



“Listen”

Pastor Andy CastroLang

March 24, 2019

Scripture (NRSV):

Isaiah 55

55 Ho, everyone who **thirsts**,

come to the waters;

and you that have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

²Why do you **spend** your money for that which is not bread,

and your labor for that which **does not satisfy**?

Listen carefully to me, and **eat** what is good,

and **delight** yourselves in rich food.

³**Incline your ear**, and come to me;

listen, so that you may live.

I will **make with you** an everlasting covenant,

my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴**See**, I made him a witness to the peoples,

a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵**See**, you shall **call nations** that you do not know,

and nations that do not know you shall **run to you**,

because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,

for he has **glorified you**.

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**.

⁸ For my thoughts are **not your thoughts**,
 nor are your ways **my ways**, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 so are my ways **higher** than your ways
 and my thoughts than your thoughts.

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow **come down** from heaven,
 and **do not return** there until they have watered the earth,
making it **bring forth** and **sprout**,
 giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word **be** that **goes out** from my mouth;
 it shall not **return** to me **empty**,
but it shall **accomplish** that which I **purpose**,
 and **succeed** in the thing for which I **sent** it.

¹² For you shall **go out** in joy,
 and be **led back** in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
 shall burst into song,
 and all the trees of the field **shall clap** their hands.

¹³ Instead of the thorn **shall come** up the cypress;
 instead of the brier **shall come** up the myrtle;
and it **shall be** to the Lord for a memorial,
 for an everlasting sign that **shall not be cut off**.

Sermon:

There is a peach tree in flower in my daughter's back yard in Texas. I saw it last week, wild with color.

And my granddaughter, Addy, would go out to the peach tree and sing to it. Her daddy urged her to sing to the tree to help it grow.

We grownups smiled in a mildly superior way, because we don't sing to the trees. We are too worldly and probably way too self-conscious, to sing to the peach trees to help them grow.

We don't have any science confirming that peach trees "hear" anyhow.

But the psalmist is perfectly sure that creation is speaking, shouting out the joy of life, and their thanksgiving and glorious praise to God...it's just that *WE* don't have ears with which to hear the shouts of the galaxies, the songs of the stars and the nebulae.

WE cannot hear the joy of the peach tree as it blazes forth in blossom, or the thanksgiving of the ants underground, the birds in the sky, the fish in the river.

The limits of our science and of our imaginations inhibit us.

But not God.

How often do we need to hear it? Isaiah declares it, as he speaks with the voice of God:

⁸ *For my thoughts are **not your thoughts**,
nor are your ways **my ways**, says the LORD.*

⁹ *For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways **higher** than your ways
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¹⁰ *For as the rain and the snow **come down** from heaven,
and **do not return** there until they have watered the earth,
making it **bring forth** and **sprout**,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,*

¹¹ *so shall my word **be** that **goes out** from my mouth;
it shall not **return** to me **empty**,
but it shall **accomplish** that which I **purpose**,*

How frequently we need to be reminded that God's thoughts, God's dreams, God's plans for all creation are vaster than our understanding?!

How frequently, just like the remnant in the land, after the majority of the people had been driven into exile, the remnant to whom Isaiah spoke these verses...how frequently we cannot believe that there will be enough!

Wine, food, milk.

How we fear, how we worry, how we seek to protect ourselves and our belongings from the ravages of time, change, unstable markets, and war, death.

But, Isaiah says, if you will turn your heart to God again, if you will live with a humble and merciful spirit, if you will seek God...then you will find God, you will hear God.

Listen. In the first three verses, Isaiah uses the word twice. And this passage is littered with the language of the actions of relationship.

Listen, incline your ear. Seek. Call upon the Lord. Forsake wickedness. Return to the Lord. Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

I admit that being in the presence of my granddaughters is a great joy, but I sometimes feel sad, and guilty. I want to apologize that the oceans are choked with plastic, and the polar ice is melting. That the children of Syria are dying, and the children of Nebraska are flooded out and homeless. I grieve that they will go to school but not know the feeling of security that I grew up with, went I went daily to my small school in Boulder CO.

But you and I have to remember, that eternity is with God. And that every creative word that goes out of the mouth of God accomplishes God's purpose, and does not return to God until it has succeeded in the thing for which God's mind has sent it out. (Vs.11)

Our time and our vision are limited, small and short. God's mind knows, God's time is bigger than our own. We are called to trust. In the words of Julian of Norwich, "let our faith and our trust be large".

And we must not fail to remember, and we must be still and listen for:

- The trees of the field that clap their hands, the mountains and the hills that burst into song!
- I must look for the tall pine grove that grows above the thorny briars; look for the fragrant blooming tree that freshens even the desperate places. (vs. 13)
- ❖ The blooming peach tree and the singing toddler are witnesses to the "everlasting sign" of God's world and God's design and Isaiah promises, "they shall not be cut off".

Let us listen to them, and keep hope in God's promises. Amen.