

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the past here in Surprise, Arizona they have had a Surprise Swap Meet at the Surprise Community Park which is right by the city pool. You can go there and buy and sell items on a Saturday. They may still have them at times during the year.

Some towns around Surprise also have Farmers Market. (Peoria & Sun City) At these events growers sell produce like vegetables. You get it fresh from the field to your table.

Imagine that you go to one of these markets and you find a table, but all that was being offered was the Gospel, the Good News of salvation. And what if what was being offered was free and at no cost to you? We might be tempted to move after all we were looking for trinkets and treasures that will enhance this life. Do you want to stand around and listen to the message about Jesus, the Christ?

Isaiah 55 is picturing a booth in a market place. Jesus is standing behind the table and he is inviting people to come and satisfy their hungry and thirsty souls. Jesus offered the gospel to people during his ministry in many different places. Over the years he uses apostles, pastors, teachers and lay people to extend the invitation. As we listen to the Gospel, God is satisfying our greatest need. As we learn this, we are also to understand that the Lord provides **Satisfaction for (all) Our Needs**.

1. God’s Word satisfies our need for salvation. Vs. 1-3

Most of the time I tend to ignore commercials that are on T.V. There are so many of them and some are so silly. One day there was a commercial advertising a new type of super glue. I needed super glue. So, I paid attention. I took note of what was being sold and how it was used. You too may not pay attention to advertising voices until you hear someone selling something that you need.

The Lord God is marketing, promoting eternal salvation. This is something that you and I need. We want to listen to his voice because God’s word satisfies our need for salvation.

A. In Isaiah 55 we hear a very specific and urgent call to receive salvation.

1. There is an invitation to come to the Lord and receive salvation without

cost.

The Lord mentions that we should come to him because we are thirsty and hungry. What is being pictured is that our soul is thirsty for forgiveness because of our sins. People are hungry to have their guilt removed and to be at peace. This why Jesus shouted out in Jerusalem during the festival. In John 7 it says, **“On the last day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”** (37) Jesus indicates that he gives forgiveness and peace when extends the invitation, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”** (Matthew 11:28-29)

This satisfaction for our souls comes at no cost. It is free! That sounds incredible, how can something so valuable be free? Because God says it is. The Apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:8, **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—”**

2. Despite the fact God is giving away salvation, people still want to pay for salvation. Our Lord cries out, **“Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? (2a)** In Jesus’ day, many religious people, like the Pharisees, wanted to earn their salvation by their good works. The people of Martin Luther’s day were taught by their religious leaders that they had to earn salvation. Most religious people today believe that they have to earn salvation.

The Lord God says that we are not to waste our time on what does not satisfy. We cannot salvation by our own efforts. God provides it for us in Jesus, the Savior. Jesus earned salvation. Now God is giving it away. And it is rich and wonderful. We need this.

3. This is something that should resonate with you and me. Even though we are Christians, we get thirsty and hungry for righteousness. During the week our sins pile up like stinky garbage. We long to get rid of it. We pray and sometimes we feel better. Then we come to church and confess our sins. We hear the God’s unbreakable promise that all our sins are forgiven in Jesus. We feel so much better! That is what the Lord is inviting people to receive in Isaiah 55.

B. Notice in verse 3 there is a call is to listen. **“Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live.”**

1. This is a call to listen to God's Word, the Bible. In the Bible, we have the words of salvation. Through the Word we receive forgiveness, peace and life.

2. This same Word shows how Jesus is the source of our salvation. The Lord speaks of an everlasting covenant or agreement with King David. In 2 Samuel 7, the Lord promised one of his descendants would establish David's throne forever. Jesus of Nazareth and descendant of David established his kingdom forever by winning forgiveness of sins and eternal life for sinners at the cross. He paid for our sins and conquered death so that all who believe in Jesus have eternal life.

The Lord has called you through the Gospel. He freely gives salvation. This is something we should embrace by regularly hearing God's word.

2. God's word satisfies our need for an identity. Vs. 4-5

The civil unrest that we have experienced in our country has left people unsettled. People long not just for inner peace, but they long for outward peace in their lives. In a sinful world, this is difficult.

In verses 4-5 we have a statement by the Lord God concerning the Lord's servant. The Lord's Servant in Isaiah is the Messiah, Jesus. What we hear is that through Jesus our need for an identity is satisfied.

A. The Servant of the Lord meets the people's needs as a Prophet and a King. **It says in verse 4, "See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples."** Knowing Jesus helps us to know ourselves.

1. The Messiah is called a witness. Jesus came not only to save us. He came to witness what God was doing to save us. If God told us we were sons and daughters and didn't share any details, we would probably be worried and confused. However, many details foretold in the Old Testament were explained by Jesus. One example is the resurrection of the dead. We know more details now through Jesus and his apostles. He made what God wants us to know, clear. That helps us be confident in our identity.

2. The Messiah is called a commander. When people hear this, they want Jesus to put an end to civil unrest and bring order to the governments of the world. However, Jesus made it clear that his kingdom is not of this world. Instead Jesus rules here through his word. As people hear his word, his disciples believe and obey. Jesus helps us to live life in a godly way. This helps establish our identity as Christians and children of God.

B. Without force, using only the force of the Gospel, it doesn't seem like Jesus' kingdom will succeed. Listen to the first part of verse 5.

1. **“Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you...”** We have a promise that Jesus' teaching and his rule in people's hearts will be effective. People won't just come to him, they will come running.

We may get discouraged when we don't see the church full of people. It is at certain times. We need to continue our efforts to invite people.

Meanwhile, people are packing churches in Africa and other parts of the world. Jesus wants people to be in his kingdom and there will be.

2. The reason people flock to Jesus is that “He endowed with splendor.” The Holy God of Israel had raised Jesus from the dead and glorified him. People will be coming to Jesus throughout history because he is the one and only conqueror of sin and death. We can be confident about our identity!

Conclusion: Several years ago on a cool October evening several SotV members were invited to a HOA family night. There were vendors handing out samples. We set up a table. We gave away candy. We gave away brochures. The brochures were about Jesus, the Bible, Lutheranism and our church SotV. We greeted and talked to many people. What we were doing was giving away the Gospel. This also happens at the Living Nativity and at other events, including every worship service.

This is what the Lord wants. Jesus handed out the word of salvation as did the prophets and apostles. Through this Gospel work our spiritual need for salvation is satisfied. We benefit from Jesus death and resurrection. Also, our need for an identity is satisfied. Jesus tells us who we are and what we need to do. Rejoice and help give away this salvation. Pray what is pictured in Isaiah continues here and around the world. Amen.

Context: The gospel of salvation has been presented in the form of the Servant of the Lord who died for the people's sins and rose in victory. What follows is an invitation to salvation in the Servant.

Malady: Don't despise or try to pay for free salvation that was won by Christ.

Propositional Statement: Here the Gospel's call to satisfy our thirsty and hungry soul with free grace in Christ.

Context: John the Baptist has just died after being beheaded by Herod. Jesus withdraws with his disciples to the region of Bethsaida (northeast Galilee). The crowds follow to this wilderness area. It is late in the day and the people need to eat.

Malady: The need for physical and spiritual food should not be ignored (or blamed on God), but a request for help should go to our heavenly Father in prayer.

Proposition: We can be thankful that Jesus is the Savior who provides richly and daily for all that is needed for body and soul.

Introduction: Could use a miracle? You have probably felt this way at some point. I remember when my previous congregation had fallen behind in offerings and things did not go better in the fall. Towards the end of November there was a \$110,000 deficit, red ink. At a very somber church council meeting the matter was discussed. The church council members pledged their support and all prayed. The congregation prayed and gave their support. In the first week of January, the congregation had a \$10,000 surplus, they were in the black! I am not telling you this story so we can get complacent with our giving, but to give you an example of a modern day miracle. The Lord worked through the people and he made an impossible situation work out.

We all need the Lord in our lives to provide for us through natural means and miracles. I believe this is why the crowd was chasing Jesus into the wilderness. We hear in Matthew 14 that people were following Jesus. They wanted healing, they wanted to see miraculous signs. On this occasion Jesus answered a need and did it with a miracle. As we hear about the miracle and look at Jesus ministry, we see that he was more than a miracle worker. People need more than a physical meal. We need spiritual bread which brings life through the forgiveness of sins. Today, we remember that **Jesus Is The Savior Who Provides for All Our Needs**. As we consider this event from his ministry see the depth of His compassion and see the strength of his power.

1. The Miracle of the 5000 shows that he cares.

The time of this event is around the end of the second year of Jesus' ministry. The place is a desolate area along the north east shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus wanted to be alone with his disciples. The arrival of the crowd of over 5,000 people gives us an opportunity to see Jesus not just as a miracle worker, but as our deeply compassionate Savior.

A. The fact that this large crowd of people came looking for Jesus is not unusual. For two full years Jesus had been teaching and healing and the crowds that followed him grew larger.

1. Most of the miracles that Jesus performed which are recorded in the Scriptures have to do with healing. Jesus healed cripples, lepers, and he had even raised the dead. It is not unreasonable to assume that many came to Jesus on this occasion either hoping for healing or bringing a friend who needed it. It is also true that a number of people came just to take in the scene. Jesus miracles and his profound words were fascinating. I suppose you could say that these people are like the people that slow up on the free way to stare at a bad accident.

2. Unfortunately what most of these people wanted from Jesus was not what they needed. A few people who came to Jesus physically sick, but everyone who came to listen Jesus was spiritually sick. Every person who came to hear Jesus was a sinner and needed a Savior from sin. The psalm writer reminds us of this when he writes, "Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you." (vs.2)

B. We see that Jesus is compassionate because he does not turn the crowd away when they come to him. 1. If Jesus had decided to send the crowd away we probably wouldn't have blamed him. In many cases he worked long hours teaching and healing. Jesus was probably physically and mentally exhausted. The twelve disciples also needed his attention. They had just returned from a mission which Jesus had sent them on. They had much to tell him about and they undoubtedly had a few questions about things that didn't go according to their expectations. Since Jesus was training them to soon be full time messengers for Him, he undoubtedly wanted to spend the time with them. This was undoubtedly a traumatic time for the group because John the Baptist had just been beheaded by King Herod. There was probably a need for some time to grieve and for comfort to be shared.

2. When we know these things then we can begin to understand the depth of Jesus' compassion. Even though Jesus had many other cares to attend to, he wants to go the extra mile and help these poor lost souls. When most of us would have thrown our hands up in frustration, Jesus forges ahead. He does this because his compassion is based on his divine love. He is zealous and determined to minister to and save lost souls.

C. While the actions of Jesus on this particular occasion show us a measure of Jesus' compassion, it goes much deeper than this. Jesus once told his disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) Jesus' greatest act of compassion was to lay down his life on the cross at Calvary. It is not what the crowd was looking for. It is not what we want by nature. Jesus loved us so much though he gave us what we need not what we want. He shed his blood to remove our sins. There never was, nor will there ever be a greater act of compassion.

2. This is reassuring for us when we overwhelmed by our sins and our circumstance in life. When we approach our Savior in prayer and ask for his forgiveness and help in following him he does not turn his back on us. He didn't do it on that day in Galilee and he won't do it now. We have a Savior who is more than a miracle worker. He has a heart filled with compassion and he is anxious to meet our needs.

2. The Miracle of the 5000 shows that he does it.

As you know there is a miracle that Jesus performed on this occasion. Now that we have seen Jesus in light of his compassion, let's look at the miracle. Then we also see the strength of his power.

A. Matthew informs us that a need developed. The disciples come to Jesus and they are concerned. The large crowd is out in this desolate area without food or lodging. Since darkness was coming there might soon be a lot of lost and hungry people. Their recommendation was that Jesus send the people away into the surrounding villages for food and lodging. This isn't necessarily a bad suggestion, but Jesus has something else in mind. He suggests that the disciples feed the crowd. They look around them and all they have is five loaves of bread and two fishes. They conclude that they cannot get the job done with these. The disciples in the process overlooked their greatest resource, Jesus. They fail to turn to him for help.

B. Jesus knows what He is going to do. He has the people be seated. He takes the five loaves of bread and the two fish. 1. The first thing he does is give thanks to God. This particular action reminds us of a couple of things. Jesus is perfect, without sin. He remembers to give thanks for the food that is about to be eaten. How often do we forget to stop and thank the Lord for our food? Jesus also reminds us with this prayer to God that this miracle is from God and not from the devil or anyone else.

2. We are told that Jesus broke off pieces and passed out the food to his disciples and they in turn passed it to the people. the crowd of 5000 men plus women and children was fed to satisfaction. Afterwards the twelve disciples collected twelve baskets of leftovers. This was no chinsy miracle. The was a an awesome display of God' power as he opens his hand and satisfies his people as it says in psalm ____.

C. Let's consider what this all means in light of what we heard earlier about Jesus compassion. 1. If we just look at this miracle and say, "Wow, Jesus is God's Son and he can give me whatever I need," we may be missing the point of the miracle. The crowd was wowed by the miracle and they were ready to accept Jesus as their Savior, but they only wanted him to save them from hunger, starvation, cancer and so on.

2. Jesus certainly wants us to see him as God's all powerful Son through this miracle. He doesn't however want to be our "bread" Savior. He has so much more to offer. Jesus wants to take his awesome power that He used to rip his own body from the jaws of death and He wants to give us great gifts. He offers the eternal gifts of forgiveness, peace, joy, and hope in him. He also wants to use his power in our life so help us grow in our faith and our relationship with Him.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Conclusion: Give thanks for what is provided.

Why do you follow after Jesus? Are you hanging around to see a few "miracles". Are you hoping that He will give you a comfy life right now, sparing you disaster? Through the course of Jesus' ministry many people came looking for these things and they left disillusioned because he wasn't handing out what they "wanted". Jesus, however, does invite all people to himself. We all need Jesus as our Savior. Jesus is the compassionate and all powerful Son of God, who draws us to himself so that we can receive his great gifts of forgiveness and life. Amen.

Matthew 6:33 - Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be given to you as well.
1 Peter 5:7

Matthew Henry - The gospel of Jesus made a wilderness into an Eden. (Isa 51:3; 41:19,20)

Matthew Henry - Christ all along expressed more tenderness toward the people than his disciples did; for what are the compassions of the most merciful men, compared with the tender mercies of God in Christ? (Henry, M. (1994). Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume (p. 1685). Peabody: Hendrickson.)

Matthew Henry - Note, Those who have Christ have enough, and need not depart to seek a happiness and livelihood in the creature.

Matthew Henry - The death of John the Baptist only seemed to draw more people to Jesus. (Philippians 1:12 - Paul's chains served the gospel.)

Matthew Henry - The multitudes following after Jesus was a fulfillment of Scripture. I would note that they did not for the most part follow him for the right reason. (Cf. John 6)

Note: All the preaching for what and the meal too? Most of the crowd did not follow him after he refused to be a bread king. Yet, some did. So we may preach much and spend long hours and show little for the results. Never-the-less, we are doing the work of Christ.

2011

General Theme: The Lord does not forget his people's needs but provides physical and spiritual

food for our well being. Jesus especially wants us to see him as the “Bread of Life” after which we hunger no more. (John 6:26,27)

Context: Joseph rises to power and service in Egypt.

Malady: It may have seemed after 13 hard years that the Lord had forgotten Joseph

Proposition: God is powerful and gracious to save and provide what is needed for his glory and the welfare of his chosen people. The ultimate example of this is Christ and his cross.

Jeske TPB - “*Our Savior holds the destiny of all people in his hands.*” He works things out for his glory and the welfare of his people.

The Lutheran Study Bible p. 80: *After long periods of suffering at just the right time, the Lord will give help to His people, just as He did for Joseph. Through his Son, Jesus, God rules over us and gives us what we need: pardon, provision, peace.*

Introduction: Possibly over 50 major famines since the beginning of the 19th Century. There have been enough of them. Think of starving children in places like Ethiopia and you think that this is just one example.

Famine plays a key role in the Old Testament reading for today although it is not the main character. It is not even Joseph, but it is our Gracious God. We see him using famine, Joseph, the King of Egypt, called Pharaoh and others. All of it is to rescue his chosen people and to advance God’s plan of salvation that he had promised to the Hebrews and to the world.

Background:

Note: Joseph sold into slavery by brothers who hated him at age 17.

He served Potiphar and then spent time in prison over 13 years.

He is now 30 years old. God has plans for him.

Our Savior God Plans to Feed Us

1. He can use people of the world. (Pharaoh)

Amazing chain of events where we see “the hand of God.”

A. Pharaoh elevates Joseph.

He gives him authority

pronouncement, ring, chain, clothes

He gives him status

marriage, parade

All the things the God’s servant needed were provided.

B. Pharaoh gives Joseph a job.

1. Thousands of people depended on him in a time of famine. Feed the family of the Promise, Jacob and Co. Preserve the promise of the Savior with and eventually a home in Egypt. There was a real need and mission.

2. Training had been provided by the Egyptians over the past 13 years. It wasn’t always easy. It worked and Joseph was ready.

Application: God’s plan of salvation is being carried out. He often uses unbelievers to make it happen. Roman Caesar Augustus - “It cam to pass.” Pontius Pilate - “I have the power to

crucify you.”

We need the “bread of life.” Sin = we don’t trust the Lord to provide. We grumble and complain.

Jesus is the “Bread of Life” that feeds out souls. He became the Bread of Life through his conception, birth, death and resurrection.

He feeds and satisfies our souls today. To do this he needs to use another kind of people.

Trans: Pharaoh is not the Lord’s only instrument.

2. He can use his chosen people. (Joseph)

Another key instrument in the Lord’s hands is Joseph.

A. He displays a humble attitude.

1. Strength of Joseph came from his belief God’s promises and particularly in the Savior and the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection, heaven, etc.

2. God had humbled Joseph and then raised him up.

B. He serves in his station.

1. Served well as slave, served well as master.

2. He carried out his duty faithfully. **FAITHFULNESS**

Note: God supplied him with a plan. Us too!

C. He has opportunities to witness God’s gracious plan.

Application: The Lord Feeds us with the Gospel through his ministers and others. He trains us to serve. He gives us a mission and a plan.

Conclusion: We are reminded of: Famine of the Word today. FIC Panning 6/2003

What is the Lord planning...

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.”

⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, “Make way!” Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

(Humility of Joseph reminds of the humility of Jesus. Hebrews 4:15; 13:8)

⁴⁴ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt.”

⁴⁵ Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt.

⁴⁷ During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully.

⁴⁸ Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹

Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

(Famine served to bring Jacob and his sons out of idolatrous Canaan into the relative safety of Egypt. God's family would grow into a nation over the next 400 years and come out in the Exodus under Moses.)

Isaiah 55:1-5 (NIV 2011)

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 you will delight in the richest of fare.

3 Give ear and come to me;
listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
my faithful love promised to David.

4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
a ruler and commander of the peoples.

5 Surely you will summon nations you know not,
and nations you do not know will come running to you,
because of the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with splendor."

Genesis 41:41-49 (NIV 2011)

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³ He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command,[a] and people shouted before him, "Make way[b]!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

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foot in all Egypt.” 45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphra, priest of On,[c] to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout Egypt. 47 During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV 2011)

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”[a]

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[b] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 4:4-5 (NIV 2011)

4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Matthew 14:13-21 (NIV 2011)

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

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