



Eighteenth Sunday Ordinary Time 2005

Isaiah 55:1-3 Romans 8: 35-39 Matthew 14: 13-21

Isaiah asks a question today that is filled with poignancy. Why spend your money on food that is not nourishing?

Are you spending money on things that don't satisfy your deep cravings?

God calls us to the banquet of life and to accept this invitation you don't need a lot of things.

The thirteen verses of Isaiah 55 are a poem about a God-life. Isaiah is suggesting that our dis-ease come from not knowing what we really want from life. Verse three begins, "Come to me heedfully." The word *heedful* means; careful, attentive, watchful and mindful. God calls us to live our lives fully awake.

God, who is totally heedful of us, knows that we can live a half-life, worried about ourselves, our families, the future, until there is no more time to actually live, no time to enjoy all the blessings that we actually have.

"Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare."

We know that a bowl of soup and a piece of fresh bread shared with friends is better, richer fare than a four course meal eaten when our hearts are disturbed or if we have no one to share it with.

Food is a metaphor for life.

How we live depends on our nourishment. Today we are concerned about genetic modification of food, toxins in the food chain, polluted water and so on. These are all important issues.

Perhaps we are less concerned about the nourishment of the spirit. Where do we find our soul food?

Through Isaiah, God says to us, "Let me feed you. It will be rich food, only the best. We need reassurance and this God supplies. "I fed you in the wilderness."

In another deserted place Jesus also reminded people of the lavishness of God. In Matthew's story of the feeding of the crowd, Jesus calls his disciples to be hosts to the hungry.

"There is no need to send them away, **you** feed them."

The disciples' reply is often ours.

"We haven't got anything, except five loaves and a couple of fish." In other words you couldn't expect us to do much with this.

Jesus said the blessing over the food, broke it and passed it on to the disciples, *who in turn*, gave the food to the people.

As God so generously feeds us, so we must share this “food” with others. What has been given to us freely so we must give freely to others.

We give the bread and wine of compassion, of mercy, of faithfulness, of, love, of joy. Not just in small doses, measured out, but pressed down flowing over, a banquet not a counter lunch.

The Eucharist is the great sign to us that, as we are fed so must we feed.

Unfortunately we have made our Eucharist table a sign of contradiction; when we exclude people who seek to be feed, who need to be fed. I say we because the laws that keep people away from the table are human laws. People say that discipline is important but Jesus never used it to exclude people from his grace.

The first sign of the beginnings of reconciliation in a family are often when someone accepts the invitation to come to the table.

In the warmth of human fellowship, the grace of God has a fertile ground to begin the healing of old hurts.

Let us imitate God and call everyone to the feast.

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