

Meat & Potatoes

- Steak and a baked potato, or burger and mashed? Not that there's anything wrong with either. (*I especially love a good chopped beef steak with mashed potatoes.*) This lesson is to help us focus on the bottom line message of the Bible, which is God's love to mankind and our ultimate responsibility to love Him in return through obedience to His word if we want to receive an R.S.V.P. to His Son's future wedding feast.

Rev 19:9 ... Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

- Not that the food of that feast will consist of meat and potatoes either. We can only imagine. And the food we presently enjoy, we should always remember to thank Him from Whom it came. It's just that...

1Ti 4:1 ... the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

"By the authority or permission of God. It would be profane or unholy if He had forbidden it; it is made holy or proper for our use by His permission, and no command of "man" can make it unholy or improper;"
Albert Barnes

Mashed Potato Preaching

- Although I like mine fluffy, sometimes I like to leave some lumps when making mashed potatoes just to be able to taste the potato flavor. That you can't get in the boxed, instant kind. Like some sermons heard from preachers who only want to entertain the masses. There's no real sense that it came from the Book (*like instant potatoes that may or may not have come from a potato*) but from a boxed, canned sermon outline handed down from another man further up the chain of command. Obviously, those who know the truth understand that those sermons, for the most part, don't come from the source of real truth. I mean, why go to the middle man if you "long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation"? (*1 Pet 2:2*) He's only the messenger! And sometimes the messenger might not be telling the truth.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit (*Gk.4151- vital principal [vital because it pertains to the salvation of the soul]*), but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses (*Gk.3670- [Thayer: to profess one's self the worshipper of one] acknowledge*) that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. (*2:18- "many antichrists"*) 4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (*...the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - Eph 2:2*).

- Confessing **Christ** has more to it than just “saying” something. And all the false televangelists do it because that’s what sells to their misguided flock. They really don’t have the “covenant” relationship with **Christ** they profess they do. Our lives confess whether we are **His** followers or not. We have something that is greater than what the world has because ours comes from **God**.

Heb 10:16 "This is the covenant that **I** will make with them after those days, declares the **Lord**: **I** will put **My** laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," 17 then **He** adds, "**I** will remember (*Gk.3415- recollect*) their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

- Since **God** is omniscient our sins aren’t going to be forgotten; **He** just won’t ‘recall’ them once we are “sealed with the promised **Holy Spirit**” (*Eph 1:13*). With **God’s** laws in mind we can separate the wheat from the chaff when we are able to discern truth from error.

1Jn 4:5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from **God**. Whoever knows (*Gk.1097: -understand*) **God** listens to us; whoever is not from **God** does not listen to us. By this we know the **Spirit** of truth and the spirit of error.

- People have a tendency to believe lies over truth because it fits their politically correct lifestyles or agendas. “The things of the **Spirit** of **God**... are folly to [them]” (*1 Cor 2:14*). How many people have you ever known that sit in front of the television and “amen” everything the stand-up televangelist says, and without ever having an open **Bible** to refute it? Maybe they really aren’t interested in truth. Or, how many people do you know that lean on the “That’s what the preacher said!” mentality? I once did in the denomination I came out of until I did my own research. It was as though the preacher’s word was more gospel than **God’s** word! He may just be telling a lost, worldly world exactly what they want to hear. “Someone else can do the research and I’ll benefit from **their** work”, or “That’s the preacher’s job, it’s what we pay him to do”. But **their** research is only surface, it’s not “meat and potatoes” because they won’t dig any deeper; they have customers to satisfy. But what did **Paul** tell **Timothy**?

2Ti 4:2 **preach** (*Gk.2784- to herald, especially divine truth [the gospel]*) **the word**; be ready in season (*Gk.2122- opportunely*) and out of season (*Gk.171- inopportunately*); reprove (*Gk.1651- admonish: -tell a fault*), rebuke (*Gk.2008-censure [scold]*), and exhort (*Gk.3870- invite, invoke [by imploration]*), with complete patience and teaching (*Gk.1322- instruction*). 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound (*Gk.5198- uncorrupt*) teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths (*Gk.3454- fiction*).

- People might want their ears tickled but we just can’t let that deter us. Nor should we wait for them to approach us to get into a **Bible** study. Even when it’s inconvenient we are to be on the lookout for any opportunity to share the gospel. And why are we to herald the message of truth? (*Remember, it’s not just up to the preacher to proclaim the good news that Christ came to save sinners. What about the gratitude of having our own sins washed in His blood?*) We are all to spread the word. And behind a pulpit there **is** room for a preacher in almost any sermon to add SOME fluff, but it should never be the main filler. A sickening sweet sermon was never preached by the apostles because such sermons don’t convict the hearts of people who need to know the good, honest, **God** loving, soul saving truth! Too much fluff only proves one of two things, either the speaker is ill prepared (*i.e.*,

hasn't done his homework- 2 Tim 2:15), or he doesn't know enough Bible to fill a thimble's content of a recipe to make potato soup. Sadly, such preaching has become the norm, (*sorry to say*) even in churches of Christ to the point where you wouldn't even know them as such but for their signs by the road. They are "R.I.N.O."s; righteous in name only! This has got to change! But some might ask "what am I supposed to preach because that old style religion doesn't resonate with people anymore". But...

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be led away by diverse (*Gk.4164- motley, that is, various*) and strange (*Gk.3581- foreign; entertainer*) teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

- "You gotta give 'em what they want!" Well, that may be true if you don't mind trying to explain that to the Judge on judgment day why you "gave 'em what they wanted" (*and not what they really needed*)!

"And the man who is called to preach in a rich and fashionable congregation, should remember, that he is stationed there not to please the ear, but to save the soul; that his object is not to display his talent or his eloquence, but to rescue his hearers from ruin."

Albert Barnes

1Co 2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (*basic meat and potatoes*). 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible (*Gk.3981- enticing*) words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- It was as though Paul was very nervous when speaking to an audience. It is said that public speaking is feared by even the most eloquent of speakers. But Paul spoke with power because his message was simply Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. We **can** adapt the **method** (*how the truth is delivered*) to the **message** but we should never adapt the **message** to the **method**. Truth has no agenda! We live in the electronic age with mass media and the internet to reach the masses and even though they didn't have that in the first century the church **still** grew leaps and bounds then. Why? What will it take, what did it take, to grow the church and get those people, either back to, or, to begin worshipping God "in spirit and truth"? (*Jn 4:24*) Answer: they were blessed with a motivation **most don't want to be blessed with**. Do we need another great persecution like they did then? Do we need another Saul to "[ravage] the church, and [enter] house after house, [dragging] off men and women and [committing] them to prison" before the church is "scattered" to go "about preaching the word" (*Act 8:3-4*)? In all seriousness, persecution's coming! As a matter of fact it's already here. Are we ready for it? Are we ignoring it? Or will it be so subtle that we might miss it like the Jews missed their Messiah's first coming?

Act 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know-- 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, **you crucified and killed** by the hands of lawless men. 24 God

raised **Him** up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for **Him** to be held by it.

“As people called Christians were in danger of death all who were insincere were deterred from becoming Christians. The church was able to remain comparatively pure and the courage with which the truly converted confessed their faith in time of trial made a profound effect upon the non-Christian.”

(F. W. Mattox – The Eternal Kingdom, pg. 98)

- Is my own personal faith a “meat and potatoes” kind of faith, or is it more like the traditional Sunday meal when the family gets together, only known to exist on Sundays? Think of where the church in general could be if we all shared our faith as easily as we share our recipes. And remember, it doesn’t take much to share a basic recipe that we know like the back of our hands. Why should the basic plan of salvation, the only real recipe that exists to save the world, be any different?

1Co 2:11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of **God** except the **Spirit of God**. **12** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the **Spirit Who** is from **God**, that we might understand the things freely given us by **God**. **13** And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the **Spirit, interpreting (Gk.4793- to judge of one thing in connection with another) spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (Interlinear: “communicating spiritual things by spiritual means”)**

- How is the meat and potato message delivered to us today? How does the **Spirit** communicate to us today? Through **His** inspired writers and the written word. It’s how we understand the very basic concept of good and evil. It’s how we tap into the mind of **God**.

1Co 2:16 "For who has understood the mind (*Gk.3563- intellect; by implication meaning*) of the **Lord** so as to instruct **Him**?" But we have the mind of **Christ**.

- We too can have the mind of **Christ**. How? Open the **Book** and let it speak. But, as was with Corinth, sometimes our judgment can be clouded by our own selfish desires.

1Co 3:1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in **Christ**. **2** I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

- How frustrated **Paul** must have been to know the church at Corinth, along with some other congregations then, wasn’t growing, they weren’t digging into the meat of the word like the Bereans were.

Act 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. **12** Many of them therefore believed, with not a few **Greek** women of high standing as well as men.

- They had the truth and obeyed it. But truth without zeal is like meat without potatoes. And zeal alone won’t save either. Like that of the **Jews** for the **Law** once it ended at the cross of **Christ**.

Rom 10:2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for **God**, but **not according to knowledge**. **3** For, **being ignorant** of the righteousness of **God**, and seeking to **establish their own**, they did **not** submit to **God's** righteousness.

- Like some false prophets today, who are sincere. But sincerely wrong. Why?

Meat

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the **basic principles of the oracles of God**. You need milk, not solid food, **13** for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **14** But solid food is **for the mature**, for those who have their powers of discernment (*Gk.145- judgment*) trained by constant practice (*Gk.1838- habit*) to distinguish good from evil.

- Using mature in this context, the Hebrew writer noted that it hasn't so much to do with time as it has to do with training and habit. One who is still a babe in **Christ** may have spent their entire lives as members of the church but couldn't even explain the basics of conversion, even when they are mentally able to do so, as compared to someone recently converted who **is on fire**. They would be considered to still need milk. Why?

Pro 20:4 The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

- Excuses abound. If it's not too cold it's too hot. If it's not too early it's too late. There will always be something that will take the focus of many away from being "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the **Lord**" (*1 Cor 15:58*). Then again, there will always be legitimate reasons for not being in the assembly, but remember, a reason is a good excuse but an excuse is a poor reason. If our conscience can't determine the difference (*between reason and excuse, between want and need*) then we still have need of the milk instead of steak, or mashed potatoes instead of au gratin.

Php 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **think about these things**.

- There was a time when the "Blue Laws" regulated who could and couldn't be open and on what activities were permitted on Sundays. Even grocers were controlled as to what they could and couldn't sell having to rope off certain isles to keep from having to pay fines if they sold non-essentials. Not that it was **Biblical** to have had such laws but if you think about it, there was that much less opportunity to take our focus off Sunday as the day of worship for **Christ's** church. People controlled their buying habits with the understanding that you didn't wait until Sunday to go on a grocery trip. Now you can't go anywhere without most businesses having store hours that include being open on the "first day of the week, when the disciples" are **supposed** to come "together to break bread" (*Act 20:7- KJV*). Not only is "Super Bowl Sunday" considered a temptation to stay home in order to prepare for it (*not making time for worship*), now even commencement services and other activities once held on Saturdays are held on Sundays, even Sunday mornings. There was also a time when Wednesday evenings were hands off because most government representatives, employees

and other institutions (*including those who ran recreational activities*) understood that it was set aside for midweek church functions. Even in the denominations where most attended. Not anymore. And although not specifically stated that we are to meet on certain days during the week, the precedent is definitely there.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, **25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more **as you see the Day drawing near.**

- **The Day** here, speaking to a Hebrew audience, had to do with the destruction of Jerusalem as it neared then. The disciples of **Christ** knew the events that would signal the fall of Jerusalem because they were warned of such by what **Christ** taught. The ultimate day that **Christians** are looking for is “the day of the **Lord**” which “will come like a thief” (*2 Pet 3*). How can we encourage each other if we’re not together, in each other’s lives, unless we share time strengthening each other, looking forward to that day as we know it will come? And such includes our remembering the **Lord’s** supper (*1 Cor 11:26*). Our busy schedules are busy because we’ve lost control of our ability to budget time to make our schedules fit into **God’s** schedule. **His** is set so we can always work around it. Our appointment with **Christ** and **His** church for worship has been scheduled in the **Book** so far in advance we should never be unable to schedule life’s **less** important activities around it!

Jas 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. **17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the **Father** of lights with **Whom** there is **no variation** or shadow **due to change.**

- Jobs, family, education, leisure activities and so many other things that we’ve been so blessed with by **God**, have taken many away from getting into the real meat and potato basics of **Christianity**, and are now (*and have been for some time*) replacing **God**, which is fast becoming the norm. Many don’t even realize it (*or even care*).

Mat 10:34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. **35** For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **36** And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. **37** Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

- The truth has caused untold amounts of conflict within families since it was first proclaimed. Not that we as **Christians** are supposed to forsake the necessity of providing for our families either, whether with our love or with the necessities of life.

1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

- Sadly, too often our families are placed on the sacrificial altar of excuses in order to get out of doing the good that we know to do.

Jas 4:17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

- Much of this indifference toward religious truth began in the sixties with one squeaky wheel. We need to end it with a roar from “the **Lion** of the tribe of **Judah**” (*Rev 5:5*). Were it not that **Madeline Murray O’Hare**, the catalyst for atheism, ended up where she is right now she would be proud of what she did in getting **God** kicked out of our schools and slowly but surely out of the fiber that once held this country together. The moral dominoes have been falling ever since. But there is a recipe that can change this and we all need to keep it handy in case we might want to stir the pot a little bit with the truth. It’s the recipe for salvation and like recipes for certain menu items, if you try substituting or excluding any ingredient on the list you’ll not “have tasted the goodness of the word of **God**” (*Heb 6:5*).

Recipe for Meat & Potato, Gospel Pie

1. The first ingredient is “hear”.

Joh 6:45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has **heard** and learned from the Father comes to Me--

2. Add belief.

Joh 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins.

3. Stir in some honest repentance to the mix.

Act 17:30 The times of ignorance **God** overlooked, but now **He** commands all people everywhere to repent,

4. Bring the mix to a confession.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Mat 10:33 but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in Heaven.

5. Cleanse it with baptism.

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

6. Don’t allow to cool down.

Jer 20:9 ... there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be **steadfast, immovable, always abounding** in the work of the **Lord**, knowing that in the **Lord** your labor is not in vain.

7. Allow the heat to continue curing to a complete faith.

Php 1:9 And it is my prayer that your love may **abound more and more, with knowledge** and all **discernment**,

2Pe 3:18 But **grow** in the **grace** and **knowledge** of our **Lord** and **Savior Jesus Christ**. To **Him** be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- Ultimately, **God** has the recipe for salvation that we simply aren't to force feed on anyone. It is the free gift from above and is as simple as meat and potatoes to consume. The only way to survive spiritually is to consume spiritual food. If you haven't followed this recipe for the meat and potato gospel pie, you have not "tasted that the **Lord** is good" (*1 Pet 2:3*).

Mat 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Mat 22:4 ... Come to the wedding feast.'

Spiritually speaking...

Joh 6:55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. **56** Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. **58** This is the Bread that came down from Heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this Bread will live forever."

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