

August 3, 2014  
Sermon for The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Isaiah 55:1-5 (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Isaiah 55:1–5 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. <sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. <sup>4</sup> Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. <sup>5</sup> Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

The table is set. You're ready to sit down and eat and drink. Imagine your favorite meal. What would it be?

For me, the food isn't that important, it has to do with those I am sharing the meal with. If I had to tie it down to one, I would go with Thanksgiving. There is usually ham and turkey. The combines smells fill the house that itself is filled with voices and laughter. The food just tastes better with family. The turkey and ham, with home made dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy. Fresh corn that was frozen earlier in the year, still tastes great along with the green beans. Sweet tea to wash it all down and just a huge spread of desserts as everyone bakes and brings their favorite.

What is your favorite meal? What's on your plate? in your glass?

Isaiah writes: *"Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live"* (vv 2b–3a).

Isaiah is not talking about roast meats and hot rolls here. The table he is inviting us to has the richest of food and the most nourishing of drink. You see, the table we eat at has been set by God's one-and-only Son. Jesus has prepared a meal for us beyond imagination.

And how did he prepare that meal?

Well, just before this invitation to come and eat at this table, Isaiah had prophesied what God's Servant would do. Listen to these sentences from Isaiah

53. *Isaiah 53:1–5 (ESV)*

*“<sup>1</sup> Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”*

Sound familiar? Of course. Jesus' final few days on this earth. He is rejected and beaten. He is whipped and bloodied. You can picture how the Roman soldiers have despised Him. You've seen pictures of His wounds and that He was so crushed He could not even carry His cross to His execution. Stricken. Smitten. Afflicted.

Jesus does all this to set the table with the richest of foods.

He bore our griefs. He carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. He has all our sin and iniquity on His shoulders. And by His stripes we are healed.

On that cross, He prepares forgiveness for that iniquity. By His suffering, the table is covered with salvation. His death puts eternal life on our plates.

Look at the table—each dish, every glass brings us to the very presence of God to eat and drink of His peace. Yes, His peace.

One of the choicest of foods on Jesus' table is peace.  
And not just any peace.

The Bible's peace is more than absence of war, a stop in fighting.

God's peace is safety, health, wholeness, plenty. Food to eat. Wounds healed. Relationships strong. Bodies sound and fit. Purpose in life. One symbol for peace is the horn of plenty. The horn of plenty is a long basket, small at one end, and at the larger open end, all sorts of food rolls out. In times of peace, people have food—lots of it. It's a time of satisfaction.

Peace is health and wholeness of body and soul. Peace is freedom from worry. Peace is uninterrupted sleep. Peace is the bounce in your step and the quiet confidence of a day lived with purpose.

What an incredible spread of food on God's table: forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, God's love, and peace.

It's a meal that satisfies, blesses our relationships, gives wholeness of body and soul, provides purpose to life. And we are invited to this rich feast of blessings.

We're invited because Jesus didn't stay crushed and beaten. He didn't stay in the grave. He rose victoriously on Easter. This meal is a victory

celebration, a time to rejoice. It's the most joyous meal you could ever eat because Jesus is there, alive and inviting us to join Him.

Yes, He's inviting us. Now that, too, is incredible. Normally, who gets invited to the best meals in town?

Have you ever thought about a dinner at the White House?

In Washington DC, there is a protocol officer. His job is to make sure people sit in the right places when a major event occurs. Who sits closest to the president of the United States? Which senators are invited? Where do they sit? And it's not just with state dinners. Are you famous? Then you get invited to the clubs and parties. Celebrities get in; others wait in line outside.

Are you good-looking and wear just the right brand-name clothes? Someone will pull up a chair for you to sit on.

But notice what happens with those meals. People are excluded because they don't have enough money. No political power? Go home. Not young and beautiful? Not welcome. Don't expect anyone to make room for you.

But that's not the case with Jesus. Listen again: "*Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!*

*Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*" (v 1).

What an amazing invitation! Everyone is invited. No one is excluded from this invitation. You could be old, weak, tired, handicapped, nerdy, out of shape, wearing secondhand clothes bought at a thrift shop, unemployed, underemployed, unnoticed.

Anyone is invited. Status, power, money, fame, looks, dress don't count at Jesus' table. In fact, you can't buy your way to this table. You can only be invited by Jesus. He set the table. The chairs are ready for you and me to sit in. And only the richest of foods are there for us to nourish bodies and souls.

But some seats are empty. Some haven't arrived at the meal yet. They still need to be invited. And who does the inviting?

We do. We are the witnesses to the people who aren't yet at the table. I mean, if one hundred extra people suddenly showed up for church, we'd make room for them. But they'd need to be invited for that to happen.

Some thing or some one would have to give them cause to walk through the door.

Here are three practical ways for you to help with that invitation. First, just because you can't buy a way to Jesus' table doesn't mean money isn't important in the church. Lights need to be on. Heat needs to warm the building. Bread and wine need to be bought for the Lord's Supper. Salaries need to be paid. The buildings need to be kept up so that people feel welcome and safe here. Our church needs to be an inviting place to come, and your contributions make that happen. When you put an envelope or money in the collection plate, it's not to buy your way in, but to help invite others to come and eat at Jesus' wonderful table.

Give generously as those inviting others to the table.

Second, actually invite someone to come to worship. Ask someone you know to accompany you to a service or Bible class. Show that person around. Sit with

him and help him follow the service. Most people who don't attend church end up coming because someone invited them. Be the one who speaks an invitation and then help them through the service, making them feel all the more welcome.

Third, live an inviting life. Live a life that shows anyone is welcome to feast on Jesus' forgiveness, life, salvation, and peace.

Give generously. Invite freely. Be a living invitation. Because look what happens when we come to Jesus' table. On the altar is His body given on a cross, His blood, shed for you.

Picture yourself coming up to the Communion rail. You kneel. Then imagine the walls of the church aren't there, nor the stained glass windows. Instead, the communion rail extends around the world, filled with all those who eat and drink of Jesus' forgiveness and peace. We are kneeling with everyone who has come to this wonderful meal: male and female, rich and poor, healthy and sick, young and old,

And who else is with us? Jesus is. Our risen Lord has set the table. He invited us. What a meal this is now and for all eternity, including for those who still need to be invited.

You have been invited, and it is your privilege to invite others.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Jesus has set and invited us to His table to eat and drink,  
we are called to invite others.

Isaiah 55:1–5

1. Jesus sets the table for mankind.
2. The table is set with the best of everything, including peace.
3. The world invites the rich and powerful, Jesus invites everyone.
4. There are still empty chairs at the table; we need to invite others to the meal.