

WEEK #3 – LOVE TRIUMPHANT SATISFIES OUR HUNGER AND THIRST

March 1st – Monday

Centering Breath Prayer: May my soul delight...in the richest of fare.

Generous God, I come once more into your presence and you more that satisfy. My soul hungers and thirsts for your loving kindness and your guiding hand and every day you bring more and more of yourself into my life. My soul truly delights in the richness of your fare. In your glorious name, I pray. Amen.

Scriptures: Isaiah 55:1-5

Key Verse: Isaiah 55:1-2:

(1) “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. (2) Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare” (NIV).

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!” Without looking at the words, we hear come, buy and eat as an invitation to “come on by,” as in come around or stop by here. But the actual invitation is not just to come by, but to come and purchase, B U Y, without money. It reminds us that that the invitation is the same for all, not just those who can afford to buy financially. But, what kind of hunger and thirst is really the issue here? One moment we are speaking of wine and milk. In the next verse we are talking about spending money on what is not bread and laboring for something which does not satisfy. The verse goes on to describe eating what is good and the richest of fare which will delight our souls. Ahh...so it's spiritual food and drink we're discussing! Our author in Isaiah is comparing our need for God and God's word to hunger and thirst for bread and drink. Our need for spiritual food and drink is just as important for life as physical food and drink for our human bodies. And our author is inviting us to come and buy this food and drink without money and without cost. The question is: just how hungry and thirsty are we for this spiritual food and drink?

Hunger and thirst come from being deprived of food and drink. When we are deprived of spiritual food and drink we become hungry and thirsty. Now this is not a bad thing if we go to our source of spiritual food and drink and fill up, as the author of Isaiah is inviting us to do. We do not have to pay for this food with money or even our own righteousness. It is offered freely to all. It is part of the mystery which we will probe later in this scripture passage when we are told that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and God's ways are not our ways. We require payment for food and drink. It's part of our ways. But, God does not require payment for the food and drink for our souls. It does not matter if we are believers or not; if we are red, black, green, pink or orange; legal citizens or illegal immigrants; single, married, young or old; straight or gay; affluent or poor or any other restriction we humans might place upon our assistance. God invites us all. “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!”

In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus names himself the Bread of Life. This declaration follows shortly after the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus tells the people not to work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give them. They then ask what work they must do to receive this gift. The work given is simply to believe in the one God has sent, that is, Jesus. They then ask for a sign that he is the one who was sent and it is at this time he tells them that he is the true bread of heaven sent from the Father and that anyone who comes to Jesus will never go hungry and he who believes in Jesus will never be thirsty. How often do we eat of this precious gift to us? Are we hungry or do we continue to eat our fill, leaving our hunger behind us? Let us remember the invitation to come, buy and eat and drink our fill, without money and without cost, because Jesus already paid the cost for us. Jesus is our rich food and most satisfying drink. Let us partake our fill every day and leave hunger and thirst behind us.

Additional Scriptures: John 6:25-40

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. What kind of food and drink will fill my spiritual hunger and thirst?
2. Do I seek to satisfy my spiritual hunger and thirst each day or do I hang onto my hunger and thirst wondering why I am always hungry and thirsty?
3. How has this Lenten journey satisfied my spiritual hunger and thirst?

Suggestions for action:

1. We will talk further of ways to fill our hunger and thirst. Make a list of the things you have found satisfying and see how it compares with my thoughts in the days to come.
2. Prepare some food for a shut in or someone you would like to surprise with a home made meal. Offer it as a gift of love with no thought of return.
3. As you eat your food and drink you fill of water and other beverages today, think about what spiritual food and drink you have received today.

Bread of Life, as I prepare for the rest of my day, I ask that you make me aware of the spiritual needs I have and the many ways in which you fulfill them. Make me truly thankful for the spiritual food and drink you give me, not only today but every day. In your satisfying name, I pray. Amen.