



## "Feeding Christ"

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As Jesus made his way toward Galilee, he came to Jacob's Well in Samaria. Weary from the journey, he stopped to rest there, while his disciples went to buy food. In the meantime, a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus made a simple request of her: "Give me to drink" (John 4:7).

Christ's words to this woman began a long conversation. She ended up talking at length, and so did Jesus. During their talk, she was amazed at the things he told her. Finally, she said, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (4:25-26).

Just as Christ revealed his identity to her, the disciples returned. They were amazed to find their master so deeply engaged in conversation with this Samaritan woman. As they sat to prepare the meal, the wide-eyed woman hurried back to town. Finally, when the food was ready, they said, "Master, eat" (4:31).

Jesus responded with this puzzling statement: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (4:32). He was telling them, in essence, "I've already been fed. Something transpired here while you were gone, and I'm totally full. You see, there's something you don't realize about me. My food is not of this world."

Christ explained, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (4:34). Now, we all know God's work is to sow and reap the gospel, gathering in a harvest of souls. Jesus says in the very next verse, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest...lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (4:35).

In short, we're to be about God's kingdom work of witnessing, testifying and soul-winning. Jesus accomplished this work with the Samaritan woman. The Bible says she believed he was the Messiah, testifying, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?" (4:29).

Now, there's a purpose behind all of our kingdom labors. And that purpose goes beyond a great harvest of souls. The Father's will from creation - his entire purpose behind the birth of mankind - was to create a body of fellowship for his Son. And here, in this scene at Jacob's Well, we see Christ's need for fellowship being fulfilled.

Jesus told his disciples, in essence, "My hunger has been met by this woman. All I asked for was a drink of water. But she fed me. She brought me an honest, seeking heart. As I spoke to her, she listened closely. She waited on me, hearing every word I said to her. And she heeded my words, believing and acting on them. You

need to understand, this kind of communion is food to me."

The Bible speaks of the Son's need for communion with man from the beginning. Scripture says Christ was begotten before the world was created: "His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2). "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:2-3).

From the very beginning, we see the Lord seeking communion with man. His Spirit walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden, conversing in the cool of the day. These intimate times were food to the Lord, delighting and pleasing him. Such fellowship was his plan from the beginning. But when Adam sinned, the communion was broken.

Later in Genesis, we read of a man named Enoch being taken to heaven: "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Enoch had communed with the Lord for 365 years. Yet he lived only half the normal life-span at that time. As I pondered this, I sensed God's Spirit asking, "Why do you think I brought Enoch to glory so soon? His peers lived to be seven- and eight-hundred years old. Why would I take him during mid-life?"

I had no answer. The Spirit whispered, "Fellowship is my food, David. My Word says Enoch walked with me. This means he communed with me, waiting on me, getting to know my voice. He listened as I opened my heart to him. Our fellowship became so intimate, I wanted him with me here in eternity, where there is no night. So I brought him to my side, for endless, uninterrupted communion."

The Lord asked me the same question about Moses: "Why did I call my beloved servant to me, when he also was in the prime of his life?" You may think, "It's because Moses wasn't supposed to go into the Promised Land." But the fact is, Israel didn't enter Canaan right away. Moses could have lived quite a while longer.

I hear the Lord saying, "Moses communed with me as no other man did. Why do you think he came back from the mount with a supernatural glow on his face" The law couldn't produce that glow. It was the effect of being in my presence, for forty days and nights. When we met face to face, he fed me. Yes, I instructed him during that time. But we also had sweet fellowship. I talked to Moses, and he listened to me. I showed him how the Tabernacle was an illustration of me, full of glory. So, finally, when I took Moses, it was to have him at my side, along with Enoch."

Next came the question, "What about Elijah? Why do you think I sent a chariot to take him? This fiery prophet could have lived many more years as a faithful witness for me. I'd just given him a vision of what true ministry is. But, instead, I wanted to bring Elijah into my presence. He had prayed before me as few men did. And I wanted him at my side, for uninterrupted fellowship through eternity."

Now there were three intimate servants gathered to the Lord. This brings a fuller meaning to Jesus' words: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). In other words: "Whenever two or three of you are together in fellowship, I'm there with you, conversing and communing. And that feeds me. It delights me to have you wait on me. You minister deeply to me by waiting to hear my voice. You're fulfilling the Father's purpose from the very beginning."

Now let me take you to the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus had led three of his disciples there, Peter, James and John. Suddenly, before these men's eyes, Christ moved into the heavenly realm: "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (17:2). Next we read, "There appeared unto them Moses and Elijah, talking with him" (17:3). The Greek word for talking here is "soon," meaning union, fellowshiping. Moses and Elijah were communing with Jesus, conversing back and forth.

What was this scene all about? I believe it had nothing to do with Jesus' ministry on earth. Nor did it have anything to do with his disciples. After all, Christ instructed them, "Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead" (17:9).

No, I believe Jesus, in his glorified body, was yearning for one last meal. He knew what was ahead, and he hungered for that food which man "knows nothing of." He was about to face the cross, to pay the price he'd agreed upon, to redeem mankind from sin. And now he wanted a feast with intimate friends, to strengthen his soul for the coming ordeal. In my opinion, Christ's meeting with Moses and Elijah was a gift from the Father. God wanted to give his Son a reminder of his glory, saying, "Here is the heavenly food that awaits you."

### **Jesus tells a parable in Luke 17 that should revolutionize our prayer life.**

The following parable ought to change how every Christian views communion:

"Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him...when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:7-10).

We know the master in this parable is Jesus. And the servant here represents every believer. Clearly, this parable is about feeding Christ. And, evidently, our Lord views this act as our highest calling.

You may object, "I thought our highest possible calling was to go into the harvest fields to labor." That truly is a high calling. But Jesus says it's not the highest. The "high calling of God in Christ Jesus," as Paul refers to it, is to feed him. All service must be birthed out of communion and intimacy with Christ. I didn't understand this until I put myself in the servant's shoes.

Suddenly, I'm the one in the field, plowing and feeding the sheep. When the workday is over, I'm tired, sweaty and hungry. I've worked hard and faithfully, and now I need nourishment. So I go to the master's dining hall to be fed. As I walk in, I expect to hear my

master say, "Please, sit down. You need to be refreshed." So I stand near the table, looking famished, my eyes pleading, "I'm in need." But the master doesn't say, "Sit and eat." Instead, he commands, "Put on your apron. I'm ready to eat, so serve me first. Then, after you've served me, you'll eat and drink."

Here is proof positive that we're called to feed Christ. At first glance, this command seems harsh and demanding. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. The godly prophet Elijah gave a similar command, when he was fed by a widow. Elijah told her, "Make me a cake first. Then you may eat." What's actually being said in both passages is, "Put God's kingdom first. Then everything else will be given to you."

When I see what Jesus is really saying here, my heart melts. He had already told his disciples, "I have called you friends" (John 15:15). And now he's saying, in essence, "You're my servants, but I call you friends. And there's a need in me that only your friendship can meet. You've been out in the fields all day, laboring for me, and you're tired and hungry. But, before I feed you, I need you to do something for me. I want you to come sit at my table and let me speak to you. There's so much on my heart I want to tell you. I look forward to this time each day, when I can have fellowship with you. Gird yourself now, and serve me."

We're not to picture this servant as a waiter scurrying frantically from kitchen to table. No, the servant that Christ presents here is the image of a friend, someone who's invited to simply sit and listen. The master is telling him, "I've missed you. Now, feed me, by allowing me to unburden my heart to you. Let me speak into your life. I want to show you things of the future."

So, you see, feeding Christ isn't a one-way relationship, with us doing all the talking. Rather, we feed our master by rejoicing to hear his voice. We minister food to him by listening patiently. The Lord described it this way to Ezekiel: "The sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary...they shall come near to me to minister unto me...they shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me" (Ezekiel 44:15-16). The Zadok priests had the highest calling among God's people. What did the Lord ask of them? He wanted them to minister to him at his table. We do this today by giving our Lord an ear to hear his voice.

Jesus speaks of the same kind of table intimacy: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Christ is saying, in essence, "I'm here, wanting to come inside for table talk with you. I want to feed you, and let you feed me."

You may think, "But Jesus uses such cold words in this parable, such as 'duty' and 'unprofitable servant.' It sounds so uncharitable. That doesn't line up with God's character." In reality, the Greek word for unprofitable here means unmeritorious. And the word for duty means benefit. In short, every faithful servant should admit, "There is nothing meritorious in what I've done. I've done only that which benefits me."

Jesus is saying, in other words: "Don't leave my presence thinking, 'My master has to be grateful toward me. I gave him quality time today. Now he owes me.' You know my grace can't be earned. It's a gift, freely given to you. And my commandments aren't grievous. On the contrary, they benefit you. So, whenever you feed me, don't

count it as a meritorious good work. Such acts don't build up credit against sin."

This matter of feeding Christ ought to humble us deeply. We should honestly ask ourselves, "Why would Jesus want me near him? Why does he ask me to tarry in his presence? I'm so weak in faith, so prone to failure. Yet, he says when I wait on him and listen to his voice, it feeds him. He says it's food to him when I hunger to hear him speak. How could this be?" May such thoughts keep us ever humble before the Lord.

This message was born out of an awesome  
experience I had while in prayer.

When I pray, I begin by entering God's courts with praise and thanksgiving. Then I spend time worshipping. Next, I have a time of petition, praying over the requests sent to our ministry. I also offer supplication for widows, as well as the fatherless, homeless, poor, elderly, sick and afflicted. Finally, I pray for my family, and for direction for this ministry. Then I sit quietly, waiting for the Lord Jesus to speak.

Recently, after my prayer time, I was about to get up and leave. But I heard a still, small voice whisper, "David, please don't go. Don't leave me yet. I have so much more to share with you. There's a lot in my heart I wish to show you, about the needs of the world and the condition of my church. You feed me by listening."

In Luke 24, we find a touching scene regarding Christ's desire to be fed. At this point, Jesus has been resurrected, having finished his work of redemption. Now he's in his glorified body. He's still a man, touched by human feelings, but he's not limited by material barriers. He can appear or disappear at will, and no door or wall can stop him.

Where did the Lord go first? So soon after his resurrection, something stirred within his glorified being. He was hungry, wanting that "meat...ye know not of" (John 4:32). We first see him on the road from Jerusalem to nearby Emmaus. Suddenly, he appeared to two of his disciples, who were downcast over his death. Scripture says, "While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him" (Luke 24:15-16).

Just as he did with the Samaritan woman, Jesus struck up a conversation with these men. He asked, "What are you two talking about? And why are you so sad?" They were incredulous, saying, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" (24:18).

Was Jesus toying with these men in their grief? No, absolutely not. In fact, he did just the opposite, drawing out the depths of their hearts. He allowed them to vent their pent-up feelings, even to the point of voicing unbelief. And he addressed their unbelief: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (24:27). Talk about a seminary education. These men got it all: prophecies of Christ's coming, and the significance of his death, burial and resurrection.

What was Jesus up to here? Why did he choose to walk and talk with these two men? He simply wanted quality time with his friends. He enjoyed unhurried communion with them, opening his heart and his Word to them in sweet fellowship. And the two men's hearing ears and burning hearts fed him.

That evening, the men stopped at an inn for the night. At that point, Jesus "made as though he would have gone further" (24:28). Perhaps the Lord said, "Brothers, you've given me a lot of your time. And you've listened well as I've shared my heart. No doubt, you're tired. I won't hinder you any longer. I'll move on and let you retire."

That could have been the end of the story. In fact, for many believers, it is the end. They're satisfied with a one-time encounter they had with Jesus years ago. Now all they seek is Bible knowledge. They don't care about seeking intimacy with him. They testify, "Yes, I know Christ. I have a deep knowledge of him." But they don't wait on the Lord, to feed him. They don't know his voice. And they miss the personal revelation of who he is.

But the disciples on the Emmaus road didn't let that happen. When Jesus wanted to move on, "They constrained him, saying, Abide with us" (24:29). The Greek word for constrained here means forced. Simply put, they wouldn't let him go. Remember, they still didn't recognize their master. But their hearts burned with the words he'd spoken to them (see 24:32). Now they urged him, "You must abide with us."

This was the response Jesus was looking for. He had so much more to say to these two. And, next, we read some of the sweetest words in all of Scripture: "He went in to tarry with them" (24:29). These two men had fed Christ by listening to his heart. And now he took them to his table, where he fed them: "It came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight" (24:30-31).

Thank God, these disciples constrained Jesus to stay. Otherwise, they never would have had their eyes opened to the living Christ. They would have returned to Jerusalem with a dead-letter testimony: "We met someone on the way to Emmaus who taught us deeply from the Word. It set our hearts on fire, and we understood Christ as never before." The other disciples would have pressed them, asking, "But did you see the Lord? Did you touch him? Did you find out where he is? You say your hearts were set on fire. But, tell us, is Jesus alive?" Sadly, they wouldn't have been able to answer.

Instead, these faithful men rushed back to their brothers in Jerusalem, able to give this vibrant testimony: "The Lord appeared to us! We talked with him and ate with him. I tell you, we saw him alive. And he fed us God's Word from his own mouth. Yes, he's alive and well" (see 24:33-35). Then, at that very moment, Jesus appeared in their midst.

Tragically, many Christians will not go on to lay hold of  
the full revelation of Christ.

Not many people will take the time to wait on the Lord. Most will be satisfied to go to church, hear the Word preached, and grow only in the knowledge of Jesus. At times, their hearts may burn within them at hearing God's Word. But they won't pay the price for intimacy with Christ.

Now, Peter tells us, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). That's just what these two disciples experienced on the Emmaus road. They grew in their knowledge of the Lord, from the Scriptures. But that was only the foundation; it wasn't the finished work. Paul knew this, writing, "Grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15, emphasis mine).

Here is the issue, plain and simple: Jesus Christ wants to be the most important treasure in your life. He wants to mean more to you than your job, your career, even your family. And he wants to become more and more precious to you, as the days go by.

So, how precious is Jesus to you? You might claim, "He's the most precious thing in my life. Christ is everything to me." If that's true, you won't be satisfied with mere head knowledge about him. You'll yearn to hear him speak to you. And your desire to wait on him will grow. Hearing his still, small voice will become your greatest joy. And you won't let anything stand in the way of giving him your time. Indeed, the more time you spend waiting on him, the less concerned you'll be with the difficulties of this life.

Have you taken that walk with Christ to Emmaus? Have you been well taught in his Word, your heart rejoicing in truth? More importantly, have you delighted in serving and feeding him? Take heed: there's a danger of falling away from your communion with him. Paul speaks of "a falling away" to come upon the church (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The Greek word here indicates a defection or divorce. In short, many will defect from the Lord, forsaking all love for him and divorcing themselves from his fellowship.

Yet, let me give you a word of hope. I've learned something that makes the Lord even more precious to me. I believe this key increases my revelation of him, and could keep me from falling in the days ahead. What is this key? It's something I've added to my time of prayer. Let me explain.

I pray as usual, in the way I described earlier. Yet, after I end my prayer time, I linger in my secret closet of prayer. Now I bow before the Lord and say, "Jesus, I'm here just for you. I don't bring any requests or petitions. This is your time, and yours alone. I'm here to listen to your heart." I simply stay in his presence, loving him and waiting on him. I know he will come to me and speak his mind.

Indeed, he spoke this to my heart: "Now I know you've made me the treasure of your life, David. I know I'm more precious to you than family, ministry and work. You want me more than anything. And that's food to me. I want you to continue coming to me this way, and let me open my heart to you. If you do, I'll always be here to speak to you."

Then the Lord gave me one last word, for his church. I say it to you now, in all sincerity: Jesus asks you to feed him by giving him quality time daily. I'm not talking about the time you spend reading the Bible or praying for needs. That should all be done on your own time.

But when you've finished your labors for the day, come to the master's table, to serve him. He asks you simply to wait in his presence until you hear his voice. He wants time to unfold his heart to you. So, make your time of serving him an unlocked time. Each time you wait on him, he promises to speak to you.

What a privilege, to feed our precious Lord and Savior.

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