Oct. 16th, 2022 Memory Verse: Isaiah 55:1

“Come Buy and Eat” Scripture Reading: Psalm 34:1-10

A while back, my wife and I had a chance to try out a new restaurant. It came highly recommended and, as we walked in, it looked the part. Everything was clean and well-presented and the aroma of wonderful cuisine was undeniable. We went up to the counter to order our food, and feeling hungrier by the minute, we sat down to wait…and wait…and wait. We looked around and observed that there were very few other customers at the other tables. What could be taking so long? We just ordered burgers! We went through the old debate about whether or not we should get up and say something, but we opted to just be patient. Finally our burgers came out and they looked amazing! Yes, we waited too long but a least the food would be worth the wait. Finally after a few bites in, we both realized that our burgers we basically raw.

**Slide 2: Raw Hamburger**

 Now I know some people like a little pink in their meat, but I have never seen such a deep, vibrant red in a hamburger before. We again wondered why the cook could not seem to have found the time to properly cook our food. This time I was forced to get up and ask that our burgers be cooked longer.

 Now, everyone lived and it was no big deal, but I wanted to share that little story because we have all experienced disappointment. We have all been let down. But the feeling of dissatisfaction is made all the worse when we go into the situation with such high expectations. I can handle badly cooked food from Denny’s…but a high priced, specialty restaurant with a great reputation? That is a different story. My standard for them is higher because they function with a higher standard. And I am paying more money expecting to get a premium product. And so, I am set up to be more greatly disappointed.

 Well, I would be just outright dishonest for any of us to say that our sense of disappointment does not, at times, play into our faith. If we are talking about standards, well God is at the top of that list. His standard is perfection! His quality is the highest! His reputation is… well…it depends on who you talk to on that one. For many, their expectations of God have not panned out. They feel that they have not received what they ordered. Many people are disappointed with God.

**SLIDE 3: Many people are disappointed with God.**

 That is sort of where we meet God’s people in Isaiah 55. Last week we finished talking about Isaiah 54. We talked about we need not fear, that God had all these amazing promises in store for his people. That he would be their husband, that His faithful love (*hesed*) would never leave them, that they would be built up and beautified and that no weapon would be able to harm them. He told them, “All your children will be disciples of the Lord.” We talked about all these great benefits and blessings…but what is the crucial unpinning in all of this? Do we trust in these words? It actually all sounds too good to be true. Maybe it would be best if we didn’t get out hopes up.

**SLIDE 4: Dragon’s Den**

One business owner walked out of the Dragon’s Den, which is the British version of Shark Tank, after not getting a deal. The host of the show made a comment about the experience not going as he had hoped. The entrepreneur replied, “I don’t hope, and that way I am not disappointed.” I suppose in one sense, this man is right. We can avoid unmet expectations by always keeping our sights aimed low. After all, the higher our expectation, the lower the possibility it will be met. But on the other hand, why would this same man wake up that morning and drive to the studio? Why would he stand in front of millionaires and talk about his product? Why would he ever start a business in the first place? Hope! He drove, hoping he would arrive safely. He stood and spoke hoping for an investment. He is in business hoping to be successful, to make a profit! This man, who denigrates the idea of hope, is in fact a man of great hope!

 What about you? What about me? In what or whom does our hope lay? God has many great promises in store for those who place their trust, their hope, in him. I want to continue to look at Isaiah 55. The listing of God’s great blessings continues here, but there is also included some things, some responses, that we need to enact on our part.

**SLIDE 5: Isaiah 55**

 Look at verse 1: “All of you who are thirsty, come to the water! Whoever has no money, come, **buy food and eat!** Without money, at no cost, buy wine and milk! Why spend money for what isn’t food, and your earnings for what doesn’t satisfy? Listen carefully to me and eat what is good; enjoy the richest of feasts.” On our date night, at the recommended restaurant, my wife and I spent money on something that did not satisfy. How often have you spent money, only to be left with dissatisfaction? We actually have a term for it: “buyer’s remorse”. So what are we to do?…The first thing is to come. Just come. Show up! Be present! Don’t miss out! Come buy and eat! Expect, notice in verse one, the feast being offered is free! There is no monetary cost involved. God is providing for our needs, he is fulfilling our expectations, but we have to show up!

 Now, our church is currently in the process of collecting money through our capital campaign drive. We have a target of collecting enough funding in order to build a pavilion outside in our field. And I cannot help but see the correlation here.

SLIDE 6: **Come buy and eat! Come by and eat!**

God’s word to his people: **Come buy and eat!**  is our word to our community: **Come by and eat!** Enjoy a satisfying meal on us! Enjoy hospitality! Enjoy fellowship! And, even more than that, come and see what truly satisfies, come and learn what it means to get your hopes up in a God who will not disappoint.

**SLIDE 7: “Listen and come to me; listen, and you will live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful loyalty to David. Look, I made him a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander of peoples.” Isaiah 55:3**

 Verse 3: “Listen and come to me; listen, and you will live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful loyalty to David. Look, I made him a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander of peoples.” We have now another act that we are to perfom added to the list. The first was to come. The show up. But now we need to listen as well. Listen as though our life depended on it, because it does! Our lives depend on it! Listen and you will live. So are you listening?? This is what the Lord says. He says he will make a covenant with us and what kind of covenant? An everlasting covenant. He will show us his faithful loyalty…that is the word *hesed*  the same word we looked at last week. Remember the key to understanding this *hesed* love of God is to remember that it is associated with action. It is not emotionally based, but action based. It means that God will act on our behalf and he will do so by virtue of this covenant that he has established.

 So we come, we listen and we also look. We behold, we witness the powerful things that God is doing.

**SLIDE 8: “Look, you will call a nation you don’t know, a nation you don’t know will run to you because of the Lord your God, the holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.” Isaiah 55: 5**

Let’s read verse 5: “Look, you will call a nation you don’t know, a nation you don’t know will run to you because of the Lord your God, the holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.” These are words of hope, right? And we are a people of hope. We carry with us the highest expectations because we are present, we have come, we are listening and we are looking for the fulfillment of our hopes.

 This idea of the nations coming to us, is quite a reversal. About a hundred years after Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah spoke for God to the people. His message was a warning about coming destruction due to the unfaithfulness of the people and their failure to live out the established covenant. Listen to these words in Jeremiah 5:15, “I am about to bring a distant nation against you, people of Israel, declares the Lord. It is an established nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language you don’t know, whose speech you won’t understand.” That’s a warning about exile that is to come. You will go, you will be taken, you will not know these people and it will happen because of your sin. So let’s look back now to Isaiah 55:5. Here nations will come to us. Do you see the reversal? People we don’t know will come to us, and why? Because we are so good? Because we serve the best meals in town? Because we have built a pavilion? No. People will come because of the Lord our God who glorifies us. People will come because they see God at work here. They will come because they sense his glory here. They will come because we serve up truth that satisfies! The psalmist says, “Taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8)!”

**SLIDE 9: “Taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8)!”**

My wife and I went to that restaurant. We entered into a covenantal relationship. We agreed to pay higher prices and they agreed to provide a satisfactory product. We went in with high hopes. We tasted, but we were disappointed. The cooks failed to live up to their side of the agreement. But church, we have to believe that our God doesn’t fail. He has promised us things that seem too good to be true and yet, is God capable of seeing through His end of the deal? Of course he is! Are we capable of seeing through our end of the deal? With God’s help the through the power of the Holy Sprit we can. Amy Grant had a hit song releases in 1991. It was called Hope Set High. I wanted to share a few of the lyrics with you and I want you to hear them as though they were spoken by someone from the surrounding community coming to our church: “I’ve got my hope set high. That’s why I came tonight. I need to see the truth, I need to see the light.” And our response to such a person would be: “When it all comes down, when it all comes down, if there’s anything good that happens in life, it’s from Jesus.”

**SLIDE 10: “When it all comes down, when it all comes down, if there’s anything good that happens in life, it’s from Jesus.”**

We can be a church that invites people we don’t know to come and eat! We can be a church that listens, takes to heart and sets our hopes high in the promises God has made. We can be a church who looks out and sees those promises being fulfilled in our midst. And so we build in faith. We use our finances, our church property here and most of all our prayers, to do everything we can to invite others to come by and eat.

 Amen.