

Hungry for the Presence of Jesus

Opening texts: Mark 6:30-34, Matthew 14:13-22

1. The crowd hungry for Jesus

This text is often used to describe the miracle of multiplication of bread. However, today I would like to point out the fact that this is basically not the story of people hungry for bread, but of people hungry for Jesus. There is something powerful about a crowd hungry for Jesus!

Ecclesiastes 6:7 - *All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied.*

Isaiah 55:2 NIV- *Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.*

John 6:27 - *Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*

Appetite is an indicator of health.

2. Jesus responded to their hunger

He did not send them away, He ministered to them. Jesus responded to their hunger - Jesus responds to *appetite* not to *apathy*.

John 6:37 – *"all that comes to Me, I will by no means cast out"*.

Luke 11:9-10 says that if you seek Him you will find Him, if you knock it shall be open – He will not play 'hide and seek' with you.

Mark 7:24-29 - *²⁴ From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. ²⁵ For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." ²⁸ And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." ²⁹ Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."*

This story illustrates the fact that nothing can stay in the way of your miracle if you are that determined about the presence of Jesus.

Luke 4:42 - *Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And*

the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them;

Jesus will respond to that kind of hunger and determination. This is rare in the West and that's probably why miracles are rare in the West.

3. Jesus responded with compassion and power

Jesus responded by healing the sick and, at the end of that day, prepared a banquet for them. What a day that must have been in the presence of Jesus! In fact, that whole **chapter 14** is full of demonstrations of Jesus' supernatural power – from the first to the last verse.

However, what a contrast with **chapter 13**:

Mathew 13:58 - *Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

“There” refers to His hometown. In His hometown they were not exactly ‘hungry’ for Jesus. In fact, they did not even believe in Him. We need to make the decision to be a “Matthew 14 kind of person”, not Matthew 13!

It's the hungry that will be filled, not the indifferent!

Psalms 107:9 - *For He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.*

V.35-36 - *He turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into watersprings. There He makes the hungry dwell, that they may establish a city for a dwelling place,*

4. The importance of nourishment

Today's message is really about appetite – having an appetite for the presence of Jesus. God wants you to have an appetite because God wants to fill you. God wants to nourish your spirit so you will have a strong spirit. God doesn't want you to be spiritually malnourished and weak. God doesn't want you lukewarm and feeble. Do not neglect your spirit. I want to encourage you to make the decision to attend to your spirit, to nourish your spirit, like you would your natural body.

Ephesians 5:29 - *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

We diligently nourish our flesh but not always our spirit. The Lord wants to nourish His people, the church. There are 3 sources of nourishment for your spirit:

1. Jesus

John 6:35 – *And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

John 6:57 – *As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.*

1 Corinthians 10:3-4 – *all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.*

2. God's word

Mark 6:34 – *And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

Sheep without a shepherd – abandoned and undernourished. Jesus fed them the Word.

1 Timothy 4:6 – *If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*

3. God's will

John 4:30-34 – *Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*

Nothing will energize your spirit like serving God and doing His will.

Mark 6:31b says that “*there were many coming and going and they did not even have time to eat*”.

It is clear that all their activity for God was so energizing that they probably not even made it a priority to eat. Jesus brought balance by telling them to take a rest but still they ended up in another service across the lake.

Spending time with Jesus, His word and serving God will nourish your spirit man like nothing else. You will be strong in God!