

TITLE**ARE YOU HUNGRY?**

We've all had the experience. Hunger. In our society being hungry is a very relative thing. We miss a meal and we feel hungry. No problem, we just have a meal.

HUNGER IS RELATIVE – baked beans

We know that in the present economic climate that we have seen the re-appearance of people not having sufficient money to buy proper food so that food banks have been set up. We've all heard the stories of parents that go hungry so that their children can eat.

HUNGRY BOY

Hunger is relative. There are still parts of the world where people are genuinely going hungry. Not the odd missed meal, but missed days of food, or where their meal is not really enough for healthy growing children. Now that's real hunger – where people, particularly children experience malnutrition. It can lead to poor growth, poor health and death.

For many people in poor parts of the world, they just can't imagine what our world is like. In fact the main nutrition issue in our country is eating too much. Many don't even know how poor their diet really is and how it threatens their health. They don't know just how hungry they really are.

ARE YOU HUNGRY FOR GLORY?**WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE GLORY OF GOD**

Last week I started to look at what the glory of God was like. And we saw that to look upon the whole of God's glory is an awesome thing. It's not just experiencing appearance but being exposed to everything He is and that's something that's so profound, awesome, mind-blowing and the rest; that it goes beyond the human ability to cope with it.

We saw also that the glory of God is also expressed in His moral splendour and in the grace he has shown towards us. Last week we saw how understanding the glory of God changes lives, ours and the lives of the people we touch. And what's more, having the glory of God revealed to us is something God wants us to have. He wants us to understand and be amazed, be awestruck at His glory and doesn't hold back. If only we would ask!

I ASKED BUT?

I said that all we have to do is ask. But as I'm sure we've all found out that we ask God for things, even something like this and we don't get it immediately. We can find it that difficult. Was I right to ask? Was Mark right to say that asking for our eyes to be open to see and perceive the glory of God was something that God wants us to have? Yes – we have a God who wants to experience more and more of His glory.

So today's sermon is about knowing more of the glory of God – but just how much do we want to experience God's glory? Or let's even be more general – how much do we really want to experience of God? How hungry are we? Are the things of God something we

long after, or are we like those whose diet is so thin that we don't even know how hungry we are?

TWO WOMEN DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

In our story this morning we came across two women, Mary and Martha. Jesus was visiting their home. Martha blustered around being the good host whilst Mary sat at Jesus feet, hanging on every word. She was hungry to receive from Him. Martha was annoyed. Why wasn't Mary helping? We know her reaction – she blamed Jesus for not acting responsibly!! *"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"*

Now just as a knee-jerk reaction you may be having some sympathy for Martha. Surely Mary was being a bit selfish to not help with the domestic arrangements – after all it was a society in which women did do all the domestic work. They didn't do the sitting at the rabbi's feet bit.

Why did Jesus then find Mary's actions were so good. Why has she done the right thing? Because she had realised who Jesus was and was taking every opportunity as He was in her home, to benefit from His teaching. She was hungry to know, hungry to learn and there was no better place than straight from Jesus in the comfort of her own home. Martha had missed the point – she was too concerned with being a good host to have asked Jesus whether a simple meal may have been better and joined Mary.

It's a pointer for us. We have the Spirit of God within each of us if we are Christians. He is there to ensure that we know and understand the things of God; but how often do we stop in the bluster of our lives to listen to Him?

NOT HUNGRY?

How hungry are we **really** to know more of the glory of God. We have the Spirit, but how much do we allow Him to open our lives to knowing and experiencing God's glory? If we are honest, then perhaps not much. Like starving people, we are so hungry that we don't know how hungry we really are. Why don't we feel hungry for the glory of God? Our problem is that we have the weakness of our humanity

DISTRACTED

How hungry are we to stop and and listen? Stopping and listening means just that. God does things in His time but how are we going to notice if we are Marthas? Martha was busy, busy, busy. The Lord was in her home. Everything had to be done just so. She had forgotten who she was receiving.

Are we too busy to spend time to stop and listen to the Spirit of God. Busy with family, busy with our homes, busy with our jobs, busy with our hobbies, too busy doing the Lord's work to stop and spend time in His presence, allowing Him to open our minds.

The nature of our society is hustle and bustle. But if we really want to know the glory of God, then we need to be Mary and not Martha. That applies to church even more so.

IN WILDERNESS

Many people find approaching God and hungering after His glory because they find themselves in a wilderness place. It may be circumstances of life, or as Steve Lineham shared with us last year, sometimes we find ourselves in the desert and we don't even know why we're there. How can we experience God's glory when we are in the

wilderness? How can anything possibly happen? Look at the picture.

Have you ever been in the desert? The nearest I've got is the semi-desert areas of southern Spain. Desert areas look dry and uninviting. But look more closely and you'll see beyond the barrenness to a stark beauty which the photographer here found.

If you really want to experience what God is like, you'll find Him as easy in the desert places as anywhere else. So when you're desperate, don't give up on prayer, don't give up coming to church – but ask God to take you through it and reveal Himself even in the darkest times. He is there. It's a strange reverse of logic. We find God in wilderness places. Or perhaps not. When we are most desperate we most realise our own hunger for God. All we need to do is respond to that hunger and find the Spirit speaking to us through it.

IMPATIENT

The final reason I want to look at this morning is that we are too impatient. We want to know more of the glory of God and we know our faith needs it. But God is taking His time. The message is simple – don't give up.

WAIT IN GOD'S TIME

I was reminded of a favourite passage of mine – part of it was my baptismal verse. Is *40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. 30 Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; 31 but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (NRSV).*

Actually chapter 40 is a great statement of the creative glory of God. It culminates here in verse 28. We see what sort of God He is – He's the everlasting, the Creator, so He doesn't flag and his knowledge is infinite. Our problem is that we are limited by our human minds and bodies. We grow weary. We see the glory in creation and we want to see the glory in our lives. Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

We need to be good waiters. The most accurate translation is wait for the Lord – not wait on the Lord. If we are trying to wait on the Lord we are being the wrong sort of waiter. We are not called to wait on the Lord – recommending the 2 for 1 on main meals. Wrong sort of waiter.

We are called to wait for the Lord. The sense is to wait for the Lord in hope and expectancy. But note the wording -as we wait we renew our strength etc. Strength is found in patient waiting. Again logic goes on its head. It is the waiting that makes us strong. It is the waiting that allows the Spirit to reveal the things of God. It is in the waiting that we mount up with wings as eagles.

How do I conclude. With another verse:

Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Are you hungry for the glory of God. You are but you just need to realise it.

HE IS HERE NOW – Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Use your freedom to allow Him to reveal the glory of God to you.

How do we respond to that hunger? We ask and ask and ask, we call out to Him – and wait God's time and as we do so the Holy Spirit speaks to us through it.

HE IS HERE NOW - and as we come to the table, this experience Christ we share together is a place where we can ask the Spirit of God to minister to us. Are we hungry? Are we ready?

Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

TITLE

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