

Kingdom Foundations

Part Four

The Bread of Life

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”
Matthew 4:4

I. Introduction

A. Reiterate Purpose of Series

We're looking at the foundations of the Christian faith from a Kingdom perspective, and today, at the importance of the Word of God, the Holy Bible, to the life of one who follows Jesus.

My goal is not to just beat you upside the head and scream at you, “Read your Bible!” My hope is that after hearing today's message, you will want to live a life rooted in God's Word or at the very least understand why you should.

B. Journal Entry

II. God's Word a Witness to the King (John 5:39)

A. In John 5, we find Jews persecuting Jesus because He did things like performing miracles on the Sabbath and He, in their minds, had the audacity to even consider Himself equal with God. Little did they know that the very scriptures they were so familiar with was staring them right in the face. Jesus begins to explain that the authority was given to Him by God and how it was impossible for Him to do anything apart from the Father. In verse 39, when addressing them, He makes a powerful statement: *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.”*

B. The purpose of God's word is to bring us closer to Him! Reading our bible, confessing God's Word over our lives, and even praying the scriptures has always been about Jesus! The King!

C. I'd like to look at God's word as our nourishment, the very thing that sustains us. If we consider His Word to be our spiritual food, then the overall question is...**Why Eat?**

D. Some would view this as a silly question to ask. I mean why should we make God's word a vital part of our life? I believe it helps us in doing three things:

1. Crucifying self
2. Taking responsibility
3. Seeking God's Kingdom

III. Crucifying Self

A. Can I be real with you? Some of us have hidden the old man in the closet instead of nailing him to the Cross! By not making God's word (this bread of life) a vital part of our faith, we hold on to a part of us that we are supposed to be putting to death.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

B. Putting that old man to death...nailing that woman you used to be on that cross...isn't easy. Even the Apostle Paul in Romans 7 describes the struggle. He says that although he delights in the law of God, there is another law waging war against God's law (the law of sin and death).

C. There's an old story about an elder of an Indian tribe who was teaching his grandchildren about life. He said to them, "A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One wolf represents fear, anger, hate, greed, pride, and deceit. The other stands for joy, peace, love, faith, humility, hope, and compassion. This same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too." The grandchildren thought about it for a minute. Then one child asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?" The grandfather simply replied, "The one you feed."

D. We in the same way have two people fighting on the inside of us (the old man and the new one). Oh, how I wish we could just kill the old man once, and he would just stay dead! The reality is he keeps coming back to life because we won't stop feeding him!

- Come on men; we watch cinemax or should I say skinemax (that's all they show is skin) and BET (Booty Entertainment Television) and wonder why we have lust problems.
- What about the ladies who can't put down that romance novel expecting your husband to come home from work riding a white stallion so you can ride off into the sunset. Who are you feeding?
- We fail to monitor the music our children listen to and the company that they keep and wonder why they're misbehaving. What's comes out of them is a result of what's going into them! Who are you feeding?

E. The new man has a strict diet! He needs fellowship with other believers, good deeds, and of course God's Word.

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

Mark 8:34-35

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
Luke 9:23*

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away;
behold, the new has come.
2 Cor 5:17*

IV. The Second Reason to Eat-Taking Responsibility

A. We sometimes act like responsibility is a curse word. Oooooo, he said the "R" word. I'm gonna tell mom! Responsibility is a good thing. In many situations, it's a positive pressure that keeps us in God's will and helps us avoid making the wrong decisions. When we take on the responsibility that God has entrusted to us, it requires us to bow our knee to Christ and take ownership for the choices we make in this life.

B. Years ago, when I first surrendered my life to God at the age of 19, I remember working an internship for the summer and having to be at work at 7:45 in the morning. I would wake up at 5:30 or so and read my bible- not because I super-sized my order of holiness, but because I was told that I needed to. Even though I didn't understand why as much as I do now, I did it because I was supposed to. It was my responsibility to read God's word (that's what Christians do). I still benefit from that today. Stories from the Old Testament were engraved in my mind, and I found myself not just speaking what I was reading, but living it! It changed me. But it all started with me fulfilling my obligation.

C. I want us to understand something. Spiritual hunger is a beautiful thing. It's a gift from God that pushes into His presence and into His purpose for our lives. But we cannot depend solely on hunger when it comes to seeking and living for God.

D. Last November, our church had a men's retreat. Friday night we had our opening session, and it was great. Some of the guys and I decided we were hungry, so we went to Sonic. I decided to order a burrito. The next morning I began to feel sick. I realized that I had food poisoning! It got so bad, I had to leave the retreat early on Saturday. One of the main symptoms I experienced was my loss of appetite. I looked at food and wanted to throw up. Yet I knew if I didn't eat, I wouldn't get better. That Campbell's Soup looked so unattractive staring at me from that porcelain bowl. But there were people depending on me. I had a responsibility to go to work and that is what pushed me to bring that spoon filled with hot yellow liquid to my mouth.

E. There are plenty of days I don't feel like reading, praying, being kind, ministering to those in need, etc. But beyond my emotion, beyond my weariness, is the Word of God reminding me of my God-given responsibility to live for Him and not for me.

IV. The Third Reason to Eat-Seeking His Kingdom

A. It's not about us! The Kingdom is about loving and serving others. Being a part of it is the very thing that saves us from ourselves. I love what Jesus says in Mark 12:28-34:

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.

B. This really struck a cord in my soul knowing that truly loving others with a love that can only come through Christ Himself brings me closer to His Kingdom. It's evident that God has commanded us to love and it is impossible to do that without knowing and keeping His word.

"but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:"

1 John 2:5

C. When it comes to love, God's Word going into us is only part of the process. What really counts is when it comes out of us. Serving people, forgiving those who have done us wrong, praying for our enemies! This is when the word becomes flesh and those around us can see Jesus in us.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples."

John 8:31

D. Abide: Act in accordance with; Remain faithful to--Only by knowing and keeping the Word can we really can KNOW we are in Christ! And only through obedience can we have any REAL assurance that we are true followers of Christ and not hypocrites!!!

V. Conclusion

We eat in order to crucify the old man, take responsibility, and seek God's Kingdom.

God wants us to have a hunger for Him. It isn't something we work for or earn. It's something we are. God has created us with a desire that can only be satisfied in Him.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matt 5:6