

God's Presence - Empty / Hunger

Have you ever been so full that you could not think of having more?

It may have happened after that big Thanksgiving meal, when you ate a little bit of everything. Hours had passed but you were still full. It may have been after you faced so many trials, difficulties, losses or sicknesses that you said you could take no more. You were full.

There are times when you have been so empty that you grasped for anything that would help, offer satisfaction, or relief.

This lady came into church for the first time in many years. She was empty and hungry. She had been looking for anything that would satisfy her empty and starving soul. She had tried so many things that had not quenched the emptiness she felt inside. In desperation, she tried to drown her inner hunger with alcohol and then with drugs. The ache from her desperation caused her to search for anything that would satisfy and remove the emptiness. She tried the eastern religions, then she turned to astrology, witchcraft, various forms of meditation, and finally she came to church. She thought that maybe the God of her ancestors may be able to help. When she walked into the church she felt like turning and running away, but something began touching her soul. As the service progressed, her empty and hungry soul began to cry out to God. Tears began falling down her face as God began whispering to her innermost being. This was what she had been hungry for. She needed God. Before there was time for a formal call to come to God, she made her way to the altar and cried out for God to help her. In her moment of empty hungry desperation, she found the presence of God.

Luke 5:31 NKJV Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

God is attracted to our hunger for Him.

Emptiness determines the amount of hunger.

John 6:37 NKJV Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”

Jesus was giving a personal invitation to everyone who is empty and hungry.

Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

There is a place prepared for each of you in the presence of God Almighty.

God has made room at His table so you may find rest and relief from the burden, grief, sickness, and struggle you are going through. Here His invitation to “come to Me!” Come hungry!

Psalms 34:18 NKJV The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves

such as have a contrite spirit.

In His presence we will find relief, salvation, healing, and joy.

In 2 Kings 4, the prophet Elisha was confronted by a widow of one of the sons of the prophets.

Josephus said she was the widow of the prophet Obadiah. When she came to the man of God, she was desperately needing help. After her husband had died, she had fallen into a terrible state. Everything had turned against her. She had fallen into debt, had used up all of the food that was in her storehouse, and was left with nothing but emptiness. The fate of widows in the ancient Middle East was perilous. Often creditors took family members into slavery to pay off debts. She was empty and desperate and creditors were coming to take her two sons to be slaves.

2 Kings 4:2 NLT Elisha asked. “What do you have in the house?” “Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil,” she replied.

She remembered that her husband had feared the Lord. Hungry, she came to Elisha. Her emptiness covered every aspect of her being. Her heart was broken and her body was malnourished. She was so devastated by loss that she was diminished and empty. Her soul was broken from the death of her beloved husband. Her sons were becoming weak from lack of a proper diet. No food, money, or supply was left.

She was empty.

2 Kings 4:3 NLT And Elisha said, “Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your friends and neighbors.”

Her cumulative emptiness would determine the amount of the miraculous filling. This desperate widow and mother had no idea that the volume of her collected emptiness was going to determine her future. God works that way in us many times.

Out of our emptiness and hunger, God shows His power to save, heal, and deliver.

She didn't know how it would all work out; all she knew was to obey God's command. Empty people will do many things to try and satisfy their hunger.

She didn't realize that all of that emptiness would literally determine the measure of her miraculous filling.

The prophet gave her a hint of God's supernatural response to her hunger.

2 Kings 4:4 NLT Then go into your house with your sons and shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the jars, setting each one aside when it is filled.”

The Lord knows how to fill your emptiness and hunger.

He is the God of more than enough!

Jesus had been ministering to multitudes of people throughout the region. Sick and needy people followed Him on foot from the cities. In compassion, He healed their sick and spoke words of life to them. Now, when the people were hungry, Jesus wanted to satisfy their emptiness.

Mark 8:2 NKJV I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

The disciples took inventory and found such a meager amount of food that they thought it was not enough.

They were prepared to send the people away empty.

Sometimes we do not have what is necessary to satisfy the emptiness and hunger. When we consider our resources, there is not enough.

We are EMPTY...

In our hunger and emptiness, we should come to Jesus.

In His presence, there is satisfaction and fullness. It was not long after Jesus fed the four thousand that the Lord and His disciples were in a boat and they had forgotten to take bread. All they had was one relatively small round loaf of bread. As Jesus was speaking to them, they realized how empty they were. As they were thinking about bread, Jesus spoke to them.

Mark 8:19-21 NKJV When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven." So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?"

Jesus was not just talking about bread and physical hunger.

Psalm 107:9 NKJV For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

When Jesus crossed over into the land of Gennesaret, the people recognized Him, (Mark 6:53-56).

Empty and hungry people ran to Him from the whole surrounding region. They began carrying their sick about on beds to wherever He was. They were empty and hungry for the answers that Jesus had.

Mark 6:56 NKJV Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

Empty and hungry people want to come to Jesus.

Matthew 5:6 NKJV Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Psalms 16:11 NKJV You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Jesus will satisfy your hungry soul.

He will give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, (Isaiah 61:3). Instead of shame, you will have double honor, and instead of confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion; Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs, (Isaiah 61:7).

Listen to the Lord's call. He said, *"Come to Me and I will give you rest..."*