

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Advent 3: Come and Get it

God invites us into a life that really satisfies.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1-13

Rev. Steve Filyk

December 12, 2021

Advent Wreath: When God is a Child (verse 3)

Opening Hymn: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Chorus: You Are Holy (Prince Of Peace), Seek ye first

Closing Hymn: Lo He Comes With Clouds Descending [120]

Third Sunday of Advent

"Come and get it!"

"Come and get it!"

[One commentator recalls]

"When I was a child, ["Come and get it!"] was an imperative
that my mother only had to say once.

As soon as we heard the words,
my brothers and I would quit our basketball
or baseball games in mid-play
in order to crowd around the dinner table
for the meal that my mom had prepared.

We didn't respond so quickly
because the imperative was a threat,
nor did we think of it as a demand being made of us.

Rather, the words were music to our ears...

They were an invitation to come
and fill our hungry stomachs
—an announcement that there was good food
available for us."ⁱ

"Come and get it!"

That phrase is familiar to many of us.
It was a wonderful proclamation
That told us, as children,
That 'good' food was available.

Of course things have changed a lot
since most of our childhoods.

Kids are no longer roaming free-range in neighborhoods

Needing to be hailed back home for dinner.

The slow-cooking of a previous generation
Has been replaced by fast-food,
take-out, and easy prep meals of today.

While we are wealthier than ever,
We are somehow eating poorer.

Don't believe me?

Have you seen this picture before [show slide].
It is a picture of an ideal meal
From the Canada-food guide:

Half of it is covered with fruit and veggies.
The carbs are all whole-grain.
Water is the beverage of choice.

I'd hazard a guess that few of our plates
look like this...
Even once a week.

We are a wealthy people.
We have more knowledge than previous generations.
And yet for all the money and knowledge
We are less healthy and eat poorer.

"According to recent study
by the Canadian Men's Health Foundation...
62 per cent of men said they had **unhealthy diets**.

On top of this, 72 per cent of men
had two or more unhealthy habits on top of bad diets,
including excessive smoking, drinking,
and not getting enough sleep or exercise.ⁱⁱ

So why all this talk about food?

Today's passage speaks about food, and nutrition.

Today we are in the book of Isaiah.
We are in a section of that book
Which many scholars call **Second** Isaiah.

It is a portion of the book, believed to be written
After Judah has been occupied,
And its leaders deported to Babylon.

Unlike previous chapters which warned the people
 That judgement was coming,
 This section is full of consolation.

Today's passage is a summons back
 To the God that has disciplined them
 for their faithlessness, their disloyalty.

[For those of you who are familiar with the book of Proverbs
 you might consider the connection between today's passage
 And Proverbs chapter 9.]

Today's summons is expressed as metaphor:
 an invitation to a feast.

Listen to Peterson's rendition
 found in his translation, *The Message*:

"Hey there! All who are thirsty,
 come to the water!
 Are you penniless?
 Come anyway—buy and eat!
 Come, buy your drinks, buy wine and milk.
 Buy without money—everything's free!

Why do you spend your money on junk food,
 your hard-earned cash on cotton candy?
 Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best,
 fill yourself with only the finest."ⁱⁱⁱ

Life with the God of Abraham
 is described as a life of refreshment:
 water for the dehydrated.

Life with the God who brought Israel out of Egypt
 Is described as a life of sustenance:
 Food for the famished,
 Nutrition for those on the edge of scurvy.

In our day and age,
 Among middle class folk,
 Food is almost taken for granted.

But for people who lived in the time of Isaiah,
 In the Middle East,
 Both food and water
 Would be regarded as precious commodities.

And yet it wasn't so much that Isaiah's audience were starving.
It was more like they were malnourished.

What they were drinking offered no refreshment.
What they were eating
had only empty calories.

This was the consequence of turning away from the God
Who chose them,
and had saved them.

They were devoting their lives to gods
that were weak and ineffective
and ultimately could not meet their deepest needs.

Much is the same in our era.

People have rejected the God of Israel, the God of Jesus
And have chased after the gods of self-actualisation,
Wealth and acquisition.

People are eating the fast-food of individual spirituality,
Hooked on the espresso shots of self-help,
Rather than seeking source of all Being.

Why? Part of the reason lays at the feet of organised religion.
The Church has jealously guarded
the food it has been given...

Instead of sharing it with those in the community.

Part of the reason is that people are short-sighted.
People prefer to indulge their taste-buds
Instead of filling their deepest needs.

Almost all of us are guilty of failing to recognise
Our deepest yearnings.

How many times do you feel a little parched,
Note that a head-ache may be on the way,
And then pour yourself a cup of coffee
Instead of a glass of water?

How many times do you feel hungry,
And then tear open a bag of chips, or grab a cookie,
Instead of snacking on an apple or some vegetables,
Instead of settling down to prepare a nutritious meal.

The same way that we live oblivious to our physical needs,
 We can remain disconnected to our deepest spiritual needs.

In the same way that we can be out of sync with our own bodies,
 We can be living in disconnect with our creator and Savior.

Just consider this:

Instead of reconnecting with God through prayer,
 we spend an hour spying on the lives of others
 through social media.

And we feel lonelier than ever.

Instead of embracing a call to serve
 We ignore the needs of our neighbors,
 sedate our children with an ipad,
 And go shopping for things we don't need.

But after only an hour with our new treasure
 The dis-ease in our souls settles back in.

When we need to worship God with others,
 We spend the morning alone,
 Polishing the temples of our homes.
 And then we get in arguments with our family
 For messing it up again.

Too often even God's people
 are disconnected from our deepest needs.

But for those who are looking for something more...
 "For all of us who are burdened by life's failed expectations,
 by our own inadequacies, and by our sin,

God says, "Come and eat!"

For us who are afraid of death
 and who often feel as if we are slaves
 to circumstances beyond our control,

God says "Come and eat!"

For everyone who is thirsty, here is water.
 To all of us who have no money—nothing to give—

[God] still says "Come and eat!"^{iv}

The only cost is leaving behind
That which never fulfilled us anyways.

ⁱ Leslie J. Hoppe "Isaiah 55:1-9" *The Lectionary Commentary: the Old Testament & Acts* 363

ⁱⁱ Patel, Arti. "More than half of Canadian men have unhealthy diets: study." *Global News*, 12 June 2018,

ⁱⁱⁱ Isaiah 55:1-5 NIV

^{iv} Leslie J. Hoppe "Isaiah 55:1-9" *The Lectionary Commentary: the Old Testament & Acts* 365