



Isaiah 55:1-3

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"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. ² 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. ³ 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.

In the Name of Jesus, Who said, "Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Dear Fellow Redeemed,

They must have passed a law a few years back about contests. I mean sweepstakes and drawings and giveaways. I don't know when it was, but they must have made it illegal for a company to require you to purchase their product before you could enter their contest. Maybe you've noticed this, too: every time Pepsi announces a dream vacation giveaway, or Readers Digest puts on another sweepstakes, somewhere in the fine print there's always a disclaimer. I'm sure their object is still to sell more of their product, but somewhere in the ad they now have to tell you that—as far as winning the contest goes—there is "...no purchase required."

It's been well said that true Christianity is the only religion in the world in which there is "no purchase required" for salvation. In other words, every other religion requires a person to "buy" his salvation in one way or another. Usually it's good works that are required; sometimes it's self-denial, or a certain level of personal integrity or devotion to God. But every other religion requires that the person purchase salvation for himself—or at least contribute toward the purchase. In our text for today, the Lord presents to us a totally different kind of offer. In one of the most beautiful and comforting texts of the Bible, the Lord invites the whole world to receive a salvation that has *already* been bought and paid for. That's why our theme for today is:

God's Offer of Salvation: NO PURCHASE REQUIRED

- I. Because of sin, no purchase is possible.
- II. Thanks to Jesus, no purchase is necessary.

Verse one of our text is an invitation. Not a casual invitation, but a desperately urgent one. Three times our Lord repeats the urgent command, ***"Come!...Come!...Come!"***

God is inviting all the people of the world to come to His feast of salvation, to drink the water of salvation, and to eat the bread of life—Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, there are certain people who are not very likely to take advantage of this offer. Listen again to verse one, and see if you can guess who they might be: ***"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."***

One group of people who leave themselves out of God's offer of salvation are those who think they can purchase it themselves. They're convinced that they have some form of currency that will help them pay for their own salvation. They feel the good deeds they've done are enough to cover, if not

the whole cost of salvation, then at least a part of it. They forget that, **because of sin, no purchase is possible.**

If we're ever tempted to think of our own good works as contributing toward our salvation, Isaiah snaps us back to reality. In chapter 64 he says, ***"We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."*** (Isa. 64:6) The invitation in this passage is only for those sinners who realize just how poor they are, how absolutely penniless they are when it comes to meriting God's favor by works. Self-righteousness and pride are terrible things, that can stand in the way of the free forgiveness God wants to give us. As Jesus Himself said, ***"Those who are well do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."*** (Mark 2:17)

Yes, we have to admit that as far as our salvation goes, no purchase is possible. We are parched with a terrible thirst for righteousness that we ourselves could never quench. We have no "money" that could ever buy us eternal life. And what resources we do have are often wasted on things that have no eternal value. Do you feel it? Do you feel that hunger and thirst? Do not despair—God has Good News for you today. For it is precisely to such thirsty, penniless sinners as yourself that God's gracious invitation goes out. Salvation is available, and **thanks to Jesus, no purchase is NECESSARY!**

I hope I'm not giving you the wrong impression with the phrase, "no purchase necessary." What I mean, of course, is that no purchase is required on *our* part. Salvation is free to us, and the reason that is so is because Jesus paid a very high price for it. From Jesus, a very great purchase indeed was required! He sacrificed His own body and blood on the cross. On that dark Good Friday, God punished Jesus for the sins of the whole world—for your sins, and for my sins. As Isaiah says, a few chapters previous to our text, ***"He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*** (Isa. 53:5)

That's why there is no purchase necessary for salvation. Thanks to the redeeming work of Christ on the cross, SALVATION IS FREE FOR EVERYONE. And if you're afraid that, somehow, you're not included in that offer, you're wrong. When God says everyone, He means *everyone*—the whole world! Our text says, ***"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters."*** The Apostle John says that ***"Jesus Christ...is the payment for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."*** (1 John 2:1-2) He also writes in his gospel that ***"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish."*** This offer applies to everyone—you included!

Imagine walking into a grocery store, filling up a cart with expensive food, and then walking casually past the cash register and out the door without ever reaching for your wallet. Wouldn't it be great? That's the picture our text presents to us: ***"Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*** Only here, we're not talking about meat and vegetables and dairy products. Here God is offering us the far more precious commodities of forgiveness, salvation, and everlasting life. No purchase necessary.

Another thing our text tells us is that SALVATION COMES FREELY THOUGH THE WORD. Notice in verse two God says, ***“Listen diligently to me...”*** And again in verse three ***“Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live.”*** Why all these verbs about hearing and listening? Because there’s only one way that this offer of salvation comes to us, and that’s through *the Word of God*. Other churches may ignore God’s Word. You’ve probably visited churches where the preacher talked for thirty minutes and hardly mentioned the Bible once. Well, that’s their business. But in our church God’s Word is everything. We preach it from our pulpit. We teach it to our children. We read it in our homes. We’re careful to preserve all its teachings in their truth and purity, and to reject every false teaching. Why? Because the Gospel in Word and Sacrament are the precious means of grace. They are the only means through which God offers us salvation. God doesn’t talk to us in dreams and visions. He only talks to us in this Book. That’s why Paul says, ***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”*** (Rom 10:17) And, ***“It is the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise unto salvation.”*** (2 Timothy 3:15)

No purchase necessary. And the truth is, THE SALVATION WE RECEIVE FREE FROM JESUS IS MORE SATISFYING THAN ANYTHING WE COULD EVER BUY. Our text pictures this in terms of eating, and that’s something a lot of us can relate to. Our God says, ***“Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.”*** (Isa. 55:2) The salvation God offers us in His Son is rich food, food that satisfies completely our most basic appetites for forgiveness, righteousness, and a conscience at peace with the Lord. Those are the things we need the most in life, and besides that, the Lord promises to provide for all our other needs, as well. Why scramble vainly to find happiness in wealth, and power, and pleasure, and all the “toys” that world around us seeks to obtain? Jesus Christ gives us all we need or could ever want! He Himself tells us, ***“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** Let’s give our time and talents and treasures to our loving Savior. Then we will say with the Psalmist, ***“My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.”*** (Psalm 63:5)

No purchase necessary. Finally, Jesus’ love has purchased for us the most precious gift we could ever possess: THE PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE. In fact, in our text God even signs a contract to that effect! The text says, ***“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.”*** Come to Me, our Lord says, and I’ll give you the same contract I gave to King David. I’ll prosper you and bless you. I’ll forgive your sins and have mercy upon you. And through my Son Jesus I will bring you, one Day, into the everlasting mansions of heaven. That was the merciful promise that David lived by, as he looked forward to coming Savior who would one day be born of his line. And that’s the same promise you and I can rely absolutely on: that because our Savior has come—has lived, died and risen again for us—that “our souls shall live.” We will one Day step into the brightness of His presence, redeemed by Him, and destined to spend the rest of our existence in glory. Even now we have this! Even now this belongs to us! And thanks be to Jesus—**there’s no purchase necessary! AMEN.**

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:7 ESV) Amen.