

Isaiah 55: 1 – 11

'Free lunch'

Introduction ...

A few phrases that have become quite common/frequent in everyday language:

Buy one, get one free

Spend over £30 and receive a free gift

Free banking

Free to download

How do those fit with an older proverb:

"There's no such thing as a free lunch ..."

In each case, there is a hidden cost – or a cost to someone else ... for example:

Free banking – may well be funded by high interest rates for users.

Free to download – the cost may well be that your personal data is used in some way.

And sometimes the way we use the word '**Free**' hides the underlying costs.

So, for example, we do not want to charge anything for Time Together and so, understandably, we tend to say that it's **free ...** but for the church to understand it – we should say in some discussions that it's **free at the point of delivery**. There are costs.

Isaiah 55: 1 – 11 ...

So what are we to make of the opening verses of our Old Testament reading:

You that have no money

come buy and eat.

Come buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

And this conveys an invitation to live abundantly – as Jesus states is the purpose of his coming – **John 10:10**

I have come that they might have life – life in all its fullness – or abundant life ...

Is this life '**free**'?

Well ... yes

But is there a cost?

Well ... yes again.

The life Jesus offers is **Free at the point of delivery**

... I'm sometimes asked what a baptism costs ... what's the fee? It's a logical question in many ways ... there is a fee for weddings ... and one for funerals.

But – quite rightly ... no fee for baptisms – Entry into God's family is **free ...**

Yet there is a **'Cost'**

Most obviously for us to have this abundant life – the cost to God is immense – the coming of the Son – his incarnation, life and death – **was at great cost ...**

And there is a different kind of cost to us. Think back to those words from Isaiah ... actually receiving what's "on offer" takes a willingness

to pause

to trust

to receive

to allow a different food to enter us and become part of us.

In one imagined conversation – in a book written to convey the Gospel narrative with Jesus as The Singer ... the conversation after Jesus cures Mary of Magdala, as another man approaches her goes like this:

'Are you betrothed? The buyer asked her

'No, only loved' she answered

'And do you pay for love?' he questioned

'No, but I owe it everything.'

Conclusion ...

And so in a short time of quietness – I invite each of us to hear again **'The offer of a free – and life giving – lunch'** ... the offer of abundant life in Jesus ... ours because of God's love and to respond in some way to that short dialogue:

Do you pay for love?

No, but I owe it everything