

**Isaiah 55:1-11**  
**15 Dec. 2013**

“Hungry Yet?”

You hungry yet? Not really; I think I’ll skip dinner tonight. I don’t know about your household, but in my household that’s a conversation that sometimes takes place. Sometimes I have eaten enough during the day that I don’t need any dinner. Although I do later on in the evening often find myself eating things of a less nutritious nature. I exchange goof food for not so all because I’m not hungry. Does this make sense?

If we’re not hungry I just don’t see how this Scripture that was just read is going to speak to us. We may find the words interesting, maybe even sort of inspiring on an intellectual level. But if there is no hunger that burns within us, we’re not really going to get it.

You hungry yet? On a physical level most of us aren’t. Our dinner time question is not whether or not we have anything to eat but which of the plethora of things we have in our pantries, refrigerators, and freezers we will eat.

You know what? That may well have been true for most of the people to whom this part of Isaiah prophesied. This part of Isaiah is prophesied at the end of the exile when the Jews living in Babylon had been there for two or three generations, had put down roots in their new homeland, had built homes, started businesses, and had no personal memory of the wasteland left behind in ruined Jerusalem. We can be pretty certain that the desire to return home did not burn hotly in the hearts of all who were living in exile because after they were permitted to go home many of them stayed. There was a vibrant Jewish community living in Iraq all the way through the mid twentieth century.

So if you’re not hungry yet, you just might be like the people to whom these words were prophesied. Isaiah prophesies to us as if we *were* hungry. He prophesies to us in way designed to *awaken* hunger in us. He does so by calling us to trust in a God who is outrageously generous. Think about it. If you go to a food pantry, what are you likely to get? Some canned goods, some pasta, if they’re nutrition conscious maybe some peanut butter or tuna fish, if you’re lucky maybe some day old bread, and if you’re really lucky some actually healthy food like produce. And if you’re hungry and are balancing utility bills with grocery bills and reduced hours at your minimum wage job, you’re happy to get whatever they have.

But Isaiah stands in the marketplace like a street hawker and yells out “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!” In Isaiah’s world wine and milk are signs of luxury. It would be like the food pantry giving away filets. Big Bats doesn’t have filets, do they?

Are you hungry yet? Isaiah is trying to awaken within each of us whose stomachs are over-filled and whose lives are surrounded by entertainments a hunger for that which truly satisfies because

like on those days when I skip dinner, if we do not hunger for and feast on what truly satisfies, we'll end up filling our souls with junk food. The way I learned it there are four basic psychological, spiritual, human needs each of us has: to love and be loved, to be accepted and belong, to have autonomy and be your own person, and to have self-worth. Are you hungry for those things? And because we live in a world where everything fades and wears and ends and where even good people are not always dependable, are you hungry for something eternal, something that lasts, something that *is* dependable? Are you hungry for a more just world, a more peaceful world, a more civil world? Are you hungry for the presence of God in your life, for a secure life of low anxiety and high joy because you know that God can be trusted, that there will always be at least enough, and that God will take care of you and those whom you love in life and in death? Are you hungry for a church that is serious about building relationships with this God and serious about proclaiming this Good News? Do you want that? Are you hungry yet?

If you are, Isaiah invites you to dine on the unbelievably rich feast of the words of God which are sure and certain and eternal. God's Word is going forth, says Isaiah, and it will fulfill the mission God has given it. "6 Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; 7 let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Return to the LORD you God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Yes, the Word is coming. And the Word will bring life. That's the feast we have here each week. In terms of filling your stomach, it ain't much: a piece of pita and a thimble full of wine. But that rich feast can fill your soul because it is Jesus, the Word made flesh. It's Advent; the Word is coming. Are you hungry yet?