

Hungry for Jesus – part 4

The Power of Desire

Recap: This is part 4 of a series of teachings about the importance of being hungry for Jesus. We looked at a crowd of people running to Jesus, not hungry for physical bread but hungry for His presence. In that text, Jesus was moved with compassion. We looked at three very basic ways to experience a move of Jesus: We need to desire; we need to believe and we need to ‘turn up’. I want to talk today about the role that **desire** plays in our relationship with God.

Opening Text: Luke 22:14-16

V.15: *Then He said to them, “With fervent **desire** I have **desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*

In the story of the last supper, Jesus stands with His disciples and opens His heart: it is plain to see the depth of His affections and the reality of His passion. Jesus speaks of His “desire.” What led Him to that point and then on to the cross, was *fervent desire!*

With desire (*epithymia*, in the Greek, which means a “*desire that is boiling hot, yearning or appetite*”) **I have desired** (*epithymeo*, which means, “*to set one’s heart upon, to desire, to covet and to long for*”)

Another scholar translated this passage as follows: “*With hunger, I hunger for this, the Passover, to eat among you before this passes over me*”

We have been talking about being hungry for Jesus and desiring Him. From this passage we see Jesus Himself as the ultimate example of what hunger and desire look like. When we are passionate, hungry, with a ‘boiling hot desire’ then we are being exactly like Jesus.

Desire is a big deal!

1. “**Desire**” is one of the strongest emotions of the human heart. It stresses strength of feelings, and it is one of life’s most powerful driving forces. To desire means to wish, to want, to hunger, to crave something we long for. It was translated 208 times in the New Testament alone. In Hebrew there are 27 words that were translated as ‘desire’.
2. Desire is not a topic that is often preached about, but *desire* is such an important ingredient in our relationship with God. **The presence or absence of desire is a clear indicator of the quality of our relationship with God** – of where we are at spiritually.

The absence of desire (for instance, desire to pray, to worship, to get into the Word, to be with other believers) is a sure indicator in the dashboard of our lives that something is not right. It is a red light that better be addressed and not ignored.

The dashboard of our spiritual lives should show at least 4 things:

- **A desire for God**

Psalms 27: 4 – *One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.*

Isaiah 26:8-9 – *Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. ⁹With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;...*

- **A desire for God’s word**

1 Peter 2:2 – *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*

- **A desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit and His gifts**

1 Corinthians 12:31 – *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.*

(1 Cor. 14:1 – *desire spiritual gifts, 14:39 – *desire earnestly to prophecy)**

- **A desire to be around other believers**

1 Thessalonians 2:17 – *But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire.*

2 Corinthians 13:5 - *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.*

These 4 indicators are an easy “rapid test” to determine the quality of your relationship with God.

3. Desire is a big deal for Jesus.

How do we know that?

a) He faced that Last Supper and the Cross with fervent desire!

b) The desire of a woman to see her daughter healed, moved Jesus: **Matthew 15:28** - *Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.*

John 15:7 - *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

- c) In the book of Revelation, some of Jesus' strongest words were for the church that was neither cold nor hot (Laodicea). They had lost all sense of desire. They had become indifferent, numb, flat-lined, and static. God was no longer their utmost desire and pleasure.

To another church, the church of Ephesus, Jesus said, "*you have left your first love*".

Love? Is that a requirement in our relationship with God? Absolutely. It was in the Law of Moses and was confirmed by Jesus: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,* and *'your neighbour as yourself.'* (Luke10:27)

He didn't call us to a *contractual relationship* but a *passionate, loving relationship*.

Conclusion:

We were all once passionate sinners. How about we become passionate believers? Before we met Jesus, we knew well the power of negative, sinful desires.

- Ephesians 2:3 speaks of '*desires of the flesh and of the mind*'
- Colossians 1:3 speaks about "*evil desires*".
- James 1:14, 4:1 etc

Most of us were dominated and slaves of those kinds of desires. However, now that we are in Christ and that God has set us free, why should we be anything but full of desire and passion for God?

So, take the test. Look at the dashboard of your spiritual life. Do not ignore red lights. Be honest before God – not defensive.

Finally, make a decision to pursue the presence of God like never before.

Philippians 2:13 NLT - *For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*