hard times of life.)
- C. **Finally** He talks of “*milk*,” which means the Word of God– 1 Pe 2:2, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. [illustrating breastfeeding—an *intimate, parenting relationship of nurture*]

TRANS: If God offers salvation, divine joy, and spiritual nurture, why do so many invest their wealth on “what is not bread” and their “labor on what does not satisfy?” God asks this here through Isaiah and echoes it through Jesus in John 6:27. “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” Jesus is talking about the Holy Table of His body and blood, to which He calls all to come, who will confess their spiritual poverty and hunger and thirst.

IV. What Will It Cost? (God’s answer: “*without money and without cost*”)

- A. In human terms, God’s provision is priceless and price-less:
 - 1. Literal wealth can’t buy it (“*Money can’t buy happiness.*”)
 - 2. Educational wealth is useless (It’s *not what you know, but Who.*)
 - 3. Moral wealth doesn’t work either, because no one really has it– Rom 3:23. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- B. God’s provision is priceless in heavenly terms. (The feast of God is already paid for—purchased by the precious blood of Christ.)

CONCLUSION:

–“*Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good...*” [God is concerned about our spiritual diet!] “*and your soul will delight in the richest of fare*” (There is no richer meal than the Lord’s Supper, where *our souls delight in the sacrificed Lamb of God*, “*Who takes away the sin of the world.*”)

–**Only the hungry and thirsty poor can dine at the Master's table.**

So, God calls everyone, because all of us are spiritually poor.

– *Listen, listen...* to the last invitation in the Bible– Rev. 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.”