

HUNGRY FOR GOD

INTRODUCTION

We have just celebrated Pentecost. In preparing for it, I made a call for us to spend an additional 15 minutes with God each day, in the last 10 days I suggested that we spend part of it fasting and praying. We extended the final 2 prayer Friday prayer meetings just to open time to worship God and seek His presence and then we had the actual FIRE conference. In all, we spent some serious time focusing on the Lord, building our relationship with Him and experiencing His presence.

As a result, things happened (call people to testify as to their experience over the past month).

But while some people were experiencing growth in the Lord and being touched by God, my sense was that others had not taken much notice of what God is busy doing. In so doing, they have missed out on a great opportunity to experience God's blessing and presence in their lives.

I believe there is still time to get into the flow of what God is doing. Just because Pentecost day and the FIRE conference has come and gone it doesn't mean God is gone. The fire has just been revived and now we need the wind of the Holy spirit to blow on each burning ember and turn this little fire into a blazing inferno of His power, grace and presence.

To get there, we need to be hungry for God and this morning, I want to challenge us all and ask this question: Are we HUNGRY for God?

MESSAGE

H - HUNGER

Long ago the psalmist wrote about hunger for God in **Psalm 42:2** (NKJV) "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God".

This hunger, panting and thirsting after God is not just for the psalmist or for Christian leaders. It's not something unusual, the normal state of our hearts as Christians should be to thirst and hunger after God.

Over the past 50 days, if we had been doing everything that the Lord has led us into doing, we would have sensed a hunger building up in our spirit, a hunger that desires more, and more of the Lord.

The question today is: Are we like this?

- Are our days spent longing for fellowship with Jesus?
- Do we look forward to our quiet times, reading our bibles and praying?

- Do we long for fellowship with other believers – Do we look forward to Sunday services and Life Group meetings where we can enter and encounter God's presence as a corporate body?
- Are we flourishing in faith and growing in love?

Let us ask the Lord to stir up that spiritual hunger in our hearts and fan it into burning desire for more of His presence in our lives.

U – USHER IN GOD'S BLESSINGS

When we are hungry for God, He will respond and it will usher His blessings into our lives, our homes our workplaces, our church and everywhere we go!

Luke 1:53 (NLT) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich (those who have many supplies) away with empty hands.

Luke 6:21 (AMP) Blessed [joyful, nourished by God's goodness] are you who hunger now [for righteousness, actively seeking right standing with God], for you will be [completely] satisfied. Blessed [forgiven, refreshed by God's grace] are you who weep now [over your sins and repent], for you will laugh [when the burden of sin is lifted]. God will fill those who are hungry with good things.

- God will satisfy those who are hungry and fill them with good things.
- How many suppliers of goods today can guarantee you complete satisfaction? But God can!

These blessings are ushered in to those who hunger for God! They don't come to those who look to the world for reward!

Psalm 17:14 (NLT) By the power of your hand, O Lord, destroy those who look to this world for their reward. But satisfy the hunger of your treasured ones. May their children have plenty, leaving an inheritance for their descendants.

- God refers to those who hunger after Him as His treasured ones!
- Their children are even blessed!

2 Questions:

- ***Where are you going to get your hunger satisfied?***
- ***Are you experiencing the blessings that come from hungering after God?***
- ***Or are you like the rich, who have enough and get sent away empty handed?***

Let us usher God's blessings in by hungering after God!

N – NO MATTER WHAT (Nomakanjane!)

God has been speaking to us about New wine, fresh oil and grain – This speaks of joy, anointing and new people – i.e. growth.

But The LORD challenged me about it last week...

- Yes I desire the joy of the LORD.
- Yes, I need His anointing.
- Yes, I want to see growth in the church with a harvest of people and also spiritual growth.

...what if it doesn't happen?

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NLT) Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! 19 The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

- No blossoms means no fruit.
- No grapes means no new wine – no joy...
- No olive crop means no anointing.
- The fields empty and barren – no field white & ready to harvest.
- Flocks die in the fields, cattle barns empty – what if there are no people left in the church?

Will I still be hungry for God if this happens?

The problem is that when these things... a fruitful ministry, joy, anointing and growth become what makes me happy and hungry for God, then **I need to be honest and say that it's the things that I am relying on for my joy and not the LORD!**

- When circumstances rob us of our joy, it means we derive our joy from our circumstances and not from God.

The very next verse has the answer:

Habakkuk 3:19 (NLT) The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

- It's in the Lord and Him alone that we have our strength.
- It's not in what we can get from God, that we get our joy – we already have the greatest gift – our salvation! Nothing else should bother us!
- When we hunger after God, He gives **us strength in the most difficult of circumstances.**

When ISIS took over Iraq's largest Christian city – Quaragosh. The Christians were losing everything they had and many were beheaded. If we faced a situation like that, would we still be hungry for God?

Will we remain hungry for God even if our salvation is all that we have? Will we be hungry for God no matter what?

There are people here today whose lives have not been going as they would have liked and as a result, they have allowed their walk with God to grow cold. This morning the LORD is challenging us to get back on track with Him. To appreciate what we already have and what no-one can take from us.

G – GROW

All of us can identify through experience that any child growing up gets very hungry.

- When a baby is hungry, you need to feed it or be willing to deal with the screaming.
- When a teenager is hungry, you better have lots of food available, they will devour it all.

Why is this? The body requires food in order for it to grow! In the same way, we need spiritual food in order to grow.

1 Peter 2:2 (NLT) Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment,

- Like a baby cries, we must cry out for pure spiritual milk.
- The spiritual milk will help us to grow!
- ***Do we crave it? How hungry are we? Are we indifferent to God's Word, prayer and fellowship with other believers?***

In order to keep growing, we need more than spiritual milk!

Hebrews 5:12 (NLT) You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.

- The LORD wants us to grow. We need to move on from the milk – elementary doctrines of the Word to the deeper teachings.

Are we hungry for more of God's word? Have we moved on from the milk to the meat of the word yet?

- ***Some of us need to learn to study God's word more effectively.***
- ***Some of us need to sign up for Bible College.***

Our growth will be directly proportional to our hunger!

R – RIGHT FOOD

If we want to grow as Christians, we need to eat the right food.

Proverbs 15:14 (NLT) A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash.

God has a banquet prepared for us a feast of His presence - but we won't have the appetite for it if we have been satisfied with something else.

Many of us make the mistake of filling up on junk food, immoral TV programs, movies and other forms of entertainment, for example. But that's junk food!

Many good diets don't limit **how much** you can eat, but rather **what** you can eat. If you want to eat right Christian Spiritual food, you can't do it by filling up and snacking on the world's junk!

***This morning we need to ask ourselves what we've been eating.
Is it time to change our diet?***

There's just one letter left and it holds the key ... We need to respond to what God has been saying today... we need to say this:

Y – YES LORD, I'M HUNGRY

Let us ask God to help us live lives that hunger and thirst after Him. He has made us a great promise:

John 6:33-35 (AMP) For the Bread of God is He who comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." 35 Jesus replied to them, "I am the Bread of Life. The one who comes to Me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in Me [as Savior] will never be thirsty [for that one will be sustained spiritually].

Jesus is our Bread – He is the bread of life.

- If we are hungry, we must seek Him diligently, He will satisfy our hunger.
- When we believe in Him our thirst will be quenched.
- He is the Vine that feeds us, the branches. Being with Him will ensure that we care continually fed. This will lead to growth and fruit bearing. He is our source of life!
- **Psalm 34:10** Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the Lord will lack no good thing.

Today let us say YES Lord, I'm hungry, feed me, let me drink from your well, fill me to overflowing with Your presence.

We have heard today that God wants us to be hungry.

CONCLUSION

H – HUNGER

U – USHER IN GOD'S BLESSINGS

N – NO MATTER WHAT (Nomakanjane!)

G – GROW

R – RIGHT FOOD

Y – YES LORD, I'M HUNGRY

God wants to bless us, will we give Him the opportunity to do so?

Let us ask the Lord to make us hungry, and then to fill us on a daily basis. Let us spend time with God, in His Word and in prayer. Let us not neglect the fellowship of the believers.