



Teaching Letter 3

Jesus - the Bread of Life

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!'" (Luke 15:17, NIV).

The above verse contains the words of a young man whom we call the prodigal son. Jesus told the story about this young man who came to the desperate place in his life of literally starving to death. The story portrays someone who has left his father's house, taken all his inheritance that was due to him and gone to another country to find his own way. Spiritually speaking, he can represent someone who is away from God for a while and leaving God out of his or her life. He sought and gained his independence and did "his own thing." You can read the story; it ends well. The son "came to his senses," returned to his father's house, was restored and was given plenty of good food to eat.

Scripture has much to say about the spiritual food our Father God provides for us. Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11, *KJV*). While this verse contains clear implications regarding our daily dependence upon God for His provision for our physical needs, it also points to the fact that God is our source for our daily spiritual "bread."

Jesus said, ". . . I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger. . . ." (John 6:35, *KJV*). In this verse, we first understand Jesus was referring to eternal salvation to those who believe in Him. Second, the verb translated "cometh" indicates a continual coming for our spiritual needs. Jesus is "daily bread" for our soul—so we won't starve spiritually.

Jesus made a connection between Himself and the manna God provided for the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness for forty years. (The story of Israel's wilderness experience begins in Exodus 17.) After just a few days they ran out of food. But not to worry! God sent them manna from heaven every morning for food, and each morning they collected enough for that day (on the day before the Sabbath they collected enough for two days). God was their daily supply of food to eat; Jesus is also our daily supply of food for our souls.

There is another source of food for our souls. This food appears very tasty and nourishing for a while; however, because its source is not God but our adversary the devil, it does not truly satisfy. The "prodigal son" sought and found this food in the lifestyle he chose when he left his father's house and home country. His new lifestyle seemed to work for a while. When his money was gone, he found his friends untrue and his plight most miserable. Soul and body suffered obvious malnourishment.

A child of God is not exempt from Satan's temptations to seek soul satisfaction from sources other than God. Many things this world offers as soul food seem to satisfy for a while. However, if we partake of this food very long, we will eventually recognize, like the prodigal son, we are starving spiritually. Jesus is ". . . the bread of life . . ." That which Satan or the world offers does not produce life.

It is important to note that Jesus offers us Himself as the bread for our souls. He did not say it is His blessings that will be life for us spiritually. Jesus does bless His children and delights to do so. His blessings may encourage us, delight us, restore us, inspire us, be supply to us and so on. We receive them with joy and thanksgiving. However, they come from Him; they are not Him. Jesus did not say that our own accomplishments—even those He has helped us to achieve—will be bread for our souls. Nor will it be the acclaim or praise we may receive for those accomplishments. Our souls must have the life that comes only from communion with Jesus.

This bread for our souls is daily bread. Like the manna God sent to Israel in the wilderness, it cannot be stored up. Our souls need regular communion with Jesus in order to live and thrive. This bread of life is available anytime—all the time—to all of us. Our access does not depend on who we are or how much money we have. It's free, except for the time we spend.

I like the words of the old song: “Jesus has a table spread, where the saints of God are fed. He invites His chosen people come and dine. With His manna He doth feed and supplies our every need. Oh, ‘tis sweet to sup with Jesus all the time.” **SH**

GOD’S WORD FOR TODAY
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