

Bible Intake – *Deut 8:1-3, 1 Pet 2:1-3*

Introduction – We have seen that the Word is central here in the worship of our God on the Lord's Day. We let the Word determine what we are to do here and the service itself is Word-saturated. This sets the pattern and the habit for the rest of our week. In the same way that we need food for our nourishment and growth, we need to be Bible-eaters for our souls.

The Word is Remember-Food (Deut 8:1-3) – As the forty years of desert wandering neared its completion, the promise of the Land was in view. In order that they might *"live and multiply, and go in and possess the land,"* the Lord told them that they must be focused on Him. And the Word was the way to do this. How do you keep every commandment the Lord gives? You must *"remember that the LORD your God led you."* Commandments are kept faithfully only when we keep them while we remember all that we have been given and promised.

This is why God humbled them and let them become hungry (v3). The way He fed them was unexpected and the hunger and manna together taught them important things. Whether God gives food from the dirt or from heaven, it is God Who gives it; and it all comes according to His Word. Man does not live by bread alone – because bread never comes alone. And so we learn that we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Therefore, every trial, every hunger, is to be received by the Lord and responded to with remembrance of Who led us into our latest wilderness and Who will feed us.

We are to see the Word of God becoming our bread and not stones becoming our bread. This flies in the face of seeing bread coming from dirt (stones) and not the sky all the time. It flies in the face of seeing hands make bread with or without faith in God. This is because God did not create this world autonomous from Himself or His Word, but only eyes of faith see this.

Your Heart on All the Words (Deut 32:44-47) – Again, Moses, giving the Word to the people, commands them to personally receive the Word (*"set your hearts"*), faithfully pass on the Word (*"command your children"*), and put into practice the Word (*"carefully observe"*). They are to do this because *"it is your life."* It is never a futile thing to be in the Word. And that is because it is like food.

The Word is Life Sustaining Food (1 Pet 2:1-3) – Jesus said He was that manna and that He is the bread of heaven (John 6:30-35) and Peter tells us that if we have *"tasted that the Lord is gracious"* that we should *"desire the pure milk of the word"* that we may grow thereby. If you are not hungry, you are either sick (and verse 1 describes putting away spiritual sickness) or you are not alive (and 1:23 describes this Word as that which gives life). Therefore, since we have access to the Word of God as in no other time in history, the question is not whether or not you are "a reader." The question is whether you are "an eater." Are you hungry?

How Should We Then Eat? – To set the Lord's Day worship as central, primary, and an exclusively special time of receiving the Word, which we believe, is not to underestimate the value of devotional reading and Bible study during the week. And so let's consider some practical advice on Bible intake.

Reading This Big Book – To many of you, this thick book is daunting. But you don't have to finish it next week and you don't have to understand it all by next year. In fact, do not think of this first as a pile of information to take in; think of it as a field in which to graze, a garden with a variety of trees and the Lord saying, *"of the fruit of all these trees you may eat..."* Just start eating.

Start (or Restart) Simple – Build, buy or steal a simple reading plan. Choose an OT and a NT plan. A couple of chapters a day and you can easily finish the NT twice in less than a year. A couple of chapters in the OT and you are through it in just over a year. Read quickly without getting stuck by too many questions. Choose a good translation (AV, NKJV, ESV, NASB), make one your "home" and try other translations from time to time. Put Bibles on your iPhone so it's always accessible. Get an audio version and listen in the car or while you exercise.

And Then What? – That is simple Bible reading. Now, not to overwhelm you (just do the *start or restart* if that is where you are) but some simple add-ons are a great way to enjoy the feast as well. Like...

Meditation and Memorization (Psalm 1:2, Psalm 119:11) – Biblical meditation is not emptying your mind; it is filling it. The Hebrew word has the idea of muttering to oneself, chewing on the verse over and over. Memorizing is a great way to do this.

Singing (Psalm 95:2) – The Psalms particularly were meant to be sung. We are learning to sing the Psalms not simply for our worship service, but for personal devotions and family worship as well. Use them. They are not simply songs; they are musical food.

Application (James 1:22, Heb 5:12-14) – Deeper understanding comes by obeying the "big E's on the chart." What did you read? Something to believe? Something to do? Put it in place.

It's Your Life – It really is. We live in a lost, dark generation with no foundations (Darwinism, Atheism, Humanism) and we don't know how to address many cultural challenges (abortion, homosexuality) and every personal challenge you will ever face. The Word of God not only brings truth and light to these issues, it offers a Way out. And this is the Way of the Word: it gives life and it nurtures that life. Believe and go eat.