

“Growing deep with real food for your soul”

Read:⁵⁵ *“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. ² 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. ³ 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.*

1. **You’re in the middle of a market place.** Most of us have been to a market. It can be overwhelming actually! Voices coming from all directions spruiking of bargain prices and fresh, quality produce.

The market is a place for the senses with all the colours and aromas in the air. And if you can picture it, there are generally little stalls lined up in isles that you walk up and down and they’re all displaying the food you’re hopefully looking to buy.

It’s no secret. All the best produce is at the market isn’t it? ***Either that or you have “a guy.”***

We have all kinds of ‘guys.’ There are air-conditioning guys, electrical ‘guys’ – have you got a particular ‘guy’ you take your car to for servicing? Well it’s true for our food too.

You might be thinking of a ‘guy’ right now that you think has the best produce in FNQ!

Maybe he’s a meat ‘guy’, a fish or chicken ‘guy’ or a fruit and veg ‘guy’ spruiking to the waves of people passing by.

One thing I’ve learned about markets is that good food isn’t cheap! Have you found that? And it seems it just keeps getting more expensive – but we know this – we know that **if you want good food you have to pay for it!**

Perhaps unless you know a particular “guy”.

2. ***In Isaiah 55, God is spruiking and calling out to both Jews and gentiles.***

He is calling out to you and to me here today, to our friends and families and to our community.

The picture in the text is that God is one of the market stall owners spruiking about His produce on offer to everyone.

He’s displaying the richest produce the world has ever seen.

But he’s not calling out, \$9/kg, or 2 for \$3. He’s not even going for broke at \$1 a bag. There is no price. It’s all free, without cost.

‘Free? – oh...what’s wrong with it?’

That’s the question that comes to mind when someone wants to give us something absolutely amazing...but then tell us it’s free!

There must be something wrong with it! What’s the catch? They must need a favour!

The same thing happens when we’re invited to dinner. *“What do you want me to bring?”* It’s just a reflex question isn’t it? *“Oh nothing, just bring yourself.”* So we ask, *“What are you cooking?”*

Not because we want to know what we’re going to eat...but because we think we better turn up with a bottle that matches the meal!

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But with God, it's different.

There is certainly nothing wrong with his produce.

He's not looking for a favour – there's nothing you have that the God who created the Heavens and the Earth is in need of.

Instead he offers you the richest and best produce you could ever hope to behold.

But the price!? (It's hard to get past)

You might have little money in the bank or piles of it stacked away

– it doesn't matter - you still couldn't afford to sit at the Lord's Table without His invitation.

There is no VISA or MASTERCARD that wouldn't be humbled by trying to pay for God's rich banquet. And yet He offers His produce at no cost to us.

That doesn't mean that it didn't cost God so much more than we can imagine...because it did. The cross was a terrible price to pay and we need to hear that.

Today God invites you, your friends, your family and this community to come and partake in the richest banquet you could ever hope or dream of eating. ***So what are you hungry for? What are you thirsty for?***

3. **Nothing is hidden from God's sight.**

He knows that you're hungry and thirsty.

He also knows that you don't just hunger for what *He* has prepared for you – but everything else that appeals to your own senses and tastes.

God knows he's not the only one spruiking in the market place of your life.

- He also knows all your excuses.
- He knows you've made yourself too busy to sit down and eat.
- He knows your diary is bursting with other things to do.
- He knows you're distracted and tempted other louder voices in the world.

If anyone understands where you're at today – it's Jesus.

Jesus who overcame all the temptations and lies of Satan in the wilderness.

How?

Jesus knew how important it was to be filled with more than mere bread alone – but real Spiritual food. It's no different for you today.

That's exactly why there is a sense of urgency in this word from Isaiah...

It's urgent because we also have an insatiable appetite for things that hinder our walk as disciples. It's exactly because God can see straight into us – that he can see we're running on empty (even when we think we're full) – that we are living in a state without His nutrition and His guiding instruction.

And so He up the ante for us.

Isaiah calls out **Come! Come! Come!** and then **Listen! Listen! Listen!** Verse 2b says, ***“Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live...”***

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Coming to His table, listening and hearing from God leads to life and delighting! Delighting in God and His word that teaches and instructs us for real life – *but is also the source of all real life!* That’s what real food does isn’t it? Without it we become weak and eventually we die.

4. So what does God list on his menu of market place goodies?

In V1 He sets out His menu as any good market spruiker should. He says, ***“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...”***

There is water, milk and wine.

Water quenches thirst like nothing else doesn’t it?

When you’re feeling dry and parched, water is exactly what you need...

and God knows it.

Later on in the very same chapter of Isaiah we’re looking at today God says,

“For as rain and snow [water] come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater [because water is life giving], so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth...” We heard that just a few weeks ago...

God’s banquet, God’s life giving food comes to us through our physical ears as well as our physical mouths.

- We hear it,
- listen to it,
- understand it
- and obey it through the Word of the gospel.

We eat it with our physical bodies as we come to Jesus’ banquet table today as a family gathering around a dinner table. Only the food we’ll be eating does much more than give us energy...

It is God’s food that releases you from your past, and gives you what it promises – Jesus; along with his forgiveness and spiritual strength that you need today.

But there’s more - what about the milk and wine?

5. Milk is for children and wine is for adults.

1st Peter talks about the Word as milk saying, ***“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

To be like a newborn nursing on the milk of the Word is a good thing.

It’s a good thing because it re-enforces what God is saying through Isaiah today. An infant can’t pay for its meal!

Mother’s nursing infants don’t receive \$5 after every feed. Babies are reliant on their parents for their food. They can’t pay!

They cry out and mum comes running or stumbling in the darkness to feed them.

We can’t pay God for His word either – we receive it, we are transformed by it, we grow through it. We nurse on the milk of the word.

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But there also comes a time to grow up doesn't there? In one sense we always nurse as infants on the word, but we also grow and develop as we feed and grow as disciples of Jesus.

We're not always focussed on growing though are we?
Sometimes we feel safer staying right where we are...treading water.
It all seems too hard and so we become lazy.

The writer of Hebrews was speaking to lazy Christians when he writes “...***you have become dull of hearing.*** ¹² ***For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food ...solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.***”

For us this starts when we can't be bothered coming to hear God's word.
It happens to us when we can't be bothered being involved in bible study. When we think that event at church won't apply to us – or when we tell ourselves “*I'll do it myself at home*” – but never get around to it.

A banquet involving God's word is always nutritious and filling – filling with the Holy Spirit.

Over time we start to experience the exhilaration of the word as we grow up and mature.
Friends - This is the wine! Because wine is for adults – and a good wine is exhilarating, you enjoy and savour it.

And if it's really good, you go and buy a case and share it with your friends and celebrate together! You talk about it, mull over its aromas and taste.

Christians who are growing in the word do the same thing – they can't help it – it's exhilarating like a fine wine. That's because the Word is the source of real life.

6. ***So what are you hungry and thirsty for?***

As you stand in the market place that is your life, what are you hungry and thirsty for? Like a spruiker at the markets, God is calling you out and offering you the richest of banquets.

He won't force you to come and eat, but He knows we all in desperate need of what He is offering. Good food is expensive these days. This is the very best food and it's free and available to everyone.

- This food is life giving and life sustaining like the purest water.
- As you nurse on the milk of the Word, this food will cause you to develop and grow up into your Lord Jesus Christ.
- This food is more exhilarating than the finest wine...it's like the finest wine that never runs out.

God is calling out your name today. He's offering you sustenance, growth, joy and to delight in Him forever.

Come, taste and see that the Lord is good! Amen!