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Lent Day 22: The Waters

3-4 minutes

Isaiah 55:1-7 (ESV)

*Come, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!*

*Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.*

*Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?*

*Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.*

*Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live;
and I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.*

*Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.*

*Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.*

*Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

In these verses, the Holy One of Israel is crying out through Isaiah, pleading with his people on the eve of destruction to return to the true fountain of life. It is an emphatic call to come without barrier to the eternal spring of living waters. Verses 2 and 3 make clear that this water is the word of God. The invitation is to drink deeply: to receive the word, reason with it, delight in it, to listen to it like they had never listened before. “Listen diligently” (v. 2) is literally, “Listen-listen!” a call for undivided and sustained attention. Ultimately, this word is meant to save them (v. 3), transform them (v. 7), and make them a blessing to the entire world (v. 5). They are being called into communion with their compassionate God (v. 7). But they refuse to hear him (6:9).

Lent is a time for us to admit the same tendencies displayed by Isaiah’s audience. For reasons conscious and less conscious, we are prone to neglect God’s word, and ultimately, God himself. Given enough time apart from the Scriptures, a kind of spiritual amnesia sets in, where we forget the taste that is sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb (Psalm 19:10). Lent is an invitation to see Christ as the woman at the well came to see him — as the pure, limitless satisfaction for our thirsty souls. It is our invitation to return to that well and drink deeply. Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water

welling up to eternal life (John 4:14).

Prayer

Gracious Lord, in compassion you call us. By your mercy, open our ears to hear your voice, and hearing you, to return. Remove the scales from our eyes and unveil for us the wonders of your word. Your glories are revealed there. Be our delight. Be our satisfaction. Awaken in us a new sense of expectancy, as those who put their trust in you will never be put to shame. Glorious LORD, we are yours. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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