

Feast or Famine

Introduction

There was a moment in history captured in the Bible

It's about one of Jesus' followers named Peter... Peter had really messed up...denied his friend Jesus when Jesus needed Him the most And he didn't do it just once...he did it three times Then Jesus died....and Peter realized his failure One morning though....Jesus had resurrected and met Peter for breakfast He asked Peter three times...Do you love me? Peter said three times...you know I love you... And then Jesus tells Peter...something very interesting

John 21:17 (ESV) 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus didn't have any sheep... Jesus was speaking to Peter about Spiritual things Jesus was called the Good Shepherd...his followers were His flock Jesus tells Peter..if you really really love me...feed my sheep Peter understood...this was not about food... They had food...it was about feeding them Spiritually Jesus had repeatedly said...man lives by feeding on the Word of God If you love me...Jesus says to Peter and to us.... then feed on my Word... And teach others to do the same

If you are new to the teachings of Jesus..He often does this...and its ok He speaks Spiritually but uses physical examples He takes things we can understand...Like shepherding sheep.... And uses them as illustrations to teach us things About the Spiritual Kingdom of God He presents supernatural things....using natural examples

Jesus was telling Peter...the people are hungry...and need to be fed. Of all the things Jesus could have said to Peter... Things Peter could do to demonstrate His love for Jesus... Jesus chooses....make sure my sheep...my followers...don't starve Feed them with the Word of God...the Holy Scriptures That is how they move from baby believers.... To mature followers of Jesus

So many Christians...I believe... Are going through their journey with Jesus But starving for more.... More freedom...More peace...More Joy... They remind me of

An often told story makes our point today...

The story is told about a poor man who lived in Eastern Europe in the early 1900s. He scraped together enough money to buy a third-class ticket on a steamship to New York City. SHIP PHOTO1 He subsisted for the twelve-day journey on cheese and crackers. Every day he would eat his cheese that was becoming moldy over the two week journey...He would pass by the banquet hall SHIP PHOTO 2 and see everyone enjoying great company and a wonderful meal...especially the desert....But he kept eating his cheese and crackers...dreaming of the day when he would be in America and could then eat....On the final day of the voyage, the man stood at the railing beside one of the ship's stewards. "Why have we not seen you in the dining room?" asked the steward. The traveler explained his lack of money. The steward responded

with shock, "Did you not know that three meals a day were included in your ticket? We set you a place every day, but you never came."

Every day we see Christians who live like this man Saved on their way to a Great Destination But completely unaware that Jesus paid the price For both the journey and feasting with the Holy Spirit He said it is better than having Him here with us Yet so many starve spiritually because they don't know God had a much better plan There is a place at the Table of the Holy Spirit for every believer. There is no room service. God doesn't bring everything to you. You go to Him and Feast at His Table. At that table we feast on the Word of God

We learn to feed ourselves and grow Spiritually We are transformed by the Holy Spirit Experiencing His comfort...conviction...counsel...fellowship..gifts.. His fruit...help with prayer...His power...His freedom Yet many Christians miss it.... Because they just didn't know.... They are too prideful to take their seat and learn So they settle for Cheese and Cracker Christianity.... And instead of fully experiencing the journey...they just hope for the destination

I believe Churches today are filled with Cheese Heads....People who are just waiting for the destination. Surviving on Cheese and Crackers....Hoping for better days

They are not feeding on my Word. So many could be so much farther spiritually....but they are not prioritizing time with Me in the Word Living on milk rather than solid food

1 Corinthians 3:1–3 (ESV) 3 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh.

In other words, Paul is telling them...why are you still acting human when you have been reborn in the Spirit? Why is your filet mignon getting cold while you are eating mold? If you need a booster chair to get started it's ok...we just need you at the table.

I believe that many believers have settled for cheese.

The overwhelming majority are starving themselves They are living on morsels they get on Sunday.... Content with cheese and crackers....and missing the banquet. And wondering why some have such a deeper experience. They have embraced the lie that they don't have a seat at the banquet. That they could never on their own feed on the word of God.

Another moment in history recorded by God in His Scriptures.

Matthew 28:16–20 (ESV) 16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

11 Disciples....some doubted Doubt...dumbfounded...hard to grasp Struggle of understanding Spiritual things with your flesh mind All Authority....New Sheriff in Town Because of My Authority...Go...Go Make Disciples Didn't say "Make Converts".....Didn't say water the Word down and "Grow the Church" Make Disciples and do two things Baptize them....Teach them

What is our assignment? Baptize and Teach What are we to teach? All that I have commanded you?

No that is not what it says...We are to teach them to OBSERVE all that I have commanded you.

Making disciples is not about moving people to knowledge.... It is about moving people to obedience of that knowledge. And don't worry...I will be with you always Did you notice..... Disciples have to be made? Jesus would not tell us to make them....if we were disciples at conversion You become a believer at conversion... But you don't become a disciple Jesus says...Disciples must be made

When you repent of your sins and trust Jesus....you are spiritually reborn...brand new...Spiritual baby You may be 80 years old...but you are a baby spiritually....you have to be fed You and I enter into God's family....like Jesus entered into the world Completely dependent upon others to feed us...nurture us...teach us...and grow us. Your salvation comes in an instant.... But your sanctification...your spiritual growth...is a seed..Full of potential...but dependent upon others and you...to grow.Initially you and I are fed by others...nursed if you will But at some point...you must learn to feed yourself...and more to deeper more solid food

Sometimes people will tell me that I tend to repeat what I have said before...I know a preacher who preached the same sermon 4 weeks in a row. Someone finally asked him...if he realized that he had already taught them that sermon...and he replied...yes, but I am not commanded to teach it to you....I am commanded to teach you to obey it. Jesus said...teach them to obey all that I have commanded. In other words, if we are not obeying it, I need to keep teaching it.

To many settle for a Christian experience of Cheese and Crackers With their nose pressed against the glass of the celebration... Wondering why they can't experience a life with God that others seem to have They have taken the journey....but only because of the destination They didn't do what was necessary to experience the journey along the way Others have it....because others invested in the Word...and worked at it. No one can study the Word and spend time with God for

you So disciples have to be made...Jesus commands all of us to be in the Spiritual Growth Business
First personally....then corporately

So..then...What is a Disciple?

"Disciplined One"....Understood to be scholars...learners...students Always involving a
teacher/student relationship The idea of being someone's disciple.... Not only listen to what they
say and teach...but adopt their teaching as a way of life

They were committed to living like their Teacher....to Practice His way of life To surrender why
they were...to who he could help them become They eventually walked like Him...talked like
Him...and became like Him They went where He went...did what He did...said what He
said...they follower Him in everything

Do you know it is estimated that...in American Churches...less than 15% Of saved Christians
who surrender their lives to Jesus at that altar.... Ever actually commit to and become true
Disciples of Jesus? Most Christians live on cheese hoping that one day they will reach a
better destination They have no idea there is a seat waiting for them...and a very different
experience planned for them So what distinguishes those who become Disciples of Jesus?

John 8:31–32 (ESV) 31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in
my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will
set you free.”

Note that John is very specific here...Jesus is talking to believers here...Jews who had
believed Him. Discipleship is only available to those who believe. Discipleship today is
driven by the Holy Spirit. If He is not present in your life, you will never have a seat at
the table or entrance into the destination.

There is only one way to be Jesus' Disciple You must abide in my word... Abide...it
means to dwell...to be somewhere with the intention of staying for a while Jesus'
Disciples...dwell in God's Word...they spend time alone with God...learning

We often like to memorize the last part and forget the first part There is no way...that
you can know the truth If you don't abide in His Word And note....the
order...Believe...Abide...Know...Set Free

Lets focus on the phrase "you will know the Truth" There is only one source of truth...God's word
We come to Jesus with Minds that are messed up

Full of our ideas...Our arrogance...Our interpretation of right and wrong We have figured out
things on our own...We have listened to lies from Satan our whole lives and we have heard them
replayed in our heads so much that we came to believe them as true... I'm not attractive...I am
not lovable...I am not as good as....I can never....I guess I will always be...I am not smart
enough...I an not fill in the blank enough...

Some of us have heard those words from people we trusted and we embraced those lies as
truth. Our subconscious mind has stamped truth on lies and placed them continually
running reruns in your mind.

Many of us hear the lies in our heads from our childhood as if they were being said today. Words that were arrows from our past are still impaling us today as if for the first time.

We have adopted lies about God, about Jesus, about the power of humans, about the meaning and purpose of almost everything. We were born into a twilight zone where all that we think is real isn't all that we think is true...isn't.

We sail the Atlantic convinced that we don't have a place at the table...Paralyzed by the fear of those lies...we never even ask if the banquet could be for me.

I said in a prior week, the key to discipleship is to abide and the first step of abiding is to determine what is really true.

The process of growing up Spiritually.... Is to replace our feeble understanding of truth With God's absolute truth What Jesus is saying is this... You came to me with a mind full of your truth...your thinking in the flesh I am going to Replace your truth with real truth... YOU WILL KNOW TRUTH

My Scriptures will replace your thoughts My Scriptures will destroy your opinions and feelings If you abide in my Word....Jesus says... You are truly my Disciples...and you will know my truth And only then will you be set free...

This is so critical for us to understand. If we can't embrace the truth of these words from Jesus, the rest of discipleship is impossible for us.

Believers who desire to be disciples...who want to be just like Jesus...must make the decision to abide. To sit at the table spiritually where God is revealing and you feast on the Word of God.

If you are a follower of Jesus....there is a place set for you to feed on God's Word at His table each day. Yet for so many the banquet feast of God's word is filled with many empty seats.

Abide means to be fully present in relationship with the intent of staying. It means to be engaged emotionally, physically, spiritually completely focused on the desires, teachings and presence of the Holy Spirit. I call it fully surrendered.

Jesus said if you abide you are my disciples....odd right? What if we abide and don't obey....what if we abide and don't learn...what if we abide and aren't changed? None of those things are possible because you are not the one that accomplishes change.

If you are fully surrendered, fully engaged in your relationship with Jesus, fully present in the truth of God's Word....then you will know the truth.

Believers who invest their time abiding in Christ...will know the truth...not will discover the truth...not will decide to follow the truth....not will believe the truth...not will choose the truth...You will know the truth...A promise straight from Jesus.

In the presence of the Holy Spirit...the word of God is so self-revelatory...that if you are surrendered you can't miss what God is going to do in you and through you

It is impossible for your or I to be fully engaged with the Holy Spirit...spending time abiding with Him and not know the truth.

Now look at this verse again and memorize it this week.

John 8:31–32 (ESV) 31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Set free from the stinking thinking that comes from your way of doing things Discipleship is the daily process of taking our thoughts to the cross We learn God's truth...and we crucify our truth We die to ourselves...our ways..our thoughts And we live in Christ. We embrace and manifest His ways in everything. Easy right?

No...Discipleship is really hard...it goes against what you want to do It takes commitment and discipline You have to hate your old way of doing things....and kill them with Scripture, Remember from last week...two weapons...prayer and the Sword that is the word of God. The Battlefield is your mind. You must destroy your old way of thinking and take all the lies you have believed and nail them to the cross.

Galatians 5:24–25 (ESV) 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Deciding to be a true Disciple is a tough path.... It requires surrendering your mind/emotions/will to the Spirit of God It means giving up your thoughts to His We struggle because we are prideful When void of the Control of God's Spirit... Our prideful flesh rebels... But it is not new... The Same thing Happened in Jesus' Day

Let's look at another moment in History that John recorded in His Gospel

John 6:60–64 (ESV) 60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.”

John 6:66–69 (ESV) 66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

It's hard to surrender your Will to God's Truth.... We have to be taught..the truth...we have to understand God's Word... We can't live on milk forever..who is going to teach us? Did you notice...Jesus promise in the Great Commission Behold...I will be with you always

Jesus calls all of His believers... To not only take the journey with Him But to experience that journey as His Disciples He invites you and me...into the place...where the Father and Son commune Our salvation comes in an instant but our maturity must be grown like a seed That growth comes only from abiding in the Word of God.

Hebrews 4:12–13 (ESV) 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God's Spirit...Pierces the Mind Discerns not only our thoughts...but our intentions...and leaves us naked and exposed. It divides the Spirit from the Mind.... It replaces our prideful way of doing things...With God's Spiritual Way of Doing things....our truth with His truth... Our desires with His desires How do we show Jesus that we love Him?

John 14:23–24 (ESV) 23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

Those who truly love Him...know and keep His Word. They feast at the table...they grow through the journey...When the banquet hall serving the Word of God is open...their place is always full. Others can get by on molded cheese until their destination, but God called us into relationship..right now.

Those who abide know the truth and truth sets them free....Then we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve from His power and to contribute the mission that God has for us.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV) 9 For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

God is searching for people who are "all in" Do you see the promise...To give Strength To anoint...to give power to...to increase the presence of the Holy Spirit In other words...to bring revival God wants to bring revival to those who are fully committed to Him Revival is not about getting something from God It is about getting to know someone...

Revival

So are you? Think about the times you were in the Presence of God And you knew it... That moment when you knew something greater than you...was present When you felt His presence and suddenly were overcome with awe You never wanted that moment to end...and yet you couldn't freeze time Personal Revival is about positioning yourself for lots of those moments

Revival comes from the word we use to get revive...To put life back into...That is what Abiding does...Abiding allows the Spiritual life in us to grow. It allows us to destroy the lies that we have believed and to replace them with the truth of God's Word....We will be revived or as Jesus said it...Set Free. and Free indeed.

Ok so how do we make this more practical? How can I begin to abide in the way we are talking about?

1. We Must Make Room for God

Here is a truth that I have discovered.... If you make room in your life, God will fill that void or vacuum with His presence. But God is not in the business of making room for Himself.

You must create space for The Holy Spirit this year Stop doing some good things...to experience some incredible things Organize and simplify your life...stop wasting time... Get up early..stay up late...give up some time on social media... Commit this year to doing whatever you have to do... To create time and space for God...and then do it everyday if you do nothing else.

2. We Must Repent

Repentance is not a bad word... Repentance is not asking for forgiveness.. Repentance is simply changing your mind about something.. If God is saying something...or I read it in His Word...and I disagree... I need to repent because God is right and I am wrong.

If God is not doing something in your life... There is probably an area of your life where you are disagreeing with Him And you are refusing to admit that He is right and you are wrong.

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) 14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Repentance precedes receiving the good news... If you are spiritually stagnant, go back to the last time God told you to do something Or the last time He revealed His truth and you ignored it...you refused to do what He told you to do or believe Go agree with Him...do what He told you to do...and see what God does.

Important Truth...If you are walking in the sin that God has convicted you of and you do not repent, you will not experience personal revival.

Peter told the Jews that they had crucified their Messiah

Acts 2:36–38 (ESV) 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior....that is your first step this year. You will never connect with God.. Until you agree with Him about His Son That Jesus died for you...to pay the punishment in your place

The Message has never changed...Repent and Be Baptized. Change your way of thinking..and agree with God But even after we surrender to Jesus we still have to constantly repent...we must die to ourselves each day...as long as we are still in our flesh, we will need to repent daily. But look at the promise....from Peter...just a few moments later...

Acts 3:19–20 (ESV) 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord

A time of refreshing....From the Presence of the Lord....Sounds Like being set free....Sounds like revival to me

3. We Must Seek God

Once we create room...once we change our stinking thinking...we must fill ourselves with God stuff We must seek Him...to know Him deeper...to fall more in love... God gave us a promise through the prophet Zechariah

Zechariah 1:3 (ESV) 3 Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

Did you notice the title of God here? Not the Lord who provides...Not the Lord who Protects... God Chose in this moment to reveal Himself as the Lord of Hosts The one who hosts the presence of God The One who will welcome you as the Host

God Promised through the Prophet Jeremiah....

Jeremiah 29:11–14 (ESV) 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

This is my life verse....I could preach on this for hours. When we seek God...He makes promises... 1. We will find Him when we seek with our Hearts 2. He will restore our fortunes...He will give us back what we have lost Spiritually 3. He will gather us from the places where we have been scattered 4. He will bring us back to the where we were before we wandered away So we must...Make Room for God...Repent...Seek God

4. We Must Step out in Faith

Don't wait for God...God toward Him If you really want revival this year... Get into the Word....Get and stay on your knees Worship God every chance you get... Love People...decide to love everyone...and God will show up! Take a risk for God...

Tell people about what Jesus has done for you Tell everyone you know about Remnant Waitresses...friends...people you just met... God serve someone...Love on your enemies...Love on your friends... See what God does. Step out in faith Believe the Words of Jesus

Matthew 7:7–8 (ESV) 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Note that each time you have to do something...Ask....Seek....Knock Note the promise once you act....given to...find...open to you

Closing

So where are you?

Are you traveling to your destination...fully engaged in the journey? Are you hanging out with God? Are you feasting daily at His table... Digesting the wonder of His Word...in His presence Realizing how great it is to be at His table... Are you at total peace today? Are you having fun....having fun spiritually? Are you so excited about what God is doing in your life... That you feel like you are partying on the Aloha Deck? Are you seeing the things of God around you? Is that your journey?

Or.....could it be...your spiritual journey is far from that? Are you sitting in your room...eating rations of cheese...hungry for so much more... Dreaming of one day...when you will reach your destination Are you muddling through this world....feeling powerless..and devoid of God's presence? Trying to console yourself that one day heaven awaits you... Do you find yourself...nose pressed to the glass of the banquet hall.... Looking in longingly at those believers who clearly hear the voice of God Have a deep connection with God and a deep sense of peace and contentment They have been saturated in the Word....soaking...and it shows Do you wonder if there is a place for you? Don't wait until the journey is over...to discover what you have missed

Matthew 6:33 (ESV) 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Jesus says...You want revival? Seek the King...and you get the Kingdom Seek the Spirit of God.... And He changes everything about your journey... Stop living for the destination....soak in every moment of your Spiritual Journey The buffet I have for you...is this book

The Spirit invites every believer to the life of a disciple You can know the truth.... And the truth will set you free.... My prayer for each of us is that we will not spend another day In meager cheese and cracker Christianity When a banquet of God's Word and gifts have already been purchased for you God's plan is all inclusive... Its time...to be a disciple It is time...to truly follow Jesus

Are you wondering what offended the followers of Jesus so much that they walked away. Essentially leaving the disciples and Peter to ask Where else are we going to go....You are the Christ...Let's look for a moment what Jesus said because once again He told them what His disciples would do.

John 6:55–60 (ESV) 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” 59 Jesus said these

things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. 60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"

Jesus said whoever feeds on His flesh and drinks His blood abides in Him. And those who feed on the bread from Heaven...Jesus...will live forever. In a few moments we are going to celebrate communion and do just that.

As we share communion....I want you to focus on the importance of being at the banquet each day...feeding on the Word of God.... It is time to get serious about discipleship. During Communion promise God that your place at the table will never be empty....Let's Pray