

“Come, buy without money!” Isaiah 55:1-5

“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.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

The focus of our today’s meditations will be on ... spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst. The Word of our Lord which we just heard has come to us through the mouth and hand of Isaiah the prophet.

Initially this message was addressed to Israelites in Babylonian exile, in captivity far, far from their homeland. But we can say with certainty that this message applies to us as much as it applied to the Israelites millennia ago.

How come? Because this message is written to all people who are worn out by spiritual thirst and hunger. We may wonder – and who are those people? We are those people. All fallen human creatures who are separated from their Creator.

What does this mean? We may not have experienced it, but we all know what physical thirst and hunger are. When you are deprived of the essential elements that are crucial for our existence, of water and of bread.

When that happens, this is the only thing we can think about, the only thing where our thoughts wonder to, we can’t relax and simply enjoy our lives until these basic creaturely needs are satisfied. But what then is this spiritual thirst and hunger?

You see, we all, each one of you have been created as someone really special, to live in a very special relationships and to lead a very special life with a very special purpose. But our sinfulness has ruined it.

It has separated us from the very source of all spiritual blessings, it has thrown us into a permanent state of spiritual hunger and thirst. The thing is, that many of us, perhaps, we could even say that most people don't recognize this spiritual thirst and hunger for what they are. I will give you an illustration.

What do we think we need to be happy and to live fulfilled lives? We don't even need to guess. There is a research firm in US, called Barna Group, and one of their recent research projects was focusing exactly on this question.

They interviewed thousands of young adults and these are the answers they got. If only I could buy a home, and get married, follow my dreams, start my own business, travel the world, be financially independent, then... then...

They think they know the answers to what they truly need, and what will satisfy their hearts. As you can see, usually we think that it is something in this world... that job, that house, that achievement, that person, that success, that new thing, that experience, that pleasure...

I imagine we can relate to what they said. Who haven't believed that obtaining or achieving these things or having certain experiences or pleasures will make us happy?! I still tend to naively believe that some of them may just deliver...

So, we chase them. As Isaiah put it, we spend our money on them. It is not just money that we spend, we spend our time, and efforts, and energy, we often make huge sacrifices to get there, because we believe that they will deliver what we long for in our hearts, that they will alleviate our spiritual hunger and thirst.

Most of what we chase are good things on their own. But they all are material things. They all, we could say, belong to the created world. But material things, created things can't possibly satisfy our deep spiritual yearnings.

This is where we can see our sinful condition, and that is not how we usually think about sin. But it is revealed in our incredible foolishness, when we believe that we know better... "don't push your living water on us, we want salt, that will help us."

What we truly want, what we are designed and created to have – is to be very special, to be significant, to be valued and appreciated, to be accepted and loved, to have meaningful, purposeful and joyful lives, to be at peace and feel secure as we face our uncertain future. This is what we all long for deep, deep in our hearts.

These are not material things. And no created thing, no this worldly experience or success, or pleasure can ever fully satisfy this hunger and thirst. So, we spend our

lives chasing them, working for them, paying for them, and especially those, who have achieved much more than most of us ever will, they often recognize what Solomon has put so well: “Vanity, at the end it is all vanity.”

In this our condition the Holy Spirit speaks to us. “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.” Our God offer without money, without toil and drudgery what we all truly need.

But how does He give these things to us? Here is the answer: “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.”

He gives them to us by ... speaking, and we receive them by... listening. That simple! But it really makes sense! How do you know that you are somebody? How do you know that you are significant? That you are loved and accepted? How do we know all these things? Yes, you know that answer...

When someone tells these things to us. And the more important, the more influential the person who tells it to us, the more what we hear changes our lives. It is one thing when friends or colleagues say it, it is something different when parents or someone in positions of authority say it.

But in this case the speaking is done by the highest authority, it is your God the Creator and Redeemer who speaks to you. And as He speaks, He speaks new and beautiful reality into your life. He speaks and reveals that He has created you in His own Image and likeness, to participate in His work of creation.

That He has designed and created you for great tasks and missions, for multiple meaningful vocations and responsibilities. That you are infinitely precious in His eyes, so precious and significant that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, didn't spare His life, but gave it up for you.

That God who is your Father, your Dad in heaven, has prepared a new life for you once this one is over, that He has promised to keep you and protect you and to be with you during this life, and then to take you to be with Him, in His great and beautiful future city.

He wants you to hear this: “Listen, listen, incline your ear, that your soul may live and your spiritual thirst and hunger are satisfied!” But the Holy Spirit doesn't stop here. He goes on to remind that we are also included in the covenant that God made with His beloved servant, the king David.

Remember what He promised? That He will establish a kingdom for David's son, and that kingdom will last forever. We know that Solomon was David's heir, and

that already after his death his kingdom was divided in two parts, and then a few centuries later destroyed fully. It was another son of David, to whom these promises applied. His name was Jesus from Nazareth.

It was this Kingdom, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, that was established to last forever. And you know what, – in your baptism you were made heirs of this kingdom and co-heirs with Jesus, the true Son of our Father in heaven.

This is the kingdom that continues to grow day by day. Every day more and more our brothers and sisters are rescued from under the power of Satan and brought into the kingdom of Jesus. And when this age is over, when we have finished our race, we will receive our prize, that is already prepared for us.

We will see our God and our Lord Jesus Christ face to face, we will be made like Him and we will reign with Him forever. That is where our spiritual hunger and thirst will be satisfied forever and we will live in everlasting blessedness.

That is what your God has prepared for you. Come and drink, come and eat, so that your soul may live! How could we repay for such great gifts, how could we express our gratitude to the One who gives us everything, even His life?

Isaiah explains – we are made witnesses to the Triune God! What does a witness do? They tell about what they have seen and heard and experienced. We are to proclaim what the Triune God has done for us, and what He now offers to everyone, who is willing to receive His gifts.

Put it simply, we are to help everyone, whom our Father has placed in our lives, to understand what drives us and our lives, what we all hunger and thirst for, and to point to the only person in the entire Universe, who can satisfy this hunger and take away this thirst forever.

Come and buy without money! Come and your soul will live!

Amen.