

PERSONAL RENEWAL THROUGH GOD'S WORD

Dave Geldart 2020-04-05

Passages: Amos 8:11-13, Matthew 4:4 (Deuteronomy 8:3)

Zoom: TURN ON ORIGINAL SOUND

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL (4min)

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul

It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul

It is well (it is well)
With my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul

- Welcome yall! We're so glad you're here
 - That song was written 150 yrs ago by a man after significantly tragic times in his life (read the story on Wikipedia)
 - He reminds himself, and us, that in the midst of uncertain times, we can trust and know that God is with us and will carry us through.
 - As Philippians 4 teaches us, as we choose to bring our sorrows and anxieties to GOD in prayer, his peace, comes in and guards/protects our hearts and minds in Christ.
 - when your world is in turmoil, This is a REAL comfort
- Speaking of Comfort: Lets talk about Comfort food
 - Buttery, creamy, cheesy, fatty, salty or sweet
 - Some of my favorites
 - **Corn on the Cob, dripping with butter, salt and pepper**
 - **Extra cheese Pizza**
 - **Panda Express Orange Chicken with LoMein**
 - **French Toast with lots of butter and real maple syrup**
 - **Or Vanilla Bean ice cream with homemade chocolate sauce**
 - **→ Chicken wrapped in bacon**

- Not historically on my list:
 - Veggies (with the exception of garden fresh tomatoes, sliced with salt and pepper)
 - Whole grains
 - Fruits
 - Kale?
 - Not that comforting.....

{PUT SPOTLIGHT BACK ON ME}
- But it's funny how appetites can change.... When you're hungry
- Last week Ben did a great job teaching about America's most neglected spiritual discipline: fasting
 - And how contrary to popular belief, fasting is actually a vital personal spiritual practice, especially for those who long for personal and corporate renewal.
 - He challenged each of us to take a step with fasting
- So since Tuesday morning is Tallgrass Prayer, I joined in with others who've been trying to take steps with fasting.
 - I fasted Monday after dinner until Tuesday dinner
 - Not too bad.....Good through the morning.
 - First test over lunch
 - I'd been doing pretty good not even really feeling my hunger..... but then
 - Jenn made herself a salad
 - Not my normal fare!
 - Usually doesn't spark much interest
 - But today it looked incredible
 - Didn't feel my hunger until I SAW AND SMELLED Jenns salad
 - Spring green and lettuce
 - Ruby red Grape tomatoes
 - Dark green cucumbers
 - A little bit of deep orange Cheddar cheese
 - And even some fresh sliced hardboiled eggs
 - And she topped it off with a bit of leftover
 - Pan fried ham
 - And Bacon
 - Then it kicked up
 - I wanted to EAT.... Filled with HUNGER
 - Desire
 - That salad even SMELLED good
 - And that's exactly what's supposed to happen
 - Because, fasting has a way of resetting our desires
 - Helping us get back in touch with our true hunger ... for good nourishing food.
- Back to the theme of comfort
- We all long for comfort in uncertain and scary times.
 - Food can be comforting for small things,
 - But deeper still are our longing for WORDS of comfort
- Who do you long to hear words of comfort from? When you're sad. Hurt. Scared.
 - Parents? Best friend?

- Wife or Husband?
- Mentor
- Your favorite podcast
- Soc med?
- Govt officials?
- What about GOD?
- John 1 teaches us that God's WORD become human, Jesus Christ
 - The word that alone creates from nothing
 - Brings light from darkness
 - And life from death
- THIS is what your soul longs for – the TRUE FOOD of our deepest selves
- And God teaches us that just like our bodies need good food to be healthy
 - JUST SO our souls require nourishment
 - Not with bread, or butter
 - But with SPIRITUAL FOOD
 - Which is the Word of God
 - Jesus – Matthew 4:4 – man cannot live on just bread, but on EVERY ONE OF GOD'S WORDS
- We were created, designed to need food for our bodies and our souls
 - And God created us to live in an abundance of both!
 - A Garden of Eden full of GOOD FOOD to nourish our bodies from the Good Earth he made
 - ALL while enjoying perfect, connected relationship with Him directly.
 - Where we knew Him and our souls were filled with his words daily.
- But we've forgotten. It's been so long since the Garden.
- It's been said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
 - It's def true for me!
 - But apparently Satan knew it worked on women too.
 - And so he tempted Eve with food.
- Convinced her that God's actually not best for her.
 - There's a BETTER WAY
 - You'll be MORE nourished, free, empowered if you choose to nourish yourself with something else
- And ever since we've searched for ANYTHING else other than God for our nourishment.
 - But all we've found is only junk food.
 - Junk food → dulls the taste and appetite for real food
 - **Imagine a bowl of perfectly ripe, plump, just picked, crimson red strawberries**
 - **(GO TO SLIDES)**
 - when you're famished and parched
 - You want that goodness. NOW! And rightly so! It's good for you.
 - Now, lets change one thing. Imagine instead of being starving, you've just glugged down a coke with 4 slices of pizza.... Then and blew up a king-sized snickers bar to finish?
 - Hows that bowl of strawberries look now?
 - Hows your DESIRE?
 - The strawberries haven't changed.
 - But our DESIRE has....
- **WHAT JUNK HAVE YOU BEEN FEEDING YOUR SOUL** → What substitutes for the nourishing Word of God have you been feeding on.... that have deadened your appetite for God's Word?
 - Examples?

- Some possibilities come with an obvious JUNK FOOD WARNING label
 - **Pornography**
 - **Control**
 - **Power**
 - **and manipulation**
 - Others are less clear:
 - **Social Media**
 - **News**
 - **Distractions & amusements like**
 - **Movies, shows--Netflix**
 - **Video games**
 - And many seem downright GOOD
 - **Work**
 - **Financial Security**
 - **Good Books**
 - **CHRISTIAN BOOKS?**
 - **Relationships**
 - **SOCIAL JUSTICE and other causes!**
- **But none of these . NONE OF THESE. Truly nourish your souls.**
- None.
- Though most of Americans struggle with obesity, we're malnourished, and starving inside.
- **AMOS 8:11-13**
 - ¹¹"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD,
 "when I will send a famine on the land—
 not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
 but of hearing the words of the LORD.
 - ¹²They shall wander from sea to sea,
 and from north to east;
 they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD,
 but they shall not find it.
 - ¹³"In that day the lovely virgins and the young men
 shall faint for thirst.
- This is happening. Now.
- Those are THESE days
 - Even the beautiful young women and youthful men FAINT with thirst – for TRUTH
 - FOR GOD'S WORD
 - Even though we have more access to God's word than EVER BEFORE
 - There's still a famine in the land
 - Not an access problem
 - It's an APPETITE PROBLEM
 - Not just talking about out there – nonbelievers
 - BUT IN HERE – church people!

- We've eaten CRAP so long, we're dying inside – at a SOUL level
 - We're staggering from side to side, anxious, listless, bored, distracted, amused, and depressed – rapidly losing hope of real meaning and purpose in our lives
 - And no longer able to see and hear OR WANT the REAL nourishment of God's word
 - This is the true pandemic in our land.
- But there's hope!
 - Even in the midst of famine and pandemic.
 - Jeremiah 17:7-8 tells us about a tree
 - It's experiencing difficult circumstances
 - But it's flourishing.... Even so much so that in the midst of drought and famine,
 - IT'S STILL MAKING FRUIT FOR OTHERS TO EAT!
 - Because its's being NOURISHED --- its roots are going down deep into the true source of life
- That could be you. Right now. A NEW NORMAL:
 - **Experiencing real, personal renewal through God's Word.**
 - **SPOTLIGHT ME**
- Because even in the midst of very difficult times
 - Ben talked last time about the terrible trilogy of human suffering: disease, war, and famine
- God ALWAYS preserves a remnant
 - and from the remnant, a pregnancy.
 - A possibility
 - A HUNGER of an entire generation – for renewal
- Young Ppl (my age and younger) are seeking after God's word afresh
 - A NEW awakening, longing for real meaty food
- I believe Renewal is coming
 - There's an entire generation who are waking up....
 - Their minds brought into sharp focus by the hunger
 - And we're beginning to see what many of us have longed to see, longed for in earnest prayer and near hopeless desire:
 - People turning back to God
 - And tasting for the very first time the real, rich spiritual food God has given us in his word.
- SO MANY ppl come to church famished, having eaten nothing all week, and looking for the PREACHER to help them feel "Feed".
 - But one meal a week won't work with food
 - NOR WITH THE WORD OF GOD
 - Have you ever wondered why you're constantly disappointed with "CHURCH"?
- The main job of the shepherd isn't to feed the sheep it's to LEAD THEM TO FOOD so they can feed themselves
 - Likewise, the main job of the preacher, especially in our modern culture, isn't to FEED the sheep, but to stir up their HUNGER → so they'll be motivated to feed themselves
 - We want to be able to PRESENT EVERYONE MATURE IN CHRIST
 - Become self-feeders on the Word of God
 - Have I made you HUNGRY????
 - Or at least curious? – that's PREhunger!
- Why not respond to the ancient invitation of the psalmist in Psalm 34:8
 - -- TASTE AND SEE that the Lord – the Word of God Himself – is Good.

- **ALTON BROWN DIET (Taylor Hillegeist)**

- Identify the true good foods, and then make sure to eat them
- Then you get filled up with the GOOD STUFF
- And your appetite for the crap fades away
- And you get healthy. You actually change. Get healthy. And grow
 - NOT just for yourself, but so that YOUR LIFE can produce fruit for others
 - And you can lead others to the source of life that you've found
- It's my honest prayer that this would be you.

- **Applications (BACK TO SLIDES)**

- Natural next step from last week's focus on fasting! – fasting uses physical hunger to reconnect you to your spiritual hunger. When you fast and you get hungry, each time say to yourself: my soul is even hungrier than this for God's Word!

- **Begin to feed yourself on the Word of God**
 - Read the Bible for yourself
 - **Get a copy** -- Paper copies to start if you have em
 - Otherwise free bible apps on your phone (YouVersion)
 - If you're just getting started, I recommend the New Living Translation (easy, modern, readably) – we also like ESV
 - **Start either in Psalms or John**
 - Psalms: prayers, meditations, and songs to help you practice opening up your inner life to God
 - John: the story of the Word of God come to save us
 - Jesus Himself: in John 6:35 NLT - I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.
 - **And begin by asking God to help you understand his Word and to speak to you**
 - **Then read 1 chapter (more if you want)**
 - **End by praying thanks to God for his word**
- **Next steps (advanced): Go deeper with God's Word**
 - **Study a book of the bible like you're gonna write a report**
 - THEN DO
 - Write your own book report about a book of the bible
 - Like you're going to hand it in
 - But just never do.
 - For yourself.
 - The study and work will help you to understand God's Word like never before, learning how to get more nourishing vitamins out of it.
 - **Memorize**
 - Some passages
 - Move to entire chapters – we've all been duped into thinking this is unnecessary because of access (NOT TRUE)
 - Or impossible for you. It's a lie. You can HIDE GOD'S WORD IN YOUR HEART
 - Then it's there, like never before.
 - The soul cannot recall what the brain has not installed!

- It's what you've memorized that will give you strength in the dark nights, in the difficult conversations, in the opportunities for ministry.

Pray: God – make us HUNGRY for your word.

HUNGRY (3min)

Hungry I come to You for I know You satisfy
I am empty, but I know Your love does not run dry

So I wait for You
So I wait for You

I'm falling on my knees
Offering all of me
Jesus You're all this heart is living for

Broken I run to You for Your arms are open wide
I am weary, but I know Your touch restores my life

So I wait for You
So I wait for You

- TESTIMONIES, Questions, Comments – what's been your experience with God's word lately? What next steps do you need to take?

Other Passages:

Psalm 19:7-11, Isaiah 55:1-2 (rich food)