

**Book of Faith Bible Study**  
**Isaiah 55:1-11**

*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.*

*Why 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.*

*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.*

*See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.*

*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.*

*Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;*

*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.*

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

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

*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,*

*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.*

This word of God through the prophet Isaiah came fully alive for me recently when I was asked to memorize this text and present it in our congregation's Easter vigil service. I was to stand at the baptismal font, dip my hand in the water and lift it dripping as I began, "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters..." The text came alive because to memorize it I had to listen carefully to the thoughts, to hear how the poet put his words together.

Reading attentively, I heard Isaiah speak God's three bold invitations:

The first (vv. 1-2) comes as though God's Wisdom were standing in the market place of a desert town, selling water and food. But it is not a sales pitch. God offers to quench thirst and fill hearts because of steadfast, sure love. "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; ... buy ... without money and without price."

The second invitation (vv. 3-5) moves us from water to words. Come to the promise, to the one who promised a covenant with David and through David with all the people of the world. It is a promise to us. "Incline your ear and come to me. Listen that you may live!"

Inviting a third time (vv.6-9), "Seek the Lord while he may be found," God names the truth — we need to respond and we can — we are unrighteous and God is merciful. God does not just grudgingly forgive, God abundantly pardons!

Reading carefully, I heard Isaiah use three images to name the basis for confident response:

For God's thoughts and ways are not ours — God pardons us sinners.

**As you consider opening Scripture individually or with others, you may wish to consider these general questions:**

*How does the Bible feed your daily life?*

*How does the Bible feed the life of this community?*

*How are we renewed, empowered, and enlivened by the Word?*

*What stands in the way of our opening the Bible and joining the conversation?*

For God's ways and thoughts are beyond ours — God pardons abundantly.

For as surely as the rain and snow water the earth and feed the hungry, so shall God's word accomplish its intent — life is given for all the thirsty, all the hungry.

Speaking, the marvel of standing at that baptismal font with Isaiah's words was seeing my hearers listen — seeing God's hearers listen. They were enlivened as the words flowed into them. Like me, they were thirsty. God filled us that Easter eve.

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### Questions on Isaiah 55:1-11

- *How do we hear God's invitation to come to the waters?*
- *For what do we hunger and thirst?*
- *How are God's ways and thoughts different from our own?*
- *What promise do we hear from Isaiah?*

In addition to questions found in the studies, here are general questions that can be used for each of the texts:

*What is God saying to us through this passage?*

*What does this passage tell us about God?*

*How does this passage speak to us as individuals and to us as a community?*

*What does this passage teach us about our neighbors and our world?*