***Don't Live by Bread Alone

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-231***

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We look this morning at "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 46 in Colossians 1:25-29.

**Spiritual Maturity**

We have been stressing recently that the goal of the Christian life is to become a spiritually mature believer. Ephesians 4:11-16 teach us that. It is not the goal of the Christian life for you to perform some service for God. It is not the goal of the Christian life for you to run around witnessing to people. It is not the goal of the Christian life for you to provide your money and your talents in Christian service activities. It is not the goal of the Christian life for you to do good works. First and foremost, it is not for you to do something, but to become something – to become something in Christ. And that is to become a spiritually mature believer. Then all those other things, which are proper, and right, and necessary, and have their place, will come about.

If you do not become, first of all, a spiritually mature person, you can't do any of those things. All of your efforts will be the old sin nature, pumping out what looks good, but is nothing but useless hay, wood, and stubble in the sight of God – someday to be burned up, and thrown away as trash.

Now, this maturity, that is at the heart of the Christian life, is made possible by instructing believers in church-age doctrine – truth, via the local church pastor-teacher ministry. The spiritual food of doctrine enables the positive believer to mature in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:17-18).

The spiritual food has to be dispensed. Expository preaching has to explain the doctrinal principles. And then there has to be a believer who says, "Amen. I'll believe that. And when I hear that, that's the way I'm going to act this next week. If I didn't act that way, I'm changing my ways. I'm going to line my life up with what I have just heard." That is the mind of God. It takes teaching, and it takes proper response. But there can be no response if there's no spiritual food laid out. You cannot satiate hunger without food. And it is God's provision that makes it possible for it to satisfy our spiritual hunger.

God's grace has provided the church body with the grace system of perception by which the wisdom knowledge of God may be secured for one's life. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for you to get the mind of God (John 16:12-13). This wisdom of God, of a mature Christian, expresses itself in one very distinctive way – in personal holiness. That is separation from the world's wisdom, and the ways of the world, to the wisdom and the ways of God.

1 Peter 1:14-16: "The wisdom of a mature believer expresses itself in personal holiness. And holiness means separation from evil unto righteousness. That's what it's all about.

Now, you can't separate from evil if you don't know what the evil is. You can't separate under righteousness if you don't know what the principles of righteousness are. So, you're back, once more, to people being given a chance to do right, because they know what is right. God the Holy Spirit gives you the energy to do it. But you have to know. And after you know it, then it's up to you. The doctrine of personal volition clicks in – the divine institution of volition. You'll go for it, or you will not go for it.

The appalling things that happen in lives of Christians, such that we shake our heads in disbelief, can happen to any of us. All it takes is negative volition to the truth of God that you know. Then it is disastrous. A mature Christian is a holy Christian. That's what makes him mature, and that means that he walks the walk of God – not of the sin nature.

What the immature Christian lacks is personal holiness. And he lacks that because he's chosen Satan's world system of life to live by (1 John 2:15-17). Now, people do not attend churches which call upon them to walk a holy life. People don't like to hear that kind of talk. People don't like to hear that they have to walk apart from the world system, and from all the wonderful, glamorous things that are out there. They want to be part of that. They want to be involved in that. And they want to have a foot in both camps. And you have to answer certain questions to decide whether this is going to be for you or not. Do you want to become spiritually mature in holy living? You do, or you don't? Do you want to please God by doing His will in how you live your life? You do, or you don't.

Do you have your old sin nature fun plan for living, and then you call it the will of God? This is a favorite plan of Christians. They come up with an old sin nature fun plan for living, which involves them in the world system, and they call it the will of God. Then do you get angry with those who teach you the principles of doctrine, which frustrate your old sin nature plans in the world? People don't want to hear those things. And I guarantee you that a lot of people are not sitting in this room right now, because they know what they're going to hear, and they don't want to hear it. They don't want themselves to be made uncomfortable with living with the sin nature plans as part of the world system.

So, they get angry with the people who teach them the Word. Are you irritated by an expository preaching ministry which makes you feel uncomfortable, and guilty in living for the world, and being part of that system? The question of personal holiness is one that you have to decide for yourself.

However, it would be appropriate for me to point out that you don't have forever. This is all on a time schedule, and you don't have forever. And as life clicks away, finally, the signal is given from heaven: close the books on this particular believer. And they close the books. Now, this should come as no surprise. In Psalm 39:4-5, God is speaking to the people of Israel. The psalmist here was looking at the frailty of man, and knowing that we're all on a time schedule. Psalm 39:4 says, "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the extent of my days. Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime is nothing in Your sight. Surely, every man, at his best, is a mere breath."

How appropriate! In your best days physically; in your best days financially; in your best days emotionally; and, in your best days psychologically, you are just one breath away from the books being closed upon you in heaven. And all of your life has now been recorded, and ready to be judged and evaluated – just like that. You sit there, thinking that you're going to take the next breath, and the next breath – and all of a sudden, you open your eyes, and you hear the presence of angels, and you find yourself being carried up into the presence of Jesus. And you say, "What happened?" You took your last breath. Do you remember how the Psalm said, "That's it?" Well, how many more breaths?

Then move over to Psalm 90, where the Holy Spirit follows up the same idea. "Why should I worry about being holy? Why should I be concerned about living my life into the will of God? Psalm 90:12, "So, teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom." Oh God, teach us to realize that it is so many days. And if we drift off into reversion, and we refuse to turn back to You, you won't even give us the allotted time. You've cut us off. The time span that was allotted at your conception will be cut short.

Well, even Solomon said, "That's dumb." Solomon said, "Why would you shorten your days? Why would you die before your time?" People who are mature Christians don't die before their time. People who are mature Christians are living that separated holy life, that is making them maximum agents of performing the purpose and the will of God. And when that's happening, you are immortal. So, teach us to number of days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom – a heart of the knowledge that comes from doctrine, so that you know the reality.

We get to the New Testament, and this same principle is fortified once more with a statement from the Holy Spirit in James 4:14. James says, "You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away."

So, these questions are very appropriate in terms of the fact that our days are numbered, and our time is limited. And it is the will of God that we should prosper in spiritual things, and that we should move on to maturity.

**Man Shall not Live by Bread Alone**

Jesus made an amazing statement on one occasion, in Matthew 4:4. He made it in response to Satan's temptation in the wilderness. Now, that he's been fasting for 40 days, that he should make bread out of the stones that were lying about. He could have done that. And that would've been very welcome, because now, Scripture says: "He suddenly became hungry." And in response to that invitation of the devil, Jesus quoted an Old Testament Scripture. He said, in Matthew 4:4, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Now, there is a connection here that might easily have been missed on the surface: "Man shall not live by bread alone." Now, we understand that: "But by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." And we view that as needing spiritual food as well. But there's more to it than that. Man does live by the spiritual food of the Word of God that comes from Scripture. The bread that sustains man's physical life, however, is the product of the Word of God. That's what this Scripture is saying. The bread (the food) that sustained you through this week is because you were sustained, not just by that material thing, but by the Word of God that made that material thing possible in your life. He gave you the conditions for you to secure that bread. He gave you the conditions for you to secure that bread. He gave you the conditions where that bread was available. You're not out in some starving country. You're not some kind of a refugee that's fleeing for your life, where there is nothing for you to eat. It is the Word of God that has brought about the conditions of your life that has enabled you to secure the bread through your efforts and through your labors, and it was there for you to buy.

Now, the Lord Jesus Christ said to Satan: "God My Father guides Me by His Word. And He provides for me with His Word. And when He is ready for Me to have something to eat, He's going to take care of it in His way. And for Me to follow your advice, and turn these stones into bread, is to follow your Word, instead of My Father's Word. I know what you're trying to do, and I will not sin, and I will not obey you." And Jesus gave a holy response. Why did He do that? How could He do that? Because He was a mature person. He's spiritually mature. And a spiritually mature person gives a holy response.

Now this verse comes from Deuteronomy 8:3. And I'd like to walk you through the background of this quotation, because it fits right into what Paul is talking about, in Colossians 1:28 – that everything He does in teaching church-age doctrine is so that Christians will come to spiritual maturity. That way, they will become capable of living in the pattern of Jesus Christ, being true men and women of God, and being spiritually mature – separated unto the Lord God.

**Background**

We're going to begin at Deuteronomy 8:3. I want to read that verse first: "And He humbled you." Moses is writing his farewell address to Israel. This is it – the book of Deuteronomy. And he is going to look back over how God has led them. They are now standing on the borderline, ready to cross over into the Promised Land. Moses will not go with them. And in Deuteronomy 8:3, he says, "And He (God) humbled you, and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know – that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Now, move back a few chapters, to Deuteronomy 4. This is the background of Jesus's statement, in Matthew 4:4, and the expression of the magnificent, mature holiness of the Son of God. This is the background. In Deuteronomy 4:1-2, notice the first two verses: "And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments (doctrinal principles) which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live, and go in, and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your Fathers, is giving you." Moses said, "I want you now to pay careful attention to what I'm saying, and what I am summarizing for you, so that you will learn the godly lifestyle, by which you are to conduct yourself in the land of Canaan." He is now speaking to the new Exodus generation. The old generation has died off. This is 40 years later. The new crowd is ready to go in.

He said, "Don't make the same mistake your fathers did. You are not to look at these people about you as patterns for you to imitate. You are to walk as mature believers, and you are to be grown up when it comes to sin. It is not to have an attraction for you. Therefore, Deuteronomy 4:2: "You shall not add to the Word which I'm commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." Keep the commandments of God: "Do not add human traditions to them, by taking away and reinterpreting, or just ignoring the Word of God, so you can escape its holy separation. Don't mess with the Word. Don't add to it. Don't take away from it by ignoring it by ignoring it. And thus, you will become spiritually mature in separated holiness, resulting in a good life in the Promised Land," and that they were about to enter. And that was the whole point of this. If you want a good life, be a mature Christian. That's the way to have a good life, on every plane, in every respect.

Now, notice Deuteronomy 4:3-4: "Your eyes have seen what the Lord has done in the case of Baalpeor. For all the men who followed Baalpeor, the Lord your God has destroyed them from among you." At Baalpeor in Moab, there was the incident of an enormous orgy of illicit sex. The men who entered into this physical adultery with the Moabite women, were put to death by the sword, or else they died by a deadly diseased plague which God sent among them. So, 24,000 of those men who were guilty of this sin were killed. And this is the way God punishes violations of the moral code. He sends a disease that all the scientists knock themselves out, trying to find a cure for, and they can't. And He sends diseases that are the kind that will mutate on them. And about the time they think they're ready to pounce on it, it mutates away from them, and they're back to square one, and have zero for their efforts.

Now, the man who obeyed God's moral laws, at that incident in Moab, did not die. Why? Because they were the mature believers. They were the holy men of God. All those men who lived, looked upon what these others were doing, and they separated themselves from this evil. Deuteronomy 4:4, "But you who held fast to the Lord your God are alive today – every one of you." Those who were true to God's principles are the ones who live. And those who are not, are the ones who will die – and perhaps, before your time.

Now, in Deuteronomy 4:5-8, he goes on. Moses says, "I have brought you statutes and judgments (the Mosaic code of life), just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. So, keep and do them, for that is your wisdom, and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, "Surely, this great nation is a wise and understanding people." God gave explicit commandments for the conduct of the Jews in the Promised Land through Moses. And Moses, like the faithful leader that he was, explained the principles to the people of God. They knew, before they crossed that borderline, how they were to live, once they entered the Promised Land.

The purpose of all this was that they would be an example of holiness to all the pagan nations who still survived around them, and an example to all the great cultures that existed. And these people would be drawn, therefore, to the pagans, because they would listen to what the Jews had to say. They would observe their moral conduct. They would observe their principles of social relationships. And these people would say, "That is magnificent. This is very wise. These people have great understanding. These people are no fools. Look at how well things go for them, because of the way they live." Why were they a great nation? Because they obeyed the doctrines of God, that they were taught, for their particular age. Why do you think we are not a great nation today? It is because of the same thing: "Man shall not live by the good things of life alone, and if he has the good things of life, it'll be because Word of God has pronounced those good things into his life."

Deuteronomy 4:7-8: "For what great nation is there, that has a God so near to it, as is the Lord your God whenever we call on Him." Now, if the Jews thought God was near them, what do you think about God who indwells you? He was never in them. He was about them. He was on call. But H walks with you. He lives with you. He talks with you. He's inside of you: "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law, which I'm setting before you this day."

Israel was not to be distinguished as a nation by her wealth, or her military power, because that comes and goes, but by her closeness to God, as demonstrated by obedience to moral principles which only Israel knew. That is because, only to them, had God reveal these things.

Then, in Deuteronomy 4:9, Moses says, "Only give heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. But make them known to your sons and your grandsons." The Jews were always to be on guard against idolatry, which was practiced by the pagans around them. They were not to forget what they had seen, and that the power of God demonstrated in their presence.

The key to all of this was doctrine in the mind as the frame of reference. Notice: "Only give heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently." What part of the soul? The mentality of the soul: "Lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest you depart from your heart (another word for mind) the things that you have learned of doctrinal principles from Moses. You stay with us all the days of your life. And then you teach them to your sons and to your grandchildren." That is the key. The great works of God, which the Jews had observed, were to be diligently taught to their children, and their grandchildren, to protect them from idolatry. And it took the parents to do this.

He says, "You tell your sons, and you tell your grandsons. Don't send them to church to do that. It's not the preacher's place. It's not their Sunday school teacher's place to teach these things. It's not their Christian school teacher's place to do things. It is *your* place. Now you should send them to all those things, but that is to reinforce what you have done."

Now, here's the rub. That means that it took parental presence. That meant that it took parental time. This is the duty of the parents, not of religious leaders. And that means involvement. Need I say how far we have drifted from *that* today?

Now, in Deuteronomy 4:10-14, Moses goes on and says, "Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb (that is, Mount Sinai), when the Lord said to me, 'Assemble the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me. All the days they lived on earth, they may teach their children." Moses said, "You know these things, and you've seen these things. Now remember them." This is always the anomaly. This is always so inconceivable – how much the Jews knew by personal experience with God. We'd be excited to have some of these experiences. And yet, they were always looking across the borders to do what the rest of the world did. This is just like Christians do today. They keep looking at the carnal Christian operations, and that's what they want to be like. They look at the shallowness and the triviality. That's what they want to live like. And they cannot get hold of the fact that God has a way of doing things. If you do things in God's order, and if you do things the way God does things, then all goes well for you.

Deuteronomy 4:11-14: "You came near, and you stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire, to the very heart of the heavens, darkness, cloud, and thick gloom." God says, "Remember the day when Moses went up to the mountain to receive the covenant, based upon the moral code of the Ten Commandments. And then I gave you a way of life, 613 guideline principles, that you were to live by, to identify you as My special people on this earth. God's purpose was to make himself very real to Israel. And boy, he did. They were so frightened that they backed off, and they said, "Moses, don't let us hear that again. You go up; you get the information; you come back; and, tell us. We don't want to hear God's voice again."

But God appeared to them in a darkness cloud. There was a firestorm around the mountain – a thick gloom: "And then the Lord spoke to you, from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words. But you saw no form – only a voice." So, the Jews could not make an idol of their God. They couldn't make a shape because they didn't see any shape. God is a Spirit, and they heard His voice, but they could not do like the pagans were doing – making images of gods. "

"So, He declared to you His covenant (the Abrahamic covenant, and the Mosaic extension of that), which He commanded you to perform (that is, the Ten Commandments. And he wrote them on two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me, at that time, to teach you statutes and judgments (the Mosaic way of life), that you might perform them in the land where you're going over to possess it."

God gave the Jews everything they needed for maximum blessing. And what it all depend upon? Doctrinal information. The same thing that it depends on for you and me. God wrote out His ten Laws for freedom. We refer to them as "the Ten Commandments, on two tables of stone. God's laws of conduct were to be drilled into their children as the way of life that their children were to be follow in the Promised Land. And what this presentation by God did under these conditions, is made it very clear to those people that this God could not be intimidated. He could not be manipulated. He could not be ignored. And, by George, He could not be disobeyed with impunity.

So, the bottom line was: "You better learn to respect God. He is in charge. He has no end of compassion and love, but He will not tolerate a violation of His moral character.

In Deuteronomy 4:15-20, Moses says: "In view of this, you watch yourself carefully, since you did not see any form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb, from the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly, and make a graven image for yourself, in the form of any figure, or in the likeness of a male or female, or the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, or the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or the likeness of any fish that is in the water in the earth. And beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and all the hosts of heaven, and be drawn away, and worship them, and serve them – those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the heaven."

You do not make gods in the forms of human beings of animals, or you don't worship the stars, or the planets, or the sun, out in outer space, the astral bodies – you don't worship them." And all of this is what was being done in Egypt." This is just what they had come out of, and this is what was being done all around them: idolatry. And are these people going to live by the capacity of these gods?

"But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace from Egypt." An "iron furnace> means the suffering of slavery: "To be a people for His own possession, as today." Man shall not live by bread, per se, on its own, but by the Word of God that produces that bread, and makes it possible for you to get it. And the Jews were being told, "This land is going to be a land of milk and honey (speaking poetically), and you're going to have a life like you never believed. And it all depends upon your doing one thing – you act with holiness toward Me. I don't want you going out with the foreign gods. I want you to go steady with Me. And you operate with Me on the principles of godliness that I have laid out for you – not those helpless idol gods who can do nothing."

So, in Deuteronomy 4:21-24, Moses ties up, and says, "Now, the Lord was angry with me on your account, and swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land, which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance." At this point, Moses has a moment of sadness as he writes this book. He says, "Now, you know, this great experience that you're on – I started it with you. I started with your fathers, and your mothers, and I hoped that I'd cross over into the Promised Land with you." But, in Deuteronomy 4:22, he says, "I shall die in this land outside of the Promised Land. I shall not cross the Jordan, but you shall cross and take possession of this good land."

Moses said, "The reason I'm not doing this is, as you know, because I permit myself to get so aggravated by your stiff-necked rebellion. The obvious presence of God instilled your whining and complaining. And your eyes are focused on yourself. You're preoccupied with yourself. You're never looking at the things of God. And you're always trying to attack Aaron or myself, as we seek to instruct you. Finally, you pressed me so much that I did what I should not have done as a spiritual leader. I forgot the Samuel principle." When God had to tell Samuel, when he was blue, and angry, and fed up with the Jews, because they wanted a king instead of God to be their King, and he felt personally offended like they'd given him the back of their hand.

1 Samuel 8:7: "God said, 'Samuel, Samuel, they haven't rejected you. You're the communicator of My truth. They have rejected Me. Now let them have what they insist on having. It will bring them all the grief that you have warned them. You are right, and they are wrong. And I'll bring blessing into their lives through their misery. But I'm going to win, Samuel. They could do it the good, easy way, or they can do it the hard way.'"

So, Moses remembers how foolish it was that when God said, "Okay, you need water again? Here's the rock. This rock represents Jesus Christ. Take your rod the first time, and strike it, representing the crucifixion death." And out came the water, representing the resurrection of Jesus Christ, once-and-for-all – the washing of the water from God, to cleanse us from sin. And the life-giving water was there as a resurrection death, and the resurrection of Christ was the life-giving water spiritually.

The God said, "Now, here it is again, Moses. This time, Moses, Christ cannot be killed twice. He will not die twice. He cannot be crucified twice. We need the water. Now, you speak to the rock, and the water will come." And Moses, as he's carrying on, and fed up with these people, in telling what they think, turns around, and he strikes the rock, maybe almost without thinking, with his rod. And God always stands by His leader. They were going to make Moses look like a clown, when the bad guys are the people, and he's the good guy. So, the water came, but the Lord had to say, "Moses, you, of all people, should not have disobeyed me. You should have understood the principle of spiritual maturity of holiness, separated to My ways of doing things. Now, I can't let you go into the Promised Land. I'm going to bring you right up to the border. I'm going to take you up on the mountain. I'm going to let you look across the Jordan, and see the magnificence of the country they're going into. And then I'm going to put you to sleep, and bury you. The devil's going to want to get your body. He's going to want to make a relic (a fetish) of it, but I'm not going to let him do that."

So, in Deuteronomy 4:23, Moses says, "So, watch yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, and be dumb like I was dumb, which He made with you. And make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you." This is all about idolatry. You don't live by your idol gods you've made, and all the things you've accumulated, and all the things that you're spending your life gathering. You live by the Word of God. You have nothing, except when His Word permits you to take that next breath, and to have the means given to you, to get all these things. It all comes from His word.

Hebrews 12:29, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire – a jealous God." And boy, anybody who ever forgets this principle, that He is a consuming God, and that He is a jealous God, and that He is a consuming fire God, has forgotten the warning that Peter gives us, that everything we have, and all these achievements we've made, and all these things we have accomplished – it's all going to be reduced to the basic elements that are on the chart on the chemistry wall, on the table of elements. It's all going to be burned and sent back.

So, when you're taking pride into something you have, or achieved, or done, it's only what's done for Christ, in your service of holy separation unto the Word of God. It's only what you've done with your material things for Christ – that's what you're going to take with you into the Promised Land of heaven. The rest is gone. God will not tolerate disobedience to His word. He is a jealous God. He's jealous of His glory. Nobody else is going to get it, let alone some dumb idol God. And we've got your idol Gods all around you in our society today.

The bottom line is very sobering. Deuteronomy 4:39-40: "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord: He is God in heaven above, and on the earth below there is no other. So, you shall keep His statutes and His commandments, which I'm giving you today, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, that you may live long on the land, which the Lord your God is giving you for all time." The best of all lives are ahead of you.

Now, that chapter is the background of Matthew 4:4. And there is another chapter, a few chapters up – Deuteronomy 8, now. The memory of God's care. This also is part of the background, because this is the chapter from which Matthew 4:4 was quoted. And this chapter goes on, from what we've seen in chapter 4. Deuteronomy 8:1: "All the commandments that I'm commanding you today, you shall be careful to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in, and possess the land, which the Lord swore to give your forefathers." Jews are to obey the doctrinal principles that Moses has delivered to them, and the Mosaic way of life. This will ensure for them a great life. They will multiply as a people, and become a great nation. They will possess the land which God has promised to give them.

Deuteronomy 8:2: "And you shall remember all the ways which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these 40 years, that he might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not." God says, "Now, I've been leading you for these 40 years of wandering in this desert wilderness. I've done this to humble you, because I've been testing your loyalty to My commandments, and your devotion to Me." In this desert wilderness, the Jews could not produce food. They had to depend each day on something from God. And they learned that man does not live by bread alone. He lives by what God says he will have.

So, Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "And He humbled you, and He let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." You live by doctrine, or you die. I don't care what else you have in life. You live by doctrine, so that you are separated as a holy human being, a child of God, to the will of God. That's all that supports in life. That's all that's of value.

Well, Moses is putting it on the line to them. Do not think that you live by something of your own provision, and of your own achievements. This is why the Lord Jesus Christ refused to take Satan's advice to get His own bread. He was waiting on God's spoken provision. And what happened? Once Satan was defeated, and he went slithering away, the angels came, and they laid out the banquet feasts. Where did it come from? God says, "Take a big picnic lunch to My Son now. He likes enchiladas. He likes those cutthroat trout. Get it all there to Him. He's been waiting 40 days. For this is a Word of God that spoke it.

It's not a dumb thing, when you sit down to a meal, to thank God for it. And you might even want to pray, "Thank you God for your Word that has given us this food," because it is His word that said, "I'm going to let Sam have the body to go to work today. I'm going to let him have the capacity to earn the funds that he needs. I'm going to let him have the means to have the food for his family, and the fun things for his family." And then God speaks this for you. And then God says, "Let's let him have this." And then God speaks this into your life. It all comes because he tells us. He tells the forces that obey Him, the angelic host, to set these things up for us.

Now, He says, "Let me illustrate this." Deuteronomy 8:4-6: "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these 40 years." Why? Because you weren't walking barefooted. You had good Florsheim shoes. And they lasted for the 40 years.

Deuteronomy 8:5: "Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you, just as a man disciplines his son." Your clothing lasted for 40 years. Your shoes did not wear out. Your feet were not injured. And God was putting you under conditions where you knew you were in the wilderness. You could not survive. You could not replace these things. So, you weren't living by a pair of pants, or a dress, or a pair of shoes. You're living by the Word of God Who kept those things for you.

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 8:6: "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him." He took care of you. He commanded these things for you. Should you not obey his commandments in return? God said, "I was disciplining you (training you), so that you would learn what it is to depend on Me for everything."

So, walk in obedience to God's laws, and to His will, because you respect His power and His authority. You fear to disobey Him. Deuteronomy 8:6: "Walk in His ways, and fear Him." The core of being a grownup Christian is that you're afraid of displeasing God.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10, "For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land – a land of brooks; of waters; of fountains; and, of springs flowing forth, in valleys and hills – a land of wheat and barley; of vines; fig trees; pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; and, a land where you shall eat food without scarcity, in which you shall not lack anything. It is a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God, for the good land which He has given you."

Obedience to the commandments of God will result in blessings on this earth for the Jews. And he describes the fertile land; the abundant water; the multiple grains; and the riches of the minerals in the soil. And He said that the Jews would lack nothing if they did one thing: just live by the wisdom of God. And where do you get the wisdom of God? From doctrinal principles of Scripture. The Jews were told never to forget to praise God for the good life that His word gave them, and to obey, therefore, the Word of God. They would always be dependent upon God for their prosperity.

Then, He says, I tell you this because I want to warn you of an occupational hazard of a life under the blessing of God. And you can spend so many years, wandering around in the wilderness, and forgetting what My Word, if trusted, will do for you.

Deuteronomy 8:11-14 says, "Beware, lest you forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments, and His ordinances, and His statutes, which I'm commanding you today (the moral code, the religious code, and the social code of the Mosaic Law) lest, when you have eaten, and are satisfied, and have built good houses, and lived in them, and when your herds, and your flock multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart becomes proud. And you forget the Lord your God, Wo brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Jews were warned that when times of prosperity come, they're going to be tempted to forget God's commandments, and to disobey them, as if they were all secure." Now, I have a great advantage over any of you here, because I've been around for a long time, in one perspective, on one ministry, and boy, have I ever seen people who came as humble Joes, and who became prospered by God, because they operated on the Word of God, and became so well off, and they became a great, powerful instrument economically to Berean Church. And then they started skipping church. They got their noses caught up in the system of the world, and the glory of it. And then their children began complaining that they couldn't have the freedom that they wanted, to do what they wanted to do. What did they want to do? They wanted to do the sin nature things.

Well, pretty soon, how often have I seen people suddenly drift off? When they were nothing, they were princes among us. Then they left, and became beggars. Well, they still have money. They still have religion. They still have all the accouterments, and the carrying on. But I'll guarantee you, that when they stand up before the Judgment Seat of Christ, they're going to realize that they were out there in the wilderness, with nothing, because they lost the one thing that brings prosperity, and that's the Word of God. And they walked out from under the blessings of God, so that He was no longer speaking good things into their lives, and letting them blindly wander off into the desert of their own folly.

When the Jews were going to have plenty of food; good houses to live in; multiplying herds; and, wealth of precious metals, they would become arrogant. They would forget who gave them freedom from Egyptian slavery, as we Christians forget who gave us freedom from the sin nature. The God who led them safely through the wilderness – a wilderness infested with venomous serpents, and scorpions, and provided water from the rock, as the God they were forgetting.

Deuteronomy 8:15-16, "He led them through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents, and scorpions, and thirsty ground, where there was no water. He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness, He fed you manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you, and that He might test you to do good to you in the end. He told you how you could collect the manna. You would get so much for your family, just for that day, and no more. If you try to get enough to save until the next day, the next day, it all turned wormy. You had to depend on the Word of God.

Finally, it got through the heads of these people that God has to speak this manna down. I don't live just by the bread. I have to live by God's Word, Who brings me the bread. On a weekend you can gather twice, because I don't want you working on Saturday. That will last over for you. There was an abundant food supply of manna, to test their faith in God's Word to take care of them.

So, the Jews could never credit their survival to their own capacities in the wilderness, nor in the Promised Land. It was the Word of the living God that made that possible.

So, Deuteronomy 8:17 says, "Otherwise you may say in your heart, "My power, and the strength of my hand made me this wealth." I have heard Christians who have been blessed financially with material prosperity, say a fool thing like: "God knows which Christians He can trust with His money. And every time some fool has said that, I've noticed that he's a Christian who's about as stingy as Mites ever thought about being with his money. God was trying to keep the Jews from doing what Christians do today – crediting themselves with their own prosperity.

Deuteronomy 8:18: "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who is giving you the power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant, which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." It is God whose Word gives you that wealth. Whatever wealth the Jews accumulated was due to God's power working for them, to confirm the Abrahamic covenant, that He had made with Israel, as His special nation, and His special people.

Finally, He closes with Deuteronomy 8:19-20: the background for Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live by (the material reality of) bread, but by the Word of God, that makes it possible. And it shall come about, if you ever forget the Lord your God, and go after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you today, that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish, because you would not listen to the voice of the Lord your God."

The Jews were warned that they would perish as a nation if they ever turned from worshiping the true God to worshiping dumb idols. In time, they did do that. They worshiped those idols. And finally, God removed them from the land. He sent them off to 70 years of captivity in Babylon. That finally did it. When they got back from Babylon, there was never any more idolatry in Israel. But there was rebellion against the spiritual meaning of the Word of God. And they added to it. They confounded, undermined, and diluted the Word of God, so that they were destroyed as a nation in 70 AD. The Israelites had the example of what God had done in destroying the Canaanite nations, who rejected Him, and who are worshiping the idols.

So, what's the bottom line? Learn doctrine, because that is the Word of God, and then, obey it as the wisdom of God, so that you'll enjoy the good life, and be able to fulfill your mission for God your Father. You must know that mission, and to know it day-by-day – and not only in some generality: But: "Lord, this day, what's the job?" And to be able to do that, is to come with a life that will be so magnificent; so capable; with the provisions so abundant; and, then standing before God, as Paul said, in Romans 1:16, "I'm not going to be up there ashamed of myself, for the way I have lived, in respect to the Word of God. Whatever else I am, I'm going to stand up there and say, 'I have run the course. I've fought a good fight. I've been obedient to the Word of God. I learned it. I believed it. And I lived by it." And so too, should we.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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