

An Appetite for Christ

8/4/2024

I think we are all familiar with the saying - you never miss the water until the well runs dry.

The following passage from the book of Amos is an example of this.

Amos 8:11-13

“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. They 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. “In that day the lovely virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst.

In last week’s lesson taken from John chapter 6 I included a short portion from Matthew Henry’s commentary on this chapter. There when Mr. Henry was specifically commenting on - **‘What is meant by eating this flesh and drinking this blood** he brought up 4 points for consideration. Here are those 4 point again -

1. Having an Appetite for Christ
2. Application of Christ to our lives
3. A delight in Christ and his salvation
4. To *feed upon Christ* is to do all *in his name*

In today’s lesson our focus will be on the 1st of these 4 items. Having an appetite for Christ.

The Oxford dictionary defines the word appetite as - a natural desire to satisfy a bodily need, especially for food.

Concerning this subject of having an appetite Matthew Henry described it this way - **This spiritual eating and drinking begins with *hungering* and *thirsting* (Matthew 5:6), earnest and importunate (persistent) desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: "Give me Christ or else I die."**

The words **Give me Christ or else I die** are not specifically found in Scripture. But it happens to be the title of a song written by William Hammond in 1791, a number of years after Mr Matthew Henry had passed from this earth. And although these exact words are not found in Scripture the truth behind them is often expressed in Scripture.

As in Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

Paul expresses this truth in 1st Corinthians 15:17 *“And if Christ has **not** been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”* Paul there expressing the importance of a risen Christ (Messiah). And then Paul adds this in verses 18&19 *“Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*

Here are the words of the song **Give me Christ or else I die** -

Gracious Lord, incline Thine ear;
My request vouchsafe to hear;
Hear my never-ceasing cry;
Give me Christ, or else I die.

Wealth and honor I disdain,
Earthly comforts, Lord, are vain;
These can never satisfy:
Give me Christ, or else I die.

All unholy and unclean,
I am weighted by my sin;
On thy mercy I rely;
Give me Christ, or else I die

Thou dost freely save the lost;
In Thy grace alone I trust.
With my earnest plea comply;
Give me Christ, or else I die.

All unholy and unclean,
I am weighted by my sin;
On thy mercy I rely;
Give me Christ, or else I die

Thou hast promised to forgive
All who in thy Son believe;
Lord, I know Thou cannot lie;
Give me Christ, or else I die

All unholy and unclean,
I am weighted by my sin;
On thy mercy I rely;
Give me Christ, or else I die

There are many truths told in this song about the importance of Christ. Christ the Word of God which became flesh (John 1:14).

Isaiah speaks to Israel about why God made us (mankind) for in the first place. Isaiah 43:7 & 21
Isaiah 43:7 *“everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”*

Isaiah 43:20-21 *The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, **the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.***

This morning let us consider some of the passages in Scripture which speak of hungering and thirsting for God. And notice the rewards spoken of when we do.

Matthew 5:6 *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

Here we find two promises

1. We will be blessed
2. We will be filled

Just as having our physical hunger and thirst satiated so it will be with our spiritual needs in Christ.

Psalms 107:8-9 *“Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”*

Psalms 42:1-2 *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. my soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”*

1. As we saw in Isaiah 43 above the animals rely on God for physical water so we rely on God for living water for eternal life. For living water makes it possible for us to answer the question raised here - When can I go and meet God? - Answer when Christ returns! But His exact representation came to us in Jesus. (Hebrews 1)

Revelation 21:6 *“And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.”*

Revelation 22:17 *“The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”*

John 7:37 *“On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”*

John 4:14 *“but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (See Ezekiel chapter 47).*

John 6:27 *“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”*

John 6:35 *“Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

Matthew 4:4 *“But he answered, “It is written, ““Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””*

Referencing

Deuteronomy 8:3 *“And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”*

Luke 6:21 *“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.”*

Psalms 22:26 *“The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!”*

Isaiah 49:10 *“They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.”* (Here we see the Prophecy)

Revelation 7:16-17 *“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”* (Here we see it’s fulfillment via Jesus the Christ)

Luke 1:53 *“He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”*

The prophecy of Amos 8 which this lesson began with came true for those to whom it was spoken. They failed because of what the Hebrew writer says next.

Hebrews 11:6 *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”*

Paul reminded Timothy about the blessings to be found in Scripture -

2nd Timothy 3:16-17 *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*

And as Isaiah had said centuries earlier -

Isaiah 55:1-3 *“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.”*

We are told the following is - *A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.*

Psalm 63:1-6 *“You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.”*

Haunting words when you add the words of 2nd Samuel 11 about Bathsheba to the story. David like all the rest of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. I read that somewhere!

But as it is written

1st John 2:1-2 *“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

In conclusion let us all strive for what the psalmist says in Psalm 119:20 *“My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.”*

Consume that is what we do with food and water? Let us have an appetite for Christ.