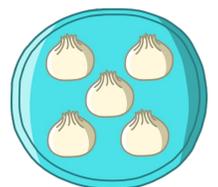




HAVE YOU *Eaten Yet?*

SMALL GROUP SERIES | ISAIAH

FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS



Written by Ashley Bauer-Yuen

 InterVarsity
ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

HAVE YOU EATEN YET? | ISAIAH 25 & 55

“Have you eaten yet?” The host asked me.

“Oh no, I’m not hungry,” but actually I am pretty hungry.

“Are you sure you don’t want to eat?” Another version of the same question.

“No, that’s okay I have something after this.” I countered.

“Here! Just eat a little bit before you go then!” A plate of food is handed to you, and you’re relieved that you’re not imposing but invited to stay.

Why do we ask the question, *have you eaten yet?* It embodies hospitality both practically and relationally. It expresses to us that another person really desires our company. The host’s role is to make sure that everyone who is present is cared for well, satisfied, and feels like they belong.

This study will explore how the Israelites have not been cared for well by their leaders and how God might be asking them, “Have y’all eaten yet?” out of deep compassion and care.

Warm-up Question

Describe a time that you’ve experienced hospitality. What was it like for you?

Context: Grasping the Story of the Israelites

Historical Setting

The book of Isaiah is about judgment and hope during the political downturn of the city of Jerusalem in Judah. Isaiah's prophecies and warnings were directed to Judah, the southern kingdom. Even though Judah was spared from the Assyrian empire, the king of Judah naively trusted the Babylonian empire, who later conquered them.

The historical backdrop of leadership in both Judah and Israel during Isaiah's time can be found in 2 Kings 15-17.

Isaiah's Rebuking

Isaiah was a prophet and political activist who warned Jerusalem's leaders of the consequences of getting political help from the growing oppressive foreign powers (Assyrians and Babylonians), who could later turn their backs on Judah. The book of Isaiah is mostly written in poetic form, which is how prophets expressed rebukes and visions.

The city of Jerusalem was the central national identity of worship and belonging for Judah. From within Jerusalem, Isaiah calls out the leaders for their lack of care for the people. Even though the city was wealthy and prosperous, the rich and powerful left the poor to starve and survive on their own. Isaiah also calls out the leaders' worthless offerings and their hypocrisy in worshipping idols.

Poverty in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament those who were poor did not have resources, which made them vulnerable and susceptible to being taken advantage of. The understanding of poverty was collective; even if some of the poor were responsible for their situation, poverty was seen as a collective sin for which the whole community bore responsibility.

Feasts and Banquets

Feasts and banquets had rich cultural, social, and religious significance. A feast was an event that strengthened Israel's faith, bringing them together in worship and a remembering of their story and heritage. A banquet was a special occasion that typically honored a special guest.

Messiah/Savior

In the passages, the imagery of a feast and banquet is used to describe a very special occasion of joyous celebration and social honor—the arrival of a Messiah or savior that would lead as a king and fulfill all God's good promises.

How to Read the Isaiah Passages

Read each passage below like a poem. They are similar, but Isaiah 25 describes Israel's longing to be saved and Isaiah 55 is a promise to fulfill Israel's longing. Pay attention to the tone and the imagery of the passages.

Isaiah 25:6-10 (CEB) | Longing for God's salvation

⁶On this mountain,
the Lord of heavenly forces
will prepare for all peoples
a rich feast, a feast of choice wines,
of select foods rich in flavor,
of choice wines well refined.

⁷He will swallow up on this mountain the
veil that is veiling all peoples,
the shroud enshrouding all nations.

⁸He will swallow up death forever.
The Lord God will wipe tears from every
face;
he will remove his people's disgrace from
off the whole earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

⁹They will say on that day,
"Look! This is our God,
for whom we have waited—
and he has saved us!
This is the Lord, for whom we have waited;
let's be glad and rejoice in his salvation!"

¹⁰ The Lord's hand will indeed rest on this
mountain.

Isaiah 55:1-5 (CEB) | Invitation to the feast

¹All of you who are thirsty,
come to the water!
Whoever has no money,
come, buy food and eat!
Without money, at no cost,
buy wine and milk!

²Why spend money for what isn't food,
and your earnings for what doesn't
satisfy?
Listen carefully to me and eat what is good;
enjoy the richest of feasts.

³Listen and come to me;
listen, and you will live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
my faithful loyalty to David.

⁴Look, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a prince and commander of peoples.

⁵Look, you will call a nation you don't know,
a nation you don't know will run to you
because of the Lord your God,
the holy one of Israel, who has glorified
you.

Discussing the Passages:

1. What do you notice about the feast in these passages? What imagery, repetition, or patterns stand out to you?
2. In Isaiah 25, what are the Israelites longing for and celebrating that has not yet happened?
3. In Isaiah 55, the questions and promises are being directed to Israel, what stands out about the promise or invitation being made?
4. What does it mean to the Israelites who are experiencing poverty and hardship to be invited to the feast? How does this contrast to Israel's leaders?
5. How does God anticipate or satisfy Israel's longing? How is God's feast good news to the them?
6. The question "*Have you eaten yet?*" can be a way to check in on someone's well-being. Consider your own longings and needs and imagine that God is asking you, "*Have you eaten yet?*" How would you answer this question? What is something you need from God this year?

Experiencing God's Hospitality

God's hospitality is rooted in deep compassionate love and care. If God is the host, we are being asked, "*Have y'all eaten yet?*" God is anticipating our needs, desires and wants to make sure that we are cared for well, satisfied, and feel like we belong. This hospitality seeks to restore the dignity and well-being of God's people.

Gleaning and Growing from Stories

1. Who is someone in your life that is hospitable to you and cares for you? Have you ever thought about or considered God to be hospitable and caring for you in similar ways?
2. In some cultures, it is respectful to avoid saying 'yes' at least the first time someone offers you hospitality. Does this resonate with you? When God offers you hospitality, how do you respond? What is it like to receive care from God?
3. As you think about your community or Asian American context, what are the longings of your community? How might your community need God's care?

Check out questions: What is something you are taking from today? Or what is something you want to keep digesting or chewing on this week?