

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

FAINT, FAMISHED, FED AND FILLED

And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. Matthew 15:37

The glory of JESUS CHRIST is on full display throughout the pages of the book which we call the Bible. That glory shines so brightly that the supposed grandeur of all else is made to vanish from sight. Isaac Watts wrote about this very TRUTH in his beloved hymn which says, "Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut his glories in, When God, the mighty Maker, died For man, the creature's sin." John commented on the centrality of CHRIST's glory set forth in the scriptures, when he pointed out the limitless supply of wonder and beauty which surrounded HIM as he walked among men. *"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."* (John 21:25)

Men have often speculated upon the activities of the LORD which are not recorded for us in the pages of Holy Writ. We confess that we have spent time in such contemplation as well. Yet we can be certain that all that the LORD intended for us to know of HIS life among men is set forth in these pages. For only those things which speak of that purpose for which HE came (i.e.; to obtain eternal redemption for HIS people) are put at the forefront lest we be sidetracked from that which is needful (see Luke 10:42). *"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever."* (Deut 29:29)

With this knowledge firmly entrenched in his mind, Paul declared, *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* (1Cor 2:1-5) It does not matter what we know, how long we have known it, or how well we may know it, if the substance of our knowledge does not center and rest in CHRIST JESUS the LORD as the SAVIOR of sinners then we are as those who have no true knowledge at all.

Much of "Christendom" (i.e.; those who profess to be the followers of CHRIST) is completely satisfied with the husks of religion and the shell of tradition, without an abiding hunger to be as Paul who said, *"what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:--- and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Php 3:7-10)

There are two accounts given to us in the scriptures wherein the LORD fed a multitude of men and women (in a miraculous fashion) who came to hear HIM declare the gospel of HIS Kingdom. Once when HE fed five thousand men, and the other when the number was four thousand. In each case HE multiplied a small amount of bread and fish, to be sufficient for all of those present, with more

left over than when HE began. Taken by itself these occurrences strike wonder in our minds and serve to warm our hearts as we consider the all-sufficiency of CHRIST. Yet HE would always turn the attention of HIS elect to a greater TRUTH than simply beholding a miracle. These miracles were sufficient for a great many of HIS erstwhile followers, yet they were not done simply for the carnal satisfaction of the multitude, but rather to illustrate the glories of HIS everlasting Kingdom to those whom HE gave eyes to see. The majority of those who were fed upon these hillsides ultimately turned from HIS message and followed HIM no more. (see John 6:66) Yet the LORD knew them that were HIS, as HE asked Peter if they too would depart. Peter responded with a confession of true FAITH which was wrought in HIM by CHRIST. *“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”* (John 6:68-69) (see Mat.16:17)

The LORD upbraided those who clamored after HIM saying, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”* (John 6:26) They were content with the carnal blessings of “following” CHRIST, much like the religious multitudes of our day. They are warmed and filled with the outward forms and activities which salve their conscience and feed their desire for idolatry (worship designed by men). Yet they have no desire to “feed upon CHRIST”. Did HE not say, *“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”* (John 6:53-58)

Now we do not think HE was exhorting them to engage in cannibalism, but rather to be as Paul described his desire, *“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”* (Eph 3:19) *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* (Php 3:13-14) The LORD prepares HIS chosen vessels and then fills them with CHRIST, nothing less will suffice and nothing more is needful.

Those who CHRIST feeds with true understanding are first made to feel their hunger. Until a man knows that he is naked and poor he will not seek after a remedy for his dilemma. *“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.”* (Psa 107:2-5)

Their hunger gnaws at their very soul and they will not be contented with platitudes and religious foolishness. Even as blind Bartimaeus and the woman with the issue of blood, sought the MASTER. *“And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread.”* (Gen 41:55) The awakened prodigal can no longer be satisfied with the husks which the swine feed upon.

The LORD feeds HIS children with meat that the world knows nothing of. *“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”* (Psa 25:14) *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”* (Jer 15:16)

Those whom the LORD “feeds” are filled with the fulness of GOD and need nothing else. This multitude which the LORD fed had not eaten all day. No doubt, they were weary, hot, and tired, yet when the LORD brought forth this meal they were completely “filled”. That word can be translated as “gorged or satiated.” *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* (Heb 9:12-14) mam