Daily Devotion #111

Spiritual Hunger

1 Kings 19:5 –*“He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, “Arise, eat.”Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.” So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God*.”

Being physically hungry can take its toll on anyone. I know for me, at least in my younger years and probably now, when I am too hungry, I get irritated more easily. Also, my depleted energy level is not capable of keeping up with the demands of the day when I’m hungry. Some years ago, I was realizing my waistline was growing larger than I wanted, probably due to a few too many chocolate chip cookies, but to my amazement, I learned, through smarter minds than my own, that I was not only eating some of the wrong things, but I wasn’t eating enough. I remember well, after learning these facts, sitting down to a plate of food that I couldn’t finish. But to my dismay, in time, I actually lost weight.

Continuing with the life of Elijah for just a few more thoughts, I want to focus on how God had him eat. Not that God just had him eat, but that there was a spiritual parallel in that command. Elijah had just come through a very physically and emotionally draining experience with the prophets of Baal and from Jezebel threatening his life. Interestingly, when people are in great distress, the last thing they want to think about is food. But the angel tells Elijah he must eat, physically eat. Why? Because the journey was too much for him.

The parallel is that when we find ourselves drained from the incessant pulls on us, it can affect us in many ways. Not only in our bodies but also spiritually. We get so emotional over life and its circumstances that we don’t want the real food we need. Godly food. Spiritual wisdom. Discernment that only God can give. Help for us when we feel overwhelmed with emotion. In this state we are spiritually starving.

As much as God knew that Elijah needed to take care of his physical body to continue on the journey and the task to which God had called him, he also needed spiritual food. He needed the break from the situation long enough to regain his spiritual focus. That’s why God made him sleep and rest more than he thought he needed. God wanted him to have a time of physical rest so that He could refresh him spiritually. And that happened. Verse eight says, “Elijah arose and left to do the work of God.”.

Beloved when you face the most challenging times of your life, God wants you to do two things. Eat food for your body and eat food for your spirit - The Word of God. Jesus said it clearly, *“I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger”* (John 6:35)

But what did our Lord really mean by that statement? He meant that He is our source of life. He is the One, the only One, who can give to us what we need, not only for eternal life, but life now. Everything else we ingest is temporary. (Mark 7:18-19) Physical food is important, but spiritual food is most important.

What is stressing you out? What is overwhelming you? What is it in your life that is causing you the most discomfort? Could it be that you are eating the wrong food? Could it be that you are putting physical food into your body but neglecting the most important food? Could it be you are spiritually starving?

Spend time with God. Rest. Eat. Rest and eat some more, but make sure that the food you are taking in is filling you with physical strength and, what you really need, spiritual strength.