

10. Spiritually balanced meal

October 23, 2008

"Eating balanced meal is very important," they say. I, too, strongly believe that having proper balance meals are important – one inch thick top sirloin steaks, cheese burgers, hot dogs, chocolate candy bars, beef jerky, Mountain Dews and Monster energy drinks, for a good measure, a nice handful of vegetable – french fries. However, I don't think that is what nutritionists consider balanced meals.

Yes, having proper physically balanced meal is important. But having proper spiritually balanced meal for our spirits is far more important. Because even if we take care of our bodies very well, it only last limited time. But our spirits will be in eternity one place or another.

In the last portion of this great Book which was apostle Peter's second letter to the fellow believers, he emphasizes living godly life by having balanced spiritual meal everyday of our lives that we may not be led away with the error of the wicked. At the same time, he does not put the responsibility of having spiritually balanced meals to God, rather to us. We are the ones who should be aware of what is out there to caution ourselves.

As instructions, he tells us several things we need to know and do.

A. BE DILIGENT

2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

According to Romans 14, we ought to give all of our accounts to the Lord when we face Him in the end. It is so much better to meet Him in peace than for Him to fight against us with His Word as it mentioned in Rev. 2.

If we are diligent and watch for His return at the rapture, and live godly lives, then we will not be afraid or ashamed. We will meet Him without spot and blameless. Since Jesus our Lord is a Lamb without blemish and without spot, we should be careful to follow His example.

B. BE CONFIDENT

2 Peter 3:15-16 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

V15 ties in with v9, where Peter explains why the Lord is delaying fulfilling His promise, mainly the rapture. God had every reason long ago to judge humans and burn up its wicked works on earth, but in His mercy, He is longsuffering with us. Some of your Bible versions say "patience". He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Nowhere else in the New Testament will you find a passage like this, where one apostle refers to another.

According to John 21:20, Jesus restored Peter for his denials of the Lord at the Sea of Galilee while they were having a breakfast with their risen Savior Jesus. How cool is

that! Peter being Peter, he asked the Lord about the future of John since there was some sort of rivalry between two of them. It was not something only Peter felt toward John. As a matter of fact, it was mutual.

For a couple of examples, in John 20:3-4 and 7-8, John wanted to make sure that every reader understood he outran Peter to the tomb of Jesus and he was the one who comprehended the resurrection of Jesus while Peter was puzzled by it.

But in here 2 Peter, after thirty some years from the resurrection of Jesus, at the end of his life, this aging apostle Peter was not bothered by the popularity of apostle Paul, nor the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit on his life. In reality, he was rejoicing for Paul's ministry and even came to his defense.

We should note three helpful insights about apostle Paul:

1) Peter reveals that Paul's letters had already begun to be distributed among the churches.

2) Paul's letters are regarded as Scripture, not just helpful correspondence. Peter ends v16 by saying that some twist Paul's teachings the same "*as they do also the rest of the Scriptures*" The word 'Scriptures' used here in Greek is 'graphe,' the same word Paul uses in 2 Timothy 3:16, "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable...*"

3) Peter tells us that some of what Paul wrote is hard to understand.

The good news about difficult passages is that they challenge us to think and dig harder in the Scriptures. But the bad news is that false teachers have an easier time distorting difficult passages to suit their own false doctrines.

It is so true whenever unbelievers don't understand or want not to understand the truth of God, the first thing they choose to do is twist the Scriptures and mock at them which would only harm themselves in the end.

Just because someone quotes the Bible, it doesn't mean that they teach Biblical truth. Gay and lesbian churches around the world use the Bible, but out of contexts. We learned about the Emergent Churches which embrace everything and anything except the truth of the Word of God. Then there is seeker-sensitive teaching that ignores the redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ and admission of our sinful wicked nature for the sake of popularity. Jesus didn't run for a popularity contest, but He died for our sins.

If Jesus ran for the President of the United States, I am positive that He wouldn't even make it to the primary election. Because the majority of people do not like His truth.

False teachings are a dime a dozen around us. People still follow the Word of Faith movement which claims that God wants every believer to be healthy and wealthy. They say, "If you don't have a healthy body or not well to do, you don't have faith." How many young naive Christians' faith were destroyed by this arrogant teaching!

If their teaching is true, we have to throw out about 80% of the New Testament Books plus the four Gospels from the Bible, because Jesus, apostle Paul, Peter and John talk about suffering we Christians go through. Apostle Paul himself was sick with a thorn in the flesh and God chose not to heal him from his sickness. Are these Faith move-

ment teachers telling me that they have more faith than apostle Paul? I think not and I know not.

Most heresies are the perversions of some fundamental doctrine of the Bible. False teachers take verses out of context, twist the Scriptures and manufacture doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God. We must accept the teaching of the Scriptures and not try to make them say what we want them to say.

In light of the twisting of the Word of God by false teachers, here are some filters you can use to see if what you hear or see are from the Lord:

- 1) Does the teacher take you right into the text in context, not around it?
- 2) Does the teacher make you interact with the Scriptures themselves, not with the opinion of the teacher only?
- 3) Do you know that you have a better understanding of the text than when you came into the session?
- 4) Do you know that you spent your time in the meaning of the text instead of a bunch of miscellaneous religious mumbo jumbo?
- 5) Do you feel challenged, comforted, rebuked, encouraged and practically instructed to live a godly life after you finished the session?

It is my prayer and hope that you are challenged, comforted, rebuked, encouraged and practically instructed to live a godly life after every teaching you hear from our church services.

C. BE ON GUARD

2 Peter 3:17-18 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Peter is forewarning us to constantly guard against being taken captive by the lies of false teachers. We will lose our steadfastness, our solid foundation in the truth, if we believe what others say without first checking their biblical credentials. We should not be impressed with their biographical and academic credentials. It would be nice to have good ones, but the most important thing is what they teach and how they teach within the biblical guidelines.

How can we as believers maintain our steadfastness and avoid being among those who are led away with the error of the wicked? We must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ continuously. We need grace and knowledge both.

Grace will keep us tolerant and loving, while knowledge will keep us strong. Grace will make us compassionate, while knowledge will make us discerning. Grace will help us smile, knowledge will help us think. Grace will result in vulnerability, knowledge will result in stability.

How easy it is to grow in knowledge but not in grace! All of us know far more of the Bible than we really live. Knowledge without grace is a terrible weapon, and grace without knowledge can be very shallow. But when we combine grace and knowledge, we have a marvelous tool for building our lives and for building the church.

Christians must be on guard all the time, grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus through the Word of God. This requires diligence. It demands discipline and priori-

ties. Oh, how we all need these desperately! Please remember this: nobody automatically drifts into spiritual growth and stability, but anybody can drift out of dedication and growth.

The final word "Amen" is not included in all ancient manuscripts of 2 Peter, yet it is appropriate for a letter affirming the truth in the face of the danger of false prophets and scoffers. Under the OT Law, Amen was only said at the declaration of the curses according to Deuteronomy 27:14-26. But under the NT, we say "Amen" at the announcement of a great blessing and praise to God.

Peter's letters are a timeless reminder of a man who grew. He grew from being a headstrong Galilean to a humble apostle, from a simple fisherman to a great fisher of men.

Peter can help you grow too-just remember the next time you're facing some troubled waters, there's a letter with your name on it waiting for you from a retired Galilean fisherman.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) Test everything against the Scripture in its context.

If it doesn't align with the scripture, ignore it and stay away from it at all cost.

2) We must grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We must have our balanced spiritual meal of grace and knowledge of Jesus constantly.