Good morning, Pine Ridge Family!

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” [KJV]Isaiah 55:1 [KJV]

Only the numerically challenged would not understand that Isaiah 55 comes after Isaiah 53. Chapter 53 is the great song of the Suffering Savior. I could have read it this last Sunday as an opening to the celebration of the Lord’s resurrection. After Chapter 53 comes the psalm of celebration in 54 where God addressed His people with promises of restoration and reminders of His covenant of peace with them which, “shall not be shaken.”

Ho! God begins this section with a “Ho!” King James and New American Standard retains this in their translations, but most of the newer translations decide that it is not understandable in English so they un-ceremonially drop it. As modern as The Message is they cannot bring themselves to leave it out and translate it “Hey there!” I am not a fan of dropping this indicator that God is shouting at us.

In verse 2 we have a similar problem where we can only come close to a good translation when we say, “Listen carefully.” The Hebrew has a stronger intensifier which is like the mother who says to her child, “listen to me,” and instantly realizes the child is *not* listening and so raises her voice and says, “LISTEN TO ME!” “Ho!” means that you need to stop everything that you are doing *right now*, and listen to this word from God.

Isaiah’s role was to speak to a people whose “ears are open, but they do not hear.” So we should not read this as a wonderful promise from God [which it is for us who already know Him], but as a chastisement to a people who should know better. Following God makes sense; what they are doing does not make sense – so stop doing that! Before we get to the good parts of chapter 55 we need to understand a God who is saying in verse 3, *“"Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you*.” We need to take “that you may live,” very seriously. Even those of us who know Him need to take that part very seriously.

This is a God who is longsuffering. He calls over and over again. Yes, most of the people will not listen - but some will. They will seek the Lord while He may be found. They will forsake their wicked way and unrighteous thoughts. They will return to the Lord and find compassion and abundant pardon (vs. 6&7).

Isaiah preached through 5 Kings and probably 60 years. Tradition has it that he died by being stuffed into a hollow log and sawn in two (Heb. 11:37?). In those years, he prepared this book that we would be both blessed and challenged. For the un-hearing, this is a challenge to turn to a God who abundantly pardons. For the already redeemed, we find a blessing, but also a challenge to find those who will believe.

In Christ, our Lord…

Pastor EA

*Roman 14:7-8 “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” [KJV]*