

Come to the Water

- † Satisfy your hunger and thirst... (vv.1-3a)
- † ...on God's everlasting covenant (vv.3b-5)

In the name of Jesus our generous Savior and Friend, dear thirsty souls:

Picture five little kids running up and down the sand dunes trying to keep up with their dad. They begged him to let them go just to the other side. "We want to see the ocean!" So off they went. Running on sand dunes tires you out fast – if you've ever tried it. As you top the first dune, you see stretching out there before you...another sand dune. "Let's see if it's on the other side of that one!" So you run hard again and come up over the top and...there's another sand dune! "Maybe it's on the other side of that one!" You know what on the other side? Yes! More sand dunes. Who knows how much farther to the ocean? Right now, who cares? We're thirsty; we want to go back! Except we're lost, but that's okay because Dad always knows the way. Finally there, you don't want anything else. **Come to the Water.**

† Satisfy your hunger and thirst... (vv.1-3a)

Life is like that. You can get so excited in the morning that you charge in hard, only to realize at the end of the day you're no closer than when you started. Ever worked so hard trying to finish, but then you're too tired to make supper? It's harder when hungry little eyes are looking at you, isn't it?

It's not just the kids who want to go out to eat on days like that. In cultures before drive-through fast food, it was the street vendor who would want to capitalize on your hunger. Can you hear him calling out? "**Hey, all of you who are thirsty, come to the water...! Come, buy and eat!**" (EHV¹) One thing you won't hear – I mean, wouldn't this be weird? "**Hey, all of you who are thirsty, come to the water, even if you have no money!...Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.**"

Reaching for your wallet, you're asking, "You mean it's free?" On both sides of the street as far as you can see there are other vendors, and they're not free. But this one keeps calling because you're looking like you might go to the other guys. So he doubles down: "**Why do you spend money on something that is not bread? Why do you waste your labor on something that does not satisfy?**"

Maybe you're thinking, "Been there. Done that." Maybe you're starting to realize that this street vendor is talking about more than physical thirst and a "hangry" stomach. Because now he's getting more specific with his free offer. "**Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good. Satisfy your appetite with rich food. Turn your ear toward me, and come to me. Listen, so that you may continue to live.**"

What do you do when you've been searching the world over and not finding what can truly satisfy your soul? Where can you go to find healing for your broken heart? Could it be right in front of you?

One time at a lake up north people were searching. It was toward the end of the day, but stores were miles away. Even if they went, what tiny towns in the middle of nowhere could come up with enough food for thousands of people? Come to find out, only one little boy came prepared. He had the poor boy's lunch of barley loaves and fish. Who does that help? But there's the Teacher saying, "**Bring that to me and have the people sit down.**" How does He do that? I mean give thanks at a time like this? There's been a death in His family. He was tired, just trying to get away. Now he's got thousands of eyes all looking at Him. He blesses....He breaks....He distributes by His disciples. It didn't cost anybody

¹ Scripture quotations marked EHV *Evangelical Heritage Version* © 2019 Wartburg Project, Inc.

anything except the little boy his lunch. But he ate too along with the rest – 5,000 men, plus women and children. Not only was everyone satisfied, but the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of leftovers.

Wouldn't it be great to have a King like that? Never have to work again? Most everybody thinks so. And that is how we stay thirsty in their souls and hungry in our hearts. We keep searching as if we can be satisfied with a little pleasure, a little fun, a few good feelings. But then we come up empty inside over again and over again. **Come to the Water** – He keeps calling. **Satisfy your hunger and thirst...**

† ...on God's everlasting covenant (vv.3b-5)

If you drink from a high mountain stream, the cool clear water tastes wonderful, but you'll be thirsty again in no time. A great meal can fill your stomach for an hour or two, but the "hollow leg" of a teenager won't last much longer than that. Step into adult responsibilities where you're caring for parents, hoping to see your grandchildren, maybe missing your spouse – and it's easy to wonder whether good times will ever come again. And will they ever last longer than a few hours or a few days?

"Turn your ear toward me, and come to me. Listen, so that you may continue to live. Yes, I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the faithful mercies promised to David." That's especially helpful if you're hiding parts of your life you never want anyone to see. David committed adultery with another man's wife, then tried to cover it up by murdering him. Self-righteous socialites may think this is unforgivable, but this street vendor calling out today made sure David could come back. Like charging no money for food and water in disaster relief, this One gave *mercy* that was so comforting to the guilty king, so soothing to his soul, that David wanted to keep saying, ***"Amen!"*** to everything of God after that. This one-sided *covenant* offered here is God doing everything, God paying the price in His own blood and God making the cure last forever. David and every other guilty soul like his finds relief here.

What good will it do to go into a grocery store famished and just stand there? Would you go through the drive through without getting anything? Would you sit down in a restaurant and not order? Or worse yet, order...and then just sit and stare at the food? Something is so sick inside our human soul, that's what we do with God. So we need to keep hearing the song in our liturgy today essentially saying, "Stop doing that! Stop just looking at the food, but staying hungry. Stop staring at the water. Drink it!" ***"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they...."*** That means *satisfied down deep inside your soul*. God is my refuge. No matter what gut-wrenching grief tears life apart, "It is well with my soul."

Come to the Water before you find yourself on the water like lawyer Horatio Spafford who lost everything in the Chicago Fire. Months later on the Atlantic, the captain came to his cabin: "We're right over the spot." Another ship carrying Spafford's wife and four daughters had sunk there. He had received a telegraph from his wife: *Saved alone*. How do you recover from losing loved ones? By a spotlight brighter than a thousand suns: ***"Look, I appointed him as a witness for peoples, a leader and commander of peoples."*** That's Jesus the *faithful witness* who says, ***"I...give you this testimony....I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star."*** (Revelation 1:5; 22:16) "It is well with my soul."

In case you worry you're not the right race or ethnicity, here's one more to satisfy your soul: ***"Look, you will call out to a nation you do not know, and a nation that does not know you will run to you, on account of the LORD your God, because of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you."***

Usually there's a point where you have to stop eating; you're full! You have to stop drinking because your tummy can't hold any more water. But when it comes to **God's everlasting covenant**, you never have to stop taking it in. Word and sacrament fill you with joy and peace and satisfaction... overflowing. But there's always an outlet for the overflow to keep you from bursting with too much joy. What's inside is all for you – compliments of the street vendor who has no greater joy than to fill your soul with God's love. But since He is the Lord's Christ, Jesus wants you overflowing in the streets for everyone else – all those other thirsty souls. He wants you calling out with Him: **Come to the Water!** He wants you echoing David as your gratitude keeps saying to God: ***"Amen!"*** Yes, Amen!