

WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.1.2023

FEASTING ON GOD'S WORD - PART 1

I. INTRODUCTION

- The rise of Biblical illiteracy - [American Bible Society's 2022 State of the Bible Survey](#)
- From the survey, what are the greatest frustrations with regard to Bible reading.
- About 1/4 respondents indicated, "*I never seem to have enough time.*"
- Top answer for Gen Z and Millennials was "*I don't know where to start.*"
- Across all categories, "*I don't feel excited about using [the Bible].*"
- Biblical illiteracy is not a result of lack of access or availability but a lack of appetite and affection.
- Why don't more professing Christians love God's Word enough to read and study it consistently?
- I don't think it's a lack of desire. People are starving for God's Word.
- It's a lack of conviction.
- It's mainly a lack of conviction that the Bible, as God's Word, has the power to transform our life and affections and to conform us more to Christ.
- It's a lack of conviction that the Bible is sufficient to show us what we need to know about God.
- And it's also a lack of motivation in the kind of diligent study that is required to grow in the knowledge of God through His Word.
- My greatest prayer this year for our church is that we be a people who love and delight in God's Word.

Jeremiah 15:16

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.

II. DEVOURING GOD'S WORD

- Jeremiah received the word and welcomed the word as a starving man would to food offered to him.
- "*Your words were found...*" He received them as they were, the very words of God.
- He describes that event as eating God's words.
- It is a comparison used frequently in Scripture of hearing and receiving God's Word to eating.
- Ezekiel 3:1-3,10 And he said to me, "Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it." Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey. 10 Moreover, he said to me, "Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears.
- Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, describes the act of hearing and receiving into their heart God's Word, via the imagery of eating delicious and desirable food.
- It is not a mere intellectual exercise we engage in, God's Word is to be taken into the heart.
- Psalm 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.
- Blessed is the man who delights in God's Word and meditates upon it day and night.
- Meditate = means to murmur or mumble.
- The one who meditates on God's Word always has His Word in their thoughts, has it ready on their lips, because it is hidden in his heart.
- Joshua 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
- God's Word is not to be consumed sparingly, like emergency rations.

- God's Word is not to be treated casually.
- The indifference, neglect, and inattention given to God's Word reveals just how little many Christians think of it.
- God has set before his people a banquet of sweet, nourishing, savory, life-giving, delicious food for our souls.
- It is a feast that we are continually to dine upon and digest.
- In the midst of the exceeding sorrow and suffering Jeremiah was going through, he took comfort in God's Word that he had tasted of and eaten.
- His spiritual hunger and appetite were satisfied as he consumed God's Word.
- What does your intake of God's Word look like?
- Do you receive regular nourishment from God's Word?
- We need nourishment from God's Word daily.
- Jesus, when tempted by the Devil, responded, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4)
- Reasons / Excuses for not reading the Bible regularly:
 - **"I don't have enough time."**
 - The amount of time the average person spends on social media and entertainment consumption proves time is not the problem.
 - John Piper famously tweeted years ago, "One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the Last Day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time."
 - You can substitute Twitter and Facebook for any number of frivolous things that we devote a lot of time to and we can substitute prayerlessness for Bible reading and study.
 - You make time for what matters most.
 - **"I don't know where to begin."**
 - We're going to give you some tools in this series to help you do just that.
 - There are a variety of reading plans you can follow. You can focus on the NT, The Gospels, The OT, the Psalms.
 - The Preferred method in this series is concentrating on one book of the Bible and reading and studying that book for a period of time.
 - The goal is not to get through the Bible in a year, the goal is to know, understand, love and treasure God's Word and be transformed by it.
 - **"It's boring."**
 - The Bible is a challenging read.
 - But ultimately, if you find reading the Bible boring it is because you are not convinced that God's Word is powerful enough to transform you, and you are not seeing it for what it is, God's revelation to you—God speaking to you.

BREATHED OUT BY GOD

- You can't begin to delight in God's Word and love God's Word until you understand that the text you hold in your hands is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, sufficient, authoritative Word of God.
- Scripture alone is our highest standard, our ultimate authority.
- 1689 LBCF 1:1 The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.
- A central text in understanding the doctrine of the authority of Scripture is found in 2 Timothy.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- Paul reminds Timothy that Scripture is supernatural and divine in origin.
- *"All Scripture"* - every word in your Bible is breathed out by God.
- Greek - *"Theopneustos"* means 'God-breathed', the very breath exhaled from the lungs of God.
- They are the Spirit-inspired words of God.
- He is the one and only Divine author.
- Every time you open your bible God opens his mouth.
- The words contained in the Bible were inspired by God through the various writers of the books of the Bible.
- 2 Peter 1:19-21 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- What is Peter saying? The words of Scripture are not of human origin.
- It was the Spirit of God who carried the writers along, He spoke through their natural voices, he superintended every single one of their words.
- Your Bible is a supernatural book. It contains divine words.
- The Bible is living and active (Heb 4:12).
- This is why it is the most important thing you can ever read, this is why it is worth devoting your whole life to its intake and study.
- All of the words breathed out by God, all of Scripture, is profitable.
- Profitable means useful, beneficial, advantageous.

- Paul gives four modifiers regarding the profitability or benefits of Scriptures: teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.
- God's Word is useful to instruct believers in everything concerning our faith; what God desires for us to know and believe.
- God's Word is useful in rebuking our wrong thinking and actions. It reveals the hidden and secret sins of the heart to bring us to repentance.
- God's Word is useful in exhorting us to right and holy living.
- God's Word is useful in training us to conform to God's righteous standard.
- In short, God's Word is enough. His Word is sufficient.
- To what end? That every believer would be built up, equipped, and matured for every good work (Eph. 2:10).
- If God has given us His Word to accomplish all of these things in the life of the believer, why do we neglect it?

III. DELIGHTING IN GOD'S WORD

- Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart,
- When Jeremiah tasted the sweetness of the Words of God, they became to him the joy and delight of his heart.
- He finds God's words to be immensely desirable, satisfying, interesting, and relevant. God's Word brought him joy.
- Delight means to be so taken by someone or something, to be captivated.
- Is God's word a joy and delight to your heart?
- Do you richly delight in it like Jeremiah?
- Psalm 119 is a love poem David writes about God's Law—His Word.
- There is so much affection and longing expressed in David's songs for God's Word.
- Ps. 119:24 Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.
- Ps. 119:47-48 for I find my delight in your commandments, which I love. 48 I will lift up my hands toward your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes.
- Ps. 119:97 Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.
- Ps. 119:111 Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.
- Ps. 119:167 My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly.
- Does David's affection for God's Word resonate in your heart?
- What David expresses is what God desires for every one of His children, that they love His Word and treasure His Word in their heart.
- Psalm 119 is the goal.
- This is exactly how you and I should feel about the word of God and what we should believe about the word of God.
- We can only begin to delight in God's Word when we devour and digest God's Word.
- God's Spirit will change our affections and intensify our longing when we engage with His Word.
- Not everyone likes to read but we all get passionate about words that we hear or read when they are of great benefit to us and concern us greatly.
- The Bible is a book that contains God's Words to us and every one of those words is of great benefit to us.
- And only those who know it most can delight in it the most.
- Only those who eat the words frequently and consistently, savoring and digesting the life-giving words, grow to love it greatly.
- Only those who spend time with God's Word can be shaped and transformed by God's Word.
- What we feel and believe about Jesus is what we should feel and believe about Scripture.
- Hebrews 1:1-2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
- Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:14).
- You cannot claim to love Christ and neglect what he has spoken to you through His Word.
- All that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and David felt and believed about the words of God is all that you and I should feel and believe about the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus, speaking to the two disciples that were on their way to Emmaus, interprets to them all of the things in Scripture concerning himself (Luke 24:27).
- If you want to grow in your love, joy, and delight in Jesus, it will not happen apart from His Word.
- As you grow in your delight of Scripture, you will grow in your delight of the Son of God.

CONCLUSION

- Most likely some of you already have self-imposed guilt or shame for the little time you devote to God's Word.
- But be encouraged today—God wants you to know and love his Word.

- Furthermore, He has given us His Spirit to help us to know and love His Word.
- David prayed, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." (Ps. 119:18)
- Ephesians 1:16-19 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe...
- Colossians 1:9-10 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- These are prayers that God delights in answering.
- When his children desire, devour, digest, and delight in His Word they will discover a God who desires to delight them through His Word.
- Set your heart this year on loving, delighting, and treasuring God's Word and you will discover God's Word will become the joy and delight of your heart.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?