

Fortifying Faith

Reflecting upon last week's discussion, we learned that part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to ingest the Unleavened Bread of Life, Jesus Christ.

John 6:35- "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time."

John 6:48- "I am the bread of life."

John 6:56-58- "The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood is dwelling in Me, and I in him. As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father; so also the one who eats Me shall live by Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna, and died. The one who eats this bread shall live forever."

One of the most widely appearing metaphors in the Bible involves eating. We must develop the ability to feed ourselves accurately, recognizing the good and bad. If

we are ingesting what is in the world, that is what will come out of us. If we are filling ourselves with the Word of God, this will also show in what comes out of us. It will show our character. It is not what goes into us that defiles us but what comes out.

Matthew 15:11- “That which goes into the mouth does not defile the man; but that which comes out of his mouth, this defiles the man.”

We are what we eat. The same can apply spiritually to what we put into our minds. God wants us to desire His Word with the impatience of a baby wanting milk.

1 Peter 2:2- “As newborn babes, yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow,”

God gave Israel manna to eat every day for forty years. We are blessed to have God's Word as our daily bread today. Are we truly taking advantage of having it in its entirety, or do we let it go to waste?

Putting Christ in us *is* as if not *more important* than get rid of the “leaven” from our lives. As we overcome the sin in our lives, we replace the void with the Bread of Life, The Word, Jesus Christ.

Thinking along this theme, faith came to mind and for times such as these, just how can we strengthen it? To begin, Merriam-Webster defines fortify as to strengthen, secure, add mental or *moral* strength, or to enhance or encourage. Since we are referring to our faith, we can increase and strengthen our faith through Bible Study.

Romans 10:17- “So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God.”

We have to go *beyond* simply hearing God’s Word and be doers of God’s Word.

Romans 2:13- “(Because the hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

Failing to be doers can cause us to fall into complacency and cease to grow spiritually. The common challenge is we *may* hear, but we *do not listen*.

Hebrews 5:11-14- “Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* word of righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown, who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil.”

It is to our benefit to follow God’s instructions to the letter without deviation. We cannot impose our thoughts on His ways and “just do it.”

Romans 15:4- “For all the things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that through patient endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

We must adjust our treatment of God's Word and His message of hope, never giving up our mission for righteousness and truth in the midst of an immoral and corrupt society.

God's called must connect themselves each day in the Bible. We may feel like are alone from time to time but God is always with His saints. Seeking more from the Bible will go further than reading a scripture from a morning devotional. That certainly is a start. If you really want to kick your faith into high gear, get in the Word of God and really dig into it.

2 Timothy 2:15- “Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of the truth;”

“Diligently study” from the above scripture means to thoroughly, carefully, and fully research and examine the scriptures. Dividing the truth means separate and to share. to Remember, we live by *EVERY* word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

God commanded that His words be in our hearts and souls, bound on our hands, taught to our children, and written on our doorposts.

Deuteronomy 11:18-20- “Therefore you shall lay up these My words in your hearts and in your souls, and bind them for a sign upon your hands so that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And *you* shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and upon your gates,”

Deuteronomy 6:5-9- “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart. And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house and on your gates.”

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God’s Word is pure, and *it is truth*. His Word is tried (trustworthy, dependable, solid) and He becomes our shield (protector) when we put our *trust* and *faith* in Him.

2 Samuel 22:31- “As *for* God, His way *is* perfect. The word of the LORD *is* tried. He is a shield to all those who seek refuge in Him,”

Proverbs 30:5- “Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.”

Psalm 18:30- “As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the LORD is tried. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him,”

Psalm 12:6- “The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Proverbs 2:1-11- “My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding; Yea, if you cry after knowledge *and* lift up your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search *for* her as for hidden treasures, Then you shall understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; out of His mouth *comes* knowledge and understanding. He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous; *He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly. He keeps the paths of *right* judgment and preserves the way of His saints. Then you shall understand righteousness and judgment and equity, every good path. Wisdom shall enter into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul; Discretion shall preserve you and, understanding shall keep you,”

The Word of God is the conduit that connects us through His Holy Spirit and our faith to God. It opens our minds and hearts to receiving truth and understanding. Spiritual growth will come to those who set the Lord before themselves constantly. We draw closer to God through Bible study and prayer. Jesus said His words are Spirit and Life; they have a quality greater than human words because their source is divine. If eaten, these words lead to eternal life.

John 6:63- “It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.”

The hope for eternal life is to live a quality life as God lives, as He commands, having developed a close relationship with Him, living by faith and accepting His sovereignty. Love God first!

Bible study provides a personal means of reaching the mind of God, growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. We live by every word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4). We are set apart in His truth by His word.

John 17:17- “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth.”

Equipping and filling ourselves with God’s Word, we prepare ourselves to face trials. God will not always send a storm to remind us to pray and study, He would rather have us show our love and devotion for Him by our actions. The trials and storms He will save for lessons to get us in line or back on track. Having God’s

Word in our hearts and minds prepares us to have that “ready answer” for those God may send our way.

1 Peter 3:15- “But sanctify the Lord God in your own hearts, and always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope *that is* in you, with meekness and reverence;”

Even if we may not understand something when we read it, God’s Holy Spirit will bring it to our remembrance if it is needed at the appropriate time.

Luke 12:11-12- “But when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how or what you should reply in defense, or what you should say; For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that same hour what needs to be said.”

This scripture is best illustrated when Satan showed up to tempt Jesus Christ when He was in the wilderness for forty days (**Matthew 4:1-10**). Jesus did not need to do an urgent search for scriptures, He knew them by heart.

In addition to having a ready answer, we will be prepared for the time that is coming where there will be a famine of God's Word.

Amos 8:11-12- "Behold, the days come," says the Lord GOD, "that I will send a *famine* in the land; not a *famine* of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*."

We may be there already as there are so very few churches who actually preach and teach the truth as it is written in the Bible. With all the daily distractions we can ill afford to become complacent in our devotion to reading and studying God's Word.

2 Peter 3:16-18- "As *he has* also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things that are difficult to understand, which the ignorant and unstable are twisting and *distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness; Rather, be

growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and into *the* day of eternity. Amen.”

This is a sound warning to be on guard and do not allow us to be led astray. There are a few things we need to keep in mind when we read and study God’s Word.

Is our motive to love God, to seek His truth, to grow in grace and knowledge, or are we trying to prove a point to win an argument? We must read scripture in its entirety and whole context. We must know who is talking, to whom they are talking and not just “cut and paste” scripture to remove a partial meaning. We definitely do not need to overcomplicate God’s Word as it is of no private interpretation.

2 Peter 1:19-21- “We also possess the confirmed prophetic Word to which you do well to pay attention, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and *the* morning star arises in your hearts; Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own *private* interpretation; Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit.”

Isaiah 28:9-10- “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts, For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little;”

We read both the Old and New Testaments. Nothing was done away with, and nothing is “just for the Jews.” Search for word meanings if you are unsure in what context it is being used.

Hebrews 2:1-3- “For this reason, it is imperative that we give much greater attention to the things *which* we have heard, lest at any time we should slip away. For if the word spoken by angels was *enforced* without fail, and every transgression and disobedience received just recompense, How shall we escape, *if* we have neglected so great a salvation; which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*;”

God has called us into His service, and we have a choice to make to make our best effort to learn about Him and His plan for us. Through His Holy Spirit we can attain the wisdom and understanding we need to be the faithful stewards of His truth. We will be prepared for what lies ahead.

If we want to fortify our faith, the best armor is the Word of God. The dusty book on so many end tables is more valuable than gold or silver. It is our guidebook for preparing for salvation and the coming Kingdom of God. It is tragic that the best-selling book of all time may be the most mis-read and misunderstood. You can bet we will have a quiz by the Teacher on its contents in the future... Better study and know it now while we have time.

Amen.

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