

TITLE: "Feeding Your Soul with God's Word"

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NT p. 213)

<sup>16</sup>All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

### Introduction – You are what you eat

This morning's sermon title is: "Feeding Your Soul with God's Word." Why? Because you are what you eat.

If you eat a balanced diet, it will help you to be physically healthy.

If you learn to be a non-anxious person, it will keep you emotionally healthy.

If you keep your brain challenged, it will keep you mentally healthy.

If you feed on the Word of God, it will keep you spiritually healthy.

I would like to give you my condensed version.

We are spiritual beings. Most people are so caught up in their physical bodies, their emotional moods and their mental pursuits that they ignore the most IMPORTANT part of our human makeup, which is our souls. Not to say the others aren't important, they are, of course. But no matter how well we feed our bodies, minds and emotions, all our efforts will only last as long as we live. What we feed our souls, lasts forever.

According to the Bible, God always has existed and always will exist. God is in the farthest reaches of the universe and God is right here with us this morning. God can do anything. In fact, God created the universe and God keeps the universe going. God is love, and God loves you more than any person could ever love you and more than you can ever love yourself.

God made human beings in God's likeness. To reflect the true nature of God, God made us male and female. The part of our being that is most like God is our soul. Our soul is the spiritual, invisible and eternal part of us. Our bodies do die, but our souls live on forever.

Why did God create us? ...Love. God didn't have to create us, God already shared love with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, both of whom have always existed with God. But

God wanted to share love with us and for us to share love with others. In order for there to BE mutual love, however, God had to create us with free will. Love would not BE love if we could do nothing but love. However that meant that people could choose NOT to love God and NOT to love others.

The Bible, history books and a look at the nightly news all reveal only too clearly that many have chosen NOT to love God and NOT to love other people. The Bible tells us, in fact, that NO one loves God completely, and that each and every person has turned away from God in thought, word and action.

I certainly have. God has provided enough food to feed the world's people, enough medicine to treat them and enough water to quench the thirst of every person on the face of the earth ...if we shared. I DON'T share. I live in a nice home, drive good a car, have too many clothes and too much food to eat while thousands of children die each day because they do not have access to good food, clean water, adequate shelter and modern health care. There IS no excuse. I have sinned in that way and many others.

To other people, I may be a nice person. And if this world was all there is, I might be OK. ...But it's not. God looks at things differently than we do. As God says in Isaiah:

“My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

When we do not read the Bible, we start to think that God is just like we are and that is something is OK with us, it's OK with God. Not true.

If God WERE like us, when each person died and came face to face with God, God would say: “I created you out of love and hoped you would love me back completely, but you didn't. I wanted you to love others, as I love them, and you didn't. Therefore, you do NOT deserve to come to live with me for all eternity in my kingdom of love, joy and peace.” And there would be nothing we could do about it.

Fortunately, God is God. And to save us from separation from God, God sent Jesus. Jesus came to earth right from the realm of heaven and was born just as we were born. Jesus lived and was tempted just as we are tempted, however, Jesus did not sin. Therefore, Jesus was the One, and ONLY One, who could have died and approached God and God could have said, “You DO deserve to live with me in heaven forever.” But instead, Jesus allowed himself to be arrested, tried and crucified. And when Jesus was on that cross, he took all the sins of the world upon himself. On that cross of pain and

anguish, Jesus said, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” ...That is why. Jesus took my sin, and your sin, upon himself on that cross, and he took the punishment that we each deserve.

And the foundation of Christianity is that SOMEHOW, because Jesus died on that cross, those who believe in Jesus, those who have FAITH in Jesus, will have their sins forgiven. And even though we each much die, just as Jesus died, those who have faith will come face to face with God and God will say, “YOU’RE sins are forgiven, welcome into my kingdom of eternal love, joy and peace.”

Reading the Bible feeds our souls. God’s Word helps us to keep the whole spiritual part of us alive and vibrant. Without a vibrant soul, the pressures and pain and problems of life can overwhelm us. If we keep our souls well fed, we can find a deep inner peace even when our bodies, minds and emotions are strained to the limit.

I have found this to be true. So did Horatio Spafford. Let me tell you about him:

Horatio Spafford was born on October 20, 1828 in North Troy, New York. He later became a successful lawyer in Chicago and an active Christian and who was deeply and devoted to the scriptures. Sometime in 1871, a fire in Chicago heavily devastated the city. Months before that, Spafford had invested hugely in real estate by the shore of Lake Michigan and the disaster almost wiped out his holdings. Just prior to the fire, Spafford’s son died..

Two years after the fire, Horatio Spafford planned a trip to Europe for him and his family. He wanted a rest for his wife and four daughters, and he wanted to assist the evangelist Dwight Moody and gospel singer Ira Sankey in one of their evangelistic campaigns in Great Britain. The day in November they were due to depart, Spafford had a last minute business transaction and had to stay in Chicago.

The following is an excerpt from the memoirs of Ira Sankey:

When Mr. Moody and I were holding meetings in Edinburgh, in 1874, we heard the sad news of the loss of the French steamer, “Ville de Havre,” on her return from America to France. ...On board the steamer was Mrs. Spafford, with her four children. In mid-ocean a collision took place with a large sailing vessel, causing the steamer to sink in half an hour. Nearly all on board were lost.

Mrs. Spafford got her children out of their berths and up on deck. On being told that the vessel would soon sink, she knelt down in prayer, asking God that they might be saved if possible; or be made willing to die, if that was his will. In a few minutes the vessel sank to the bottom of the sea, and the children were lost.

One of the sailors of the vessel, named Lockurn—whom I afterward met in Scotland—while rowing over the spot where the vessel disappeared, discovered Mrs. Spafford floating in the water. Ten days later she was landed at Cardiff, Wales. From there she cabled her husband the message, “Saved alone.”

When we returned to Chicago to work, I was entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Spafford for a number of weeks. During that time Mr. Spafford wrote the hymn, “It is well with my soul,” in commemoration of the death of his children. P. P. Bliss composed the music and sang it for the first time at a meeting in Farwell Hall. The comforting fact in connection with this incident was that in one of our small meetings in North Chicago, a short time prior to their sailing for Europe, the children had [accepted Jesus as their savior].

Here are the words to that hymn:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
when sorrows like sea billows roll;  
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Today we remember the terrorist attacks that happened 10 years ago today. They happened on a day when not one of here could ever imagined such a tragedy would take place. The truth is, we do NOT know what will happen, next year, next month or even 5 minutes from now. But if we have faith in Jesus Christ, and keep our souls well fed, we too will eventually be able to say:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
when sorrows like sea billows roll;  
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Let's sing that hymn. It's #493....