

I got some good news for you this morning. Free food!

But it gets even better than that. There's going to be a party, a big bash, a shindig, a hootenanny! And it is all free for you! All you need to bring is yourself. In fact, all you can bring is yourself. The Lord God is inviting you to His wedding feast.

When I was 16, in high school, and casting about for direction in my life...

If you would have asked me at that point in my life what I really wanted.

I would have said that I wanted to be a mighty swordsman.

Now you might say, "How admirable! The guy wanted to know the Bible and how to use it."

No. I liked swords and I liked wielding them. Among other things, I was a fencer.

I wanted to fight orcs and dragons and sorcerers and save the world.

The problem with that was that we didn't really have a big problem then...

with orcs and dragons and sorcerers. So, I didn't have a lot of direction in my life.

For this reason, I began reading my Bible, and for this reason I began reading in Revelation.

*And I came across this passage. **Revelation 3:20-21***

I felt at that moment that the Lord was knocking on the door of my life.

But I wondered at the rest of the passage. Supper with God? Is that what it is talking about?

Is this even possible?

To overcome, and sit with the great king at His banquet beside His Father?

This is where Isaiah takes us in the text before us today.

God has invited every person in this world to come to Him and enjoy the gracious banquet...

served by His Servant who suffered.

You are invited to the feast.

The Servant Messiah wants you to come and dine with Him.

In the first part of Isaiah, through chapter 39, Isaiah warns God's people...

Sin = specific violations of God's Law

Corruption = worshipping idols and wrecking their lives

Rebellion = saying to God, "No thank you. I can live my life just fine without You."

For this reason, judgment is coming on God's people, just as it is coming upon the entire world.

And God is the sovereign Lord over all the nations of the earth throughout history.

So God promises judgment, but He also promises a King, a Messiah, to rescue His people.

A king who will do what no other king has or could ever do. **Isaiah 11:1-12**

But God's people would not listen and so judgment did come in the form of Assyria and then Babylon.

In Isaiah 40 begins the second major section of Isaiah, now written to a people in captivity in Babylon.

Isaiah 40:1-5 God's hurting people need comfort.

They have been brought low by their sin and the discipline of the Lord.

So we learn that the Lord's Servant is coming. The Messiah King is called "the servant."

It is a remarkable title and says something even in itself. What king comes as a servant? This one does. He comes as a gentle servant, guided by the Spirit of God.

He comes to rescue captives, heal the hurting, and to open blind eyes. The imagery of Isaiah is powerful.

He comes to save God's people from their sin and idolatry.

And He holds the fate, future, and the decisions of the greatest emperors in the palm of His hand.

Isaiah 48:12-16 God will act. His Servant will rescue His people. But how?

In Isaiah 53 we learn that the Servant will suffer and die and give His life in exchange for His people.

The Messiah King is a Suffering Servant.

But His suffering is not the end. No, He suffers in order to save and bring victory for His people.

Isaiah 54:17 And vindication means a celebration.

I. The Lord is inviting you to a feast. Isaiah 55:1-5

Are you thirsty? Are you longing for something that you do not yet have?

I have felt that.

Are you poor? Do you see your lack, your spiritual poverty? That you have nothing really to offer God?

I have felt that too.

Back to that passage in Revelation... Do you know what the problem was that the Lord was addressing?

Revelation 3:17-21 They thought that they could satisfy all their desires with stuff.

Wow, is that not where we are right now in 21st century America?

People really think that they can buy their way to heaven, at least for a little while.

The Lord is inviting you to His feast. And He is going to pay your way.

In fact, He has to pay your way because if it were on you to pay... well...

You could be Bill Gates and you still couldn't afford the entry fee. You cannot pay the price.

You might think you can... that you can satisfy your longings with money and stuff. (vss. 2-3)

We live in a world where people all around us, and even we ourselves are seeking more.

We want something to make us happy.

We are spending our money, seeking life... but finding only death.

All because we do not understand the Lord's invitation.

He says come. He says, "I will pay your way by my own blood shed for your sins."

He says "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me."

You just have to let Him pay and then come to the feast His way. You cannot come your way.

This feast shows up in a lot of places in the Bible. It is a wedding feast. (Revelation 19:9)

And you have got to understand how a wedding and the feasting worked in Isaiah's and Jesus' day.

Matthew 22:1-14

When a Jewish man wanted to get married, he would go to the bride's father and strike a bargain.

They would then be betrothed. People sort-of considered them married.

Then he would go and begin building his house, usually onto his father's house.

When he had a place to live and enough to provide for his wife...

he would return and there would be a wedding and a huge feast that would last a week.

When he was on his way back, the invitations would go out to all the family and guests.

The Son of God is on His way, the meal is being prepared, the invitations have gone out.

II. You have to respond to the invitation. Isaiah 55:6-9

You have the invitation, but you must respond. If you do not respond you will miss out, forever.

You cannot show up to this feast with your own money.

You cannot come to this feast in your own clothes.

You might think, "Hey, I'm good enough for God." But it is His wedding and His feast.

You come in your own clothes; you will get your own self thrown out.

You need the righteousness found only in Jesus Christ.

You might think, "Hey, I'll get there in my own good time." But it is His wedding and His feast.

You must respond now because you don't know when it will be too late.

And the Lord can go out and invite somebody else if you won't come.

If you want to come to this feast, you have to come God's way, not yours.

His ways are not ours. 1 Corinthians 1 says that God uses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

You might think that you know stuff, but God knows better.

This is why it is so important to know what God says and how God thinks.

And, to understand all that you have got to be willing to set aside your thoughts and your ways.

Why should I do that? Because God's thoughts and God's ways are better. They actually happen.

And you have to say "Yes" to His invitation. If you don't, you will miss it forever.

III. It is going to be grand and wonderful. Isaiah 55:10-13

God upholds His words so that what He says always happens. There is power in what God says. Therefore, what God says is always worth reading, studying, memorizing, talking about. You do not want to miss this feast. Romans 8 tells us that all creation is longing for it, trees, hills, valleys, rills. vs. 13, "It will be a name to the Lord." People will be talking about it forever, literally.

Brothers and sisters, there is a feast coming. It's better than the best church potluck. The bridegroom is on the way. Things are going to be amazing, and they won't stop being amazing.

All of creation is moving toward this moment.

In every book of the Bible, every part of the Bible, in nearly every chapter...

We are taught to be thinking about the Lord's return and His grand design for us and for creation.

This is supposed to be the goal of your life, the Lord's return and our meeting Him.

But the devil does not want you to think about it.

He does not want you to talk about it.

He does not want your life to be about this. He wants it to be about something else.

I just returned from a two-day meeting in Minneapolis. I'm part of our national Board of Ministerial Standing.

We discuss pastors and churches and doctrinal and moral issues.

There is a tragic movement in today's American evangelical churches.

People and churches are making their lives about COVID vaccines, for or against...

About masks, for or against... about Trump, or about hating Trump

About Republicans, or about Pelosi, or about schools, or about America, and on and on.

People are protesting and blogging and sending messages to their friends and relatives...

As if these issues are now the most important thing on the planet.

My friends, practically speaking, you get to stand for one thing.

When people think about you and your life and what you think, you get to have one message.

What is it going to be?

That COVID vaccine is government overreach? Really? If everyone believed that, would it change a thing?

If the Republicans took over the government, would anything really get better for long?

Have we learned nothing from history or the Bible?

King Jesus, who gave His life for me, is on His way and He has invited us all to His feast. Are you ready?

That's my message. And it changes everything.

And I do not want to confuse or dilute that message with any other.

When my brother, who knows what I think about all these contemporary and political issues...

When He asks me what I think... and he wants to go around on it.

I tell him, "You know what I think, but I also think that what I think doesn't matter that much."

"I do not look to politics or politicians for solutions to the most important problems."

"And I don't hold banners or post stuff online that might make people think that I do."

"It is what Jesus thinks that matters. And His is the only opinion that really matters."

Do you know what Jesus said about the political issues of His day?

Nothing. Ever. He had relentless message control. He always turned the conversation back to God.

He spoke about sin and salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven coming to this world.

Do you know why? It is because that is what matters.

I do not want this church to be an anti-COVID shot church or a pro-mask church or a home school church....

Or a conservative church, or a hipster church, or any other kind of church.

I want this church to be a Jesus church, a Christian church...

Relentless in our focus upon what Jesus says, what He has done, and what He will still do.

It is His word that will not return without accomplishing its purpose.

He speaks the truth. He will solve our problems. He will bring justice. He will make all things new.

And He's coming. And you're all invited to the feast. You do not want to miss out.

Have you responded to your invitation?