

ISAIAH. 44:18-20 *They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. ¹⁹ No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?” ²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”*

FEEDING ON ASHES

ISAIAH PAINTS A PICTURE OF A MAN WHO HAS CAREFULLY BUILT A FIRE AND PREPARED HIMSELF A DELICIOUS MEAL.

HE HAS TAKEN THE TIME TO:

- *COLLECT THE WOOD*
- *CAREFULLY ARRANGE THE LOGS*
- *LIGHTS A FIRE*
- *MIX THE DOUGH AND BAKE SOME BREAD*
- *KILL AN ANIMAL, SKIN IT, DRESS IT AND PREPARE IT ON THE FIRE*

AND THEN HE SAT DOWN AND ENJOYED THIS SCRUMPTUOUS MEAL.

HIS SACRIFICE OF TIME, AND HIS CAREFUL EFFORT HAVE YIELDED HIM A FEAST THAT:

- *SUSTAINS HIM*
- *SATISFIES THE HUNGER*
- *PROVIDES STRENGTH FOR THE DAY*
- *BRINGS A CONTENTMENT AND HEALTH TO HIS PHYSICAL BEING*

AND, AS THE DAY PROGRESSES, HE IS GIVEN THE STRENGTH TO PERFORM HIS APPOINTED DUTIES BY THE FRESH MEAL HE HAS PARTAKEN OF – A MEAL PREPARED WITH FRESH FIRE THAT CAME FROM FRESH SACRIFICE AND EFFORT!

BUT NOW, THE DAY IS OVER, THE NIGHT IS PAST AND HE ARISES AND ONCE AGAIN RETURNS TO THE PLACE WHERE HE SO PAINSTAKINGLY PREPARED YESTERDAY’S MEAL.

BY NOW, HOWEVER, THE ONLY THING LEFT FROM THAT MEAL IS THE PILE OF ASHES, OR RESIDUE.

HOWEVER, TODAY:

- *MAYBE HE IS TOO BUSY TO SPEND THE TIME ON PREPARING A MEAL LIKE YESTERDAY’S*
- *MAYBE HIS LIST OF “TO-DO’S” HAS GROWN TO THE POINT THAT HE DOESN’T HAVE THE TIME TO GO TO ALL THE EFFORT*

- *MAYBE HE IS PRE-OCCUPIED WITH THE BUSINESS OF THE DAY AND CAN'T FORCE HIMSELF TO SLOW DOWN*
- *MAYBE HE IS JUST LAZY, OR TIRED, OR WEARY*

BUT, WHATEVER THE CAUSE, ON THIS PARTICULAR MORNING, HE DOES NOT:

- *MIX THE INGREDIENTS AND KNEAD THE DOUGH TO MAKE FRESH BREAD*
- *HUNT THE ANIMAL, PREPARE AND DRESS IT TO HAVE FRESH MEAT*
- *PUT FORTH THE EFFORT REQUIRED TO PREPARE A FRESH, SUSTAINING, LIFE-GIVING MEAL AS HE DID YESTERDAY*

TODAY HE IS JUST FEEDING ON THE ASHES FROM YESTERDAY'S FIRE!

TODAY HE IS JUST TRYING TO DRAW STRENGTH FROM YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE!

HE HAS GONE BACK TO THE SAME SPOT THAT PRODUCED SUCH STRENGTH YESTERDAY – BUT TODAY ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE RESIDUE FROM A PREVIOUS MEAL.

AND INSTEAD OF PUTTING FORTH THE EFFORT REQUIRED FOR A FRESH MEAL –

“HE FEEDETH ON ASHES!”

**HE TRIES TO LIVE TODAY ON
YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE!**

I.) MANY OF US CAN REMEMBER EXPERIENCES IN OUR LIVES WHEN WE PURPOSED IN OUR HEARTS:

- **NO MATTER HOW MUCH EFFORT IS REQUIRED, I WILL NOT LEAVE THIS PLACE UNTIL MY SOUL IS FED!**

WE:

- *CAREFULLY CUT THE WOOD AND ARRANGED IT, THEN PRAYED FOR HOLY GHOST FIRE*
- *WENT INTO THE WORD, GATHERED THE INGREDIENTS, MIXED AND KNEADED THE DOUGH TO MAKE THE BREAD OF LIFE, AND THEN BAKED IT WITH FRESH HOLY GHOST FIRE*
- *WE TOOK THE MEAT OF THE WORD AND ROASTED IT OVER THE FIRE*

THE MEAL THAT WE SO PAINSTAKINGLY PREPARED THROUGH SACRIFICE, EFFORT, AND DEDICATION PROVIDED STRENGTH FOR THE DAY!

BUT, NOW:

- *YESTERDAY'S GONE – IT'S A NEW DAY!*
- *YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE WAS AWESOME,*
- *YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE PROVIDED STRENGTH FOR YESTERDAY*

AND TODAY WE STAND AT THE SAME SPOT AND WE MUST MAKE A DECISION:

- *ARE WE GOING TO PUT FORTH THE EFFORT TO CUT NEW WOOD!*
- *ARE WE GOING TO DIG INTO THE WORD FOR THE INGREDIENTS TO MAKE FRESH BREAD AND MEAT!*

- *ARE WE GOING TO BUILD A FRESH ALTAR AND PRAY FOR FRESH FIRE?*

OR, WILL WE BE CONTENT TO FEED ON THE ASHES OF YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE?

I STAND UP TODAY AND SAY:

- *I DON'T CARE HOW BUSY I AM*
- *I DON'T CARE HOW TIRED I AM*
- *I DON'T CARE THE COST OR THE SACRIFICE,*

I CANNOT AFFORD TO FEED ON ASHES – I NEED A FRESH MEAL FOR A NEW DAY!

I WILL NOT BE CONTENT TO FEED ON ASHES!

II.) THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS WITH EATING ASHES!

- **ASHES ARE BITTER!**

WHEN WE FEED ON ASHES IT IS EASY FOR US TO BECOME BITTER.

WHEN WE TRY TO LIVE ON YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE WE BECOME BITTER, ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED.

JAMES 3:11-12 ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

JAMES TELLS US THAT THE OPPOSITE OF FRESH WATER IS BITTER WATER – AND THE OPPOSITE OF A FRESH EXPERIENCE WITH GOD IS A BITTER EXPERIENCE.

HEBREWS 12:15

¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

PAUL TELLS US THAT THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS CAN NOT ONLY DEFILE US, BUT MANY! WHEN WE FEED ON ASHES, WE AFFECT THOSE AROUND US!

WE NEED TO BREAK UP THE FALLOW GROUND DAILY WITH A NEW EXPERIENCE AND MAKE SURE THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS IS DESTROYED!

- **ASHES PROVIDE NO STRENGTH**

THERE IS NO NUTRITIONAL VALUE IN ASHES! WE WILL GROW WEAKER BY THE DAY IF WE "FEED ON ASHES".

**PSALM 102:4, "My heart is struck down like grass and has withered.
I forget to eat my bread.**

PSALM 102:9, “⁹ For I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink,

DAVID SAID, **“I GOT SO BUSY I FORGOT TO EAT!”**

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE FORGET TO EAT, WHEN WE TRY AND SUSTAIN OURSELVES ON THE ASHES FROM YESTERDAY?

PSALM 102:11, “MY DAYS ARE LIKE A SHADOW THAT DECLINETH; AND I AM WITHERED LIKE GRASS.”

WHEN WE FAIL TO EAT FRESH BREAD EACH DAY, WE BEGIN TO DECLINE AND WITHER LIKE THE GRASS!

OUR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONATE TO HOW MUCH FRESH BREAD WE EAT DAILY!

I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU ATE YESTERDAY, TODAY'S STRENGTH HINGES ON TODAY'S MEAL!

- **ASHES WILL MAKE YOU SICK**

IN **EXODUS 16** WHEN THE LORD GAVE MOSES INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE MANNA, HE SAID, **“TAKE JUST ENOUGH FOR TODAY, AND DON'T LET ANY SIT UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING!”**

HOWEVER, SOME PEOPLE IGNORED THE INSTRUCTION AND KEPT SOME OVERNIGHT AND THE BIBLE SAYS IT **“BRED WORMS AND STANK!”**

NUMBERS 11:8 *“The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil.*

- *TODAY'S MANNA TASTE'S FRESH AND STRENGTHENS US!*
- *YESTERDAY'S MANNA BREEDS WORMS AND STINKS, AND IF WE TRY TO EAT IT, IT WILL MAKE US SICK!*

v **TODAY'S EXPERIENCE IS FRESH, NEW, AND GIVES LIFE AND STRENGTH.**

v **TRYING TO LIVE TODAY ON YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, WILL MAKE US SICK!**

FEEDING ON ASHES PRODUCES IN US:

- *BITTERNESS*
- *WEAKNESS*
- *SICKNESS*

III.) **WE NEED A FRESH ANOINTING AND A NEW EXPERIENCE EVERY DAY TO KEEP US STRONG, SWEET, AND HEALTHY!**

1. PSALM 92:1-2

“It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;² to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,

- **NOT ONCE EACH WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR – BUT EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT WE ARE TO HAVE A FRESH RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!**

2. PSALM 92:10, *“But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil.*

- **I MUST BE ANOINTED WITH FRESH OIL, NOT DAY-OLD OIL!**

3. IN THE BOOK OF **NUMBERS 4** INSTRUCTION IS GIVEN CONCERNING THE OFFERING OF THE SACRIFICE.

NUMBERS 4:16, *“And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering, and the anointing oil, with the oversight of the whole tabernacle and all that is in it, of the sanctuary and its vessels.”*

- **EACH DAY, SACRIFICE WOULD BE MADE, AND LISTEN TO WHAT THE FIRST THING WAS THAT HAD TO BE DONE BEFORE TODAY’S OFFERING COULD BE MADE:**

NUMBERS 4:13, *“And they shall take away the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it.”*

- **BEFORE TODAY’S SACRIFICE COULD BE MADE, THE ASHES FROM YESTERDAY’S SACRIFICE HAD TO BE CLEARED AWAY!**

WE ARE TO OFFER A DAILY, FRESH, SACRIFICE TO GOD, BUT BEFORE WE DO, WE MUST GET RID OF YESTERDAY’S ASHES!

4. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16, *“ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.”*

5. LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; ²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

6. **THE DISCIPLES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR A DAILY EXPERIENCE!**

- A. **THEY “DAILY WENT TO THE TEMPLE AT THE HOUR OF PRAYER”**
- B. *Acts 17:11* *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*
- C. **IN ACTS 2 THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND THEN IN ACTS 4 THE SAME PEOPLE WERE “FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST” AGAIN! (NEW EXPERIENCE)**
- D. **THE APOSTLES HIRED PEOPLE TO WAIT ON TABLES SO THAT THEY COULD DAILY GIVE THEMSELVES TO “PRAYER, FASTING, AND THE STUDY OF THE WORD”**

THE APOSTLES KNEW THAT THEY COULD NEVER COAST ON YESTERDAY’S EXPERIENCE – IT DID NOT MATTER WHO THEY WERE, THEY HAD TO HAVE A FRESH EXPERIENCE OR THEY COULD LESSEN THERE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD OR LOSE OUT WITH GOD!

PAUL SAID IN 1 CORINTHIANS 9:27, *But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, PAUL?

SIMPLY THIS: I MUST KEEP MY EXPERIENCE FRESH, SO THAT AFTER I HAVE FED OTHERS THE GOOD FOOD OF THE WORD I DON’T WIND UP:

FEEDING ON ASHES!

**ARE YOU FEEDING ON
YESTERDAY’S ASHES?**