

Sunday, March 24, 2019

Isaiah 55:1-9

Theme: "WITH ALL YOUR HEART-REPENTING"

(SPIRIT OF LENT)

We are still in the spirit of Lent, which means our forty days journey continues...

If you have encountered a mountain, I hope it has not been too high that you could not cross over...

Or if you have encountered a valley, I equally hope that it has not been too deep that you could not climb out of...

(SPIRITUAL PRACTICES)

We have called attention to few of the spiritual practices that are associated with Lent that might help us in those times of crossing mountains and climb out of valleys ...

During these forty days, at least there should be a time of FAST and PARYER...

There should be a time of SELF-DENIAL and SELF- EXAMINATION...

By so doing we will be able to observe and align ourselves with God's plans for us...

Remember, God's plan is the free gift of salvation offered to ALL who will receive it...

That means we should constantly take an inventory of our lives to find out where do we stand in our relationship with God...

These spiritual disciplines/practices then become our spiritual food...

But it almost seems to me that there is a constant tension between how we receive our physical food compared to how we receive our spiritual food...

(ISRAELITES' CONTEXT)

Before we move forward, let us consider the context of the Israelites in this passage...

Their long exile in Babylon is coming to an end...

But they had been in exile for so long that the things they remembered about the Promise Land had faded away...

*Todd and Jennifer Pick are two Ordained Elders in the Central Texas Conference...

There contributions to and commentary on this text suggest that the people were FEASTING on the "economy of scarcity..."

*The empire at the time wrongly taught them in believing that they would never have enough; they would never amount to anything...

For that and other reasons the people were living on the edge...

*But they were also FASTING...

*The abundant promises of God was in sight...

*The assurance that God would one day bring them back home was drawing near...

*Even though they were hungry for hope, because they embodied the spiritual discipline of FASTING, they persevere...

Then came the call from God...

Those who are spiritually hungry and thirsty may come to eat and drink freely; come to the Fountain...

Friends, God is the Fountain and this Fountain never runs dry...

God promises an everlasting covenant to us just like the one established with Israel...

God's invitation to ALL is clearly stated by the appeal, "seek ye the LORD and call ye upon Him..."

In these words we find comfort, security, and assurance in God...

(ECONOMY OF SCARCITY)

But in a nation of plenty, there are many who do not have a table to sit at to have a decent meal...

Yet, there are many other tables that are blessed with plenty of food to eat...

The Israelites were malnourished in exile, but we read in Isaiah that they are now being called to God's Table...

Let us now personalize Isaiah 's message and put it in context...

Are we not FEASTING on the scarcity of things that divide us in our country today...

(1)

Poor Citizenship...

Blame...

(2)

Distrust...

Lack of Civility...

(3)

Unhealthy Political Discourse

Division

(4)

Greed...

Fear...And the list could go on...

These are all distinctive features of our nation today...

We are so "well-fed" with the things that do not satisfy that there is little or no room for the things that do satisfy..

REPENT)

There is grace at God's Table...

There is Love at God's Table...

There is Peace at God's Table...

There is Happiness at God's Table...

(COME)

The way to do this is to receive God's invitation to COME...

Leave the FEASTING of the world behind and COME to God...

Release yourself from the starvation of God's love and grace and COME to God...

Free yourself from the power of sin and be restored to the image of God, COME...

Salvation story...

Amen!