

Kingdom Living: Soul Hunger

Do you ever have days when you are restless and hungry but nothing seems to satisfy your hunger? You keep eating mindlessly but the hunger is still there. You call friends seeking a word of comfort to lift your mood and comfort your emotions but you remain empty even after talking. Have you ever stopped to consider the source of the hunger?

I have those days. Not sure what I want or why I feel restless, I look to food or friends to fill the emptiness. But the emptiness remains. It often happens after returning from a time of ministry or missions service. Whether home or abroad, I seem most satisfied when on “active service.” Whether it’s sharing together with a friend, what God’s being doing in our lives, mentoring or teaching a group of disciples, those are the moments I feel satiated, alive, fulfilled. But when I return home to daily living I can feel lost, empty, lonely and yes, I admit – even needy. Who can understand the hunger of the human soul?

These are the tensions we face every day, living in the Kingdom of God while inhabiting a body of flesh. When our emotional and spiritual tank gets empty we often try to fill it with human answers. But this won’t satisfy our spiritual and soul hunger. There are some principals we can learn to live by, which will help overcome the cravings of our flesh, feed our soul and give us victory in our Spirit.

1. Stay on the High Road of Surrendering all to Him - including our feelings and emotions.

How do we do that? Maintain Constancy in Devotion;

“He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.” Psalm 107.9

As I struggled with my emotions this week I finally poured out my soul to God in my journal. Confessing pain, emptiness and loneliness to the Lord, I told Him I was at a loss to why I was feeling this way. Why am I so restless, so empty Lord? I find it helps to be honest with God about our feelings and emotions. He’s the only one who understands the cause, the symptom and the treatment.

He answered me in this devotion from a friend; *“Do not grieve My child, though all you hold dear be taken from you. You have need of nothing. Hold me close to your heart and I will satisfy your every longing. Allow me to comfort you and you will find yourself reaching out less and less to others for support and solace. My Presence will sustain you but only if you maintain a closeness of relationship. Pure neglect alone can cause you to lose this as much as open sin. Maintain a constancy in devotion, and I will be pleased and will do all manner of wonderful things on your behalf. I will cause blessings to be heaped on you. You will be increased abundantly in the riches of the Kingdom”.*

As I wandered round the kitchen wondering what I could find in my neglected cupboards to satisfy my hunger, this word reminded me that my hunger was deeper than food could satisfy. It was soul hunger. Only Jesus can satisfy the hungry spirit and soul. Only God can meet the longings of my restless emotions. We cannot fill spirit and soul needs with earthly possessions, food or human love. Our spirit and soul needs are met by only by food from God’s kingdom, one not made by human hands. We will only be satisfied feeding on the spiritual food of God’s word, spending time in His Presence and opening our eyes of faith to see that the restlessness in our soul is deeper than our human understanding.

2. Feast at God's table, Feed on His Word

This describes the Israelites in Psalm 107 4-9; *"They wandered in the desert in a desolate way; They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city for a dwelling place. Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men; for He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness."*

The Israelites also found that their hungry, thirsty souls could not be satisfied by the things of this world. God had to lead them out of desolation to the "right way". He took them to a city which satisfied their longing soul and filled their hungry soul with goodness.

3. Keep Your Eyes of Faith Open

The city God showed the Israelites is also described in Hebrews 11. Abraham found this city walking by faith, not by sight. Hebrews 11. 8 – 10; *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

We have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of God's love (Colossians 1.13). We now belong to a kingdom not made with human hands and not seen with human eyes. We too must learn to walk by faith and not sight (2 Corinthians 5.7). When your emotions are roller coasting and you are anxiously and restlessly trying to fill the gap, perhaps you need to stop and take your spiritual pulse. Like me, perhaps you've been so busy giving out from your spiritual and emotional reservoir that you haven't had time to fill it up from God's fountain. We can get so busy doing the work of ministry, we have no time to sit at the feet of the one who called us. If you are feeling restless and empty, in need of "filling" instead of looking to food or to others to comfort you, perhaps Jesus is prompting you to come and spend time in His Presence. He has something to say to you. He has food for you to eat and water for you to drink. Come dine with Him.

Living in the Kingdom of God can feel as uncomfortable as living in a foreign country. It takes practice to exercise our faith and get used to feeding our soul from His word and spending time in His Presence. We may not have more money, more material possessions, or the things our human bodies crave from the kingdom of earth. But if we will learn to maintain our devotion to Him, we will inherit the rich rewards of the Kingdom of heaven; peace, love, joy, truth and righteousness. And - bear fruit in abundance! *"Abraham was one man, as good as dead, but from him were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude – innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore."* Hebrews 11.12

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