

The Great Invitation

Good morning everyone! It's so special to be here with you at our combined AGM family service. This is a day we set aside every year to celebrate all that God has done over the past year.

Its great to have the children joining us this morning, because we love to do this as a church family. But if you could all please excuse me for a little bit. You see, I slept in this morning, and I have not had my breakfast yet. When that happens, my tummy starts rumbling so much, that it could make a horrible noise through the mic. So I better eat something. I hope you don't mind!

(Pour some Otees into a bowl and start eating)

I was not sure what to eat today – I wanted something quick, but if you just eat something like a cereal bar it doesn't really fill you up.

Muesli & yogurt is great - I mean, just have a look at how good this looks...

(Picture of Muesli & Yoghurt)

Some nuts, some drizzled honey. But the thing with muesli and yoghurt, is that it is a bit chewy when you are in a hurry! You agree?

So, I settled on Otees. Delicious!

(Picture of Otees)

Otees are great! Nate and I enjoy them.

Now, eggs & bacon would have been better, but that just takes so much time to cook. Right? But it does look good!

(Picture of Egg & Bacon)

Mmmm! And it does satisfy and fill you up for a while... well, at least until its time for lunch!

And you know what's good for lunch? Pizza!

(Picture of Pizza)

Pizza is always good. I just wish it wasn't so full of calories! So, a braai is always better. Lots of protein!

(Picture of braai)

Wow, that looks so good. Boeries, sasaties, chops.

Is anyone getting hungry already? :)

I'm sure by now you've realised that I am messing with you.

Hopefully, you'll be able to wait until after the service, to enjoy the light lunch we will be having together to celebrate our AGM and all that God has done in the past year. I'm hoping there are going to be some tasty foods for me to try there!

I love good food!

Who of you like to be invited out for a big breakfast, or lunch, or dinner? Of course we do. Getting invited out to something is always special. And that's where today's message comes in. I have called it;

The Great Invitation

Have you ever received an invitation that made your heart skip a beat? Perhaps it was to a fancy restaurant, or a special event. Whatever the invitation was, it likely brought a sense of excitement and anticipation.

Today I want to share with you about the greatest invitation that you will ever receive - an invitation from God. Throughout the bible, we see that God is constantly extending an invitation to us, inviting us to come and experience his love, grace, and salvation. It is an invitation open to everyone, regardless of our past mistakes or our current circumstances.

In Isaiah 55, we find a powerful invitation from God to come and receive his blessings, his forgiveness, and his peace. This invitation is not just for the righteous or the perfect, but for all of us who feel broken, lost, or in need of a saviour. It is an invitation that brings hope and healing, and it is a invitation that we should not ignore.

So today, I invite you to open your hearts and minds to God's great invitation. Allow him to speak to you through his word.

Lets read what God says to us in Isaiah 55; and I invite you to stand as I read, as we honour the word of God;

Isaiah 55:1

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." ⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Thank you Lord for your word to us. We do want to seek you. We want to call on you today. Speak to us, for your children are listening. Amen.

Let me ask you a question which you don't have to respond to. Have you ever experienced the hurt of realising you had not been invited to something? It's a horrible feeling, isn't it.

It makes you feel excluded, rejected, and even unwanted. The sense of FOMO, and missing out is awful. But here is the wonderful thing;

God is very inviting!

God is not stingy or selfish. He wants to share good things with us and to give us good gifts. Three times in the first verse here he says to

'Come!' 'Come!' 'Come!' "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!

God does not hide away and wait for us to find Him. He is always calling and inviting us. How are you responding to his invitation to you?

The next thing I want to show you is the kind of people he invites here. God invites everyone, but two kinds of people of specifically mentioned;

Firstly,

God invites the thirsty and poor

Look again at **verse 1**; **"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!**

God invites the thirsty and poor. The first kind of person that God invites to come to him, is thirsty people, who can't pay for what they need.

I don't think that thirsty here is only referring to physical thirst. I think it is also speaking about a internal thirst. Have you every felt empty? Unfulfilled? Dissatisfied? Knowing there has to be something more to life, but now everything that looks good, is out of reach. No money? No strength? No motivation? But you long for something more? Come, all who are thirsty.

God invites you to come to Him and find salvation through Jesus. Something you cannot do for yourself, something you could never pay for – it is freely offered.

Secondly;

God invites the self-sufficient

In **Verse 2** God says; 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.**

There is a second kind of person whom God invites. Someone who has money, who has the means and strength to work and to be self-sufficient. This kind of person has got money and resources, and they are spending it. This kind of person has got strength and they are working hard, but what's the result? Frustration.

There are so many who are spending and still working, dreaming, chasing, searching, experimenting — different job, different city, different car, different house, different wife, new computer, new toys, new boat, new books, new bike, new weber, new season tickets, new diet, new looks — there's still a lot of looking around left in this person. But still no pot at the end of the rainbow.

No fountain of youth. And every triumph peters out. The applause fades. The boat is boring. The style passes. Everything new gets old, and the options get fewer and fewer.

Does that sound familiar? Are you always trying and striving for the next thing, the next thrill? You may not have realised it, but this search for satisfaction and meaning in your life can only be quenched by salvation through Jesus. God invites you to come to Him.

This is what I love about God - he knows exactly where each of us are at. He understands. He knows if we are thirsty inside, He knows if we have no money, He knows if we do and are still unsatisfied with life. And to all of us, he says come.

You have a place at the table.

Through what Jesus has done for us on the cross, there is a seat at the table for everyone, regardless of how young or old you are, regardless of your past or present circumstances, you are welcome to come and experience the blessing and fellowship that God offers - and together, this means that we are a part of a bigger family, united by our faith and our shared decide to honour and serve God.

No one is left out, and everyone has the opportunity to choose to receive God's forgiveness and salvation through Jesus.

Thank you Father that you love us, that you invite us, you are so good.

So, what do we see next?

Well, God instructs us to come, and to receive a few different things from him. Look at what he says;

“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.

Did you notice that God offers us three different kinds of drinks? Don't these three beverages correspond to deep needs that every one of us has?

Water. We all need refreshment. When you are most thirsty and most desperate, most dehydrated, it's water that you want, and nothing else. Psalm 23 says; "He leads me beside still waters. He restores [refreshes] my soul" (Psalm 23:2–3). God invites you this morning, to receive refreshment, restoration, reviving, and a new beginning.

Milk. We all need ongoing nourishment. When someone is gasping for life, you give them water. But when you want a little baby to grow, day after day, you give them milk, again and again.

You see everyone. God is not just for emergencies and mountain peaks. He is for your health in the long haul. He invites you not only to come alive with water, but also to be stable and strong with milk.

Wine. Oh boy. I know you children might not be able to relate on this one, but in life, God also knows we need joy! We need celebration! We want to live and not die. Sure, we want to be strong and stable instead of weak and wavering, but that is not all we need in life. No matter how tough, unemotional, or laid-back we may seem to others, there is a child inside of every one of us, that God made to have fun. For shouting and singing and dancing and playing and skipping and running and jumping and laughing. God knows that. He knows what we need.

And he invites us to come.

The water is good and it's plentiful. The milk is good and it's plentiful. The wine is good and it's plentiful. The Bible loves to talk about the riches of God's glory and the fullness of joy at his right hand. He gives what is best and it never runs out. Jesus said, "

Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

So that's all very cool you might say, all these things that God is offering us, and it all sounds very much out there! But what is really going on here? What is this really all about, and what is God saying?

Look at verse 3 with me; 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.**

You see, what God is really after, is a relationship with us. A covenant is an old word for a unbreakable relationship - a promise between two people. God wants to be in an unbreakable lasting relationship with you.

This means that when you come to God, He binds himself by an unbreakable oath to pursue you with goodness and mercy all your days right into eternity — with ever-refreshing water, and ever-strengthening milk, and ever-joyful wine, forever and ever!

So what's the catch? How do we get this kind of life and relationship with God?

What do we have to do?

Well, there are twelve instructions in these three verses, the most pleasant, most inviting twelve commandments you will ever hear;

Come - Come everyone who thirsts... Come to God. He is the only one who can provide what we really need. He created you and I and we are created to be in a loving relationship with Him. He invites you to come.

Buy - Buy wine and milk without money and without price. He has paid the cost for our salvation already – Jesus paid the price on the cross. That is what we will celebrate this Easter. Whether you are broke or whether you are wealthy you cannot buy God's salvation – He has already paid for it.

Eat – Eat that which truly satisfies. We need to take what God is offering and bring it into our lives. Water giving life, milk for nourishment and growth, wine for joy and celebration, bread for daily life. God has what we need for a satisfying life.

Listen – Verse 2 says “Listen diligently.” Do you hear God calling to you today? We listen to so many things in the world and so many voices and opinions. Will you trust the voice of God your creator and saviour?

Enjoy – God has created you for a life with purpose – for thriving not surviving. It does not mean that life is easy, but it can be meaningful and joyful.

God has created you for more - don't settle for what the world has to offer. I love how God ends chapter 55 with a few incredible statements;

Isaiah 55. 7 Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

God is forgiving and merciful – God invites you to forgiveness and a fresh start. In Verse 8 says;

⁸ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God invites you to look at our lives and the world through His eyes – He sees things differently than we do. He has a good good plan for us – will you trust Him?

Verse 10 says;

¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

When God speaks things happen – He created the whole world just by His words. You can trust His promises for salvation and a life that satisfies for His words are true and powerful.

12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. 13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, that will endure forever."

God invites you to a life of joy. This is different to happiness that is based upon our circumstances and outward things, but joy is a deep heart emotion based upon knowing God and that He has a good plan for your life.

How will you respond to God's invitation this morning?

Will you come, buy, eat, listen, and enjoy what the Lord offers you.

Lets pray together.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-great-invitation-come-drink-eat-live>