

Isaiah 55:1-5

As I read the words of our text today, the first thing I thought of was the **song** entitled, Come To The Wells. This is a song which, at least for a while, our Synod had unofficially **adopted** as its theme-song. You used to hear a **portion** of it every time we watched a segment of the WELS Connection **video**. For those of you who have never heard the **entire** song before, I'd like to take a moment and **share** those words with you. They read, "*Come to the wells, and be filled with **living water**. Come to the wells for **new life** in the living **Word**. Come as you **are**, let your **spirit** be restored. Walk in the new life of **Jesus Christ** our Lord. Come as you **are**; lay your **burdens** down. He calls you by **name** to a love that knows no bounds. In a world that knows Him **not**, His voice can still be **heard**, 'Come and learn of **Me**, I am the **living Word**.' Come to the **wells** for the **living water**, and the living **Word**." It's a **beautiful** song, with a beautiful **message** - a message which is based on the words of our text for today, Isaiah 55:1-5.*

Our sermon today presents three main thoughts. There is an invitation to **come**, the instructions to **follow** once we **get** there, and the **benefits** we will receive as a **result**. Our text begins with the **invitation**. "*Hey, all of you who are thirsty, **come** to the water.*" Bear in mind that **God** is the one who is taking the **initiative** here. **He** is the one who is sending out this invitation - and what an invitation it is! In order to realize the full **impact** of these words, we must remember how important **water** is. Water is one of the **life sustaining** elements. We all **need** water in order to **live** - we can't get by **without** it. That in **itself** makes water **extremely** valuable. However, when you add the fact that good, drinkable water is a very **scarce** resource in the Holy Land, that makes it even **more** valuable. In Isaiah's day, water was sold by **vendors**. We might compare such a person to the **ice cream** vendors who drive around in their ice cream trucks playing **music** to attract all the children in the neighborhood. When you hear the **music**, if you're hungry for **ice cream**, all you have to do is **come** and **buy** it. Although the sales methods and tactics were considerably **different**, the **concept** was virtually the **same** for the **water** vendors in Isaiah's day. They would have been happy to sell you **water** - if you were **thirsty**, and if you had the **money** to pay the **price**.

That would have been a pretty **normal** situation in many towns and villages at the time of our text. But now let's **change** the picture a bit. Instead of picturing someone bringing their bottled water to **town** in order to sell it, let's move out into the **desert**. Picture a man crawling through the desert with tattered clothes and a parched throat **gasping** for water. Just by **coincidence**, along comes a **water vendor** offering his life sustaining water at a cost of only **\$20.00/bottle**. Now **you** might

think that \$20.00 is a **ridiculous** price to pay for a bottle of **water** - but it's **not** ridiculous to a man who's **dying** of **thirst**. He would gladly pay **\$200** or even **\$2,000** for a bottle of water, in order to save his **life**. Unfortunately, the man in our scenario doesn't have a **cent** to his name - so it doesn't matter if the water is priced at \$20.00, or \$2.00, or even a **penny** a bottle. He **still** couldn't **buy** it and quench his **thirst**. The only way he could get that water, was if the vendor was **giving** it away for **free**.

That's exactly the **spiritual** situation in which we find **ourselves**. Our souls are **thirsty** for spiritual **water** and spiritual **blessings**. But you and I are spiritually **bankrupt**, and unable to **purchase** the water of life which we need. What will we **do**? How will we **survive**? Thanks be to **God, He** has the perfect solution to our problem. In our text He says, "*Even if you have **no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk **without** money and **without** cost.***" What we **need** - the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in heaven - is offered to us **free of charge** through our Savior Jesus Christ. All we have to do is **come** and **get** them.

Isn't it **amazing** that so many people who already **know** this still don't come and feed their souls with God's precious **Word**? The Bible is available to us **daily** in our homes. The Bible is also available to us **weekly** right here in our worship services. Online Bible Classes are available too. We even have **regular opportunities** to come and receive God's Word and His forgiveness as it is offered to us in the Sacrament of **Holy Communion**. With all these opportunities to feed our souls and **more**, there should certainly be **no reason - no excuse** - for allowing our souls and our faith to **waste away** because of a lack of spiritual food and water.

I thank God that even though the world around us is trying to keep us from gathering together for worship, **you** are **here** today or are **tuning in** today to hear God's Word and to grow **stronger** from it. There is **no substitute** for God's Word, even though many people **think** they can get by **without** it. Somehow they think they can gain strength by **praying** for it, or by helping **others** who are in need. But that won't **work**. Such things take great **effort** on our part, and actually **drain** our spiritual strength. In order to continue to **have** the strength to carry out such **fruits** of faith, we must see to it that our faith receives **regular** spiritual **food** and **water**. As you well know, a fruit tree which doesn't continue to receive water and nourishment will soon stop **producing** fruit, and in **time**, it may even become **diseased** and **die**. Our **faith** is no different. It needs **continual** feeding and strengthening, and that comes **only** from our Lord. Jesus Himself says, "*Come to **me**, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I** will give you rest ... If anyone is **thirsty**, let him come to **me** and drink!*" It is through **Jesus alone** that God freely gives us **all** we need for our physical **and** spiritual life. So, why would we even **attempt** to find our strength

anywhere **else**?

Yet, there are many people who are still desperately struggling to find peace and satisfaction in the **riches** of this world. Very few people would argue with you if you said that the riches of this world include **money** and the things that it can **buy**. Most of us, if not **all** of us, would like to make **more** money than we do now. Perhaps we would like to drive a newer **car**, or have a nicer **home**, or work on a faster **computer**. We aren't really **greedy** - we just want a **little** more. But that's **exactly** where the **deception** lies. While there is really nothing **wrong** with having more of the things of this world, they just can't **satisfy** us. Money can buy **medicine** - but it can't buy **health**. Money can buy a **bed** - but it can't buy **rest**.

The **point** of all this is found in the **question** which **Isaiah** asks us in our text when he says, "*Why do you spend money on something that is not **bread**? Why do you waste your labor on something that does not **satisfy**? Listen carefully to **me**, and eat what is **good**. Satisfy your appetite with **rich** food.*" Isaiah wants to know why we **waste** so much time, effort, and hard-earned money on a bunch of **things** which only leave us feeling **empty** or wanting **more**. Why **bother** with costly things which don't **satisfy**, when we can have **total satisfaction** for **free**? That's a good **question**, isn't it?

But Isaiah doesn't stop with just **asking** this piercing question. He also gives us an **answer** for it. He says, "*Listen. Listen carefully to **me** and eat what is **good**. Satisfy your appetite with **rich** food. Turn your ear **toward me**, and **come** to me. **Listen**, so that you may continue to **live**.*" **Turning our ears** toward the LORD means paying **close attention** to what He says. The LORD doesn't use any **gimmicks** or **strong arm** tactics with us. He leaves the choice to **us**. **We** are to listen - **we** are to come to Him - and **we** are to **hear** Him, so that our souls may **live**. God doesn't **drag** us along by the ears, but rather, He **encourages** us to **listen** to Him, because He gives us **good, solid** advice.

And what is God telling us to **do**? Our text concludes, "*Look, you will **call out** to a **nation** you know not, and a nation that does not know you will run to you, on account of the **Lord** your God, because of the **Holy One** of Israel, for he has **glorified** you.*" God says we should **call out** to **nations** - **invite** people to **come** - to come and see the **glory** which He has **given** to us. Maybe you're thinking that sounds pretty **boastful**, and it **would** be if we were talking about the mere **human** glory of our church building, or even the **people** of our congregation. But we're **not**. The **real** glory which we want them to see - the glory which has been **given** to us - is **Jesus** - **our** Savior, and **their** Savior.

In conclusion, our text makes it very clear what the **results** of doing this will be, because Isaiah writes, “*Satisfy your appetite with **rich** food ... You may continue to **live** ... I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you ... And there will be **faithful mercies**.” A lack of **time** will prohibit me from going into **detail** on each of these blessings, so I will concentrate only on the **first** - “*Satisfy your appetite with **rich food**.” A more **literal** translation of that first sentence would be, “Satisfy your appetite with **fatness**.” There is probably no other society in all of history which is as **preoccupied** with physical **weight** as **ours** is. Just think about all the ads and commercials which deal with diets, exercise, and fitness. But God isn’t **worried** about fatness at all. In fact, He is **proud** to be an **abundant** or **fat** God - and He invites us to **share** in His fatness - the fatness of His **blessings** - the fatness of His **goodness** - the fatness of His **love**.**

It’s like the song says, “*Come to the wells, and be **filled** with living water. Come to the wells for **new life** in the living Word.*” **Come!** To those who follow God’s invitation, He offers eternal life and an everlasting covenant. Why waste our time on **things** which don’t **satisfy**? **Come To The WELS, And Listen To the LORD. Come** to the Lord Jesus - **listen** to Him - receive real **satisfaction** in your life **through** Him - and by all means, **share** Him with others. Amen.