

## **“SPIRITUAL COMFORT FOOD” by Don Myers**

Huntingtonpost.com list the top 25 comfort foods, including grilled cheese sandwiches, mashed potatoes, pizza, tacos, dumplings, baked ziti (what is that?), tomato soup, cheese burgers, chocolate pudding, chicken soup, pie, french onion soup, french fries, shrimp and grits, chicken pot pie, spaghetti and meat balls, and ice cream. Did any of those make your “comfort food” lists?

In my last post, I shared one of my great spiritual comfort foods—God’s promise to give wisdom to the believer who asks Him in faith. That is such a comfort because I BELIEVE (that is the condition to receive wisdom—unwavering faith in God’s promise to give it) that I will never face a situation in this life that God will fail to show me the best path or the answer to a stressful puzzle by giving me wisdom. What a comfort?! Oh, and I need wisdom every day in every way! That is a comfort both now and for the rest of my time on earth.

Let me give you another great item on my list of spiritual comfort foods—it is my comfort regarding the need I have for the necessities of life such as food, water, shelter and the like. Have you ever worried or fretted that you would be fired or run out of money before you run out of life? Has your boss ever wallpapered your office with road maps or offered to buy you a one-way ticket to somewhere else? I am serious! I can be sitting on the couch in my living room perfectly content and at peace when, suddenly, a commercial comes on about making financial investments early in life. I think the slogan goes something like, “There are two things you need to build wealth for retirement—time and money.” Being 68 years old, I sit there and began to grieve over my failures to save as much money as “they” say I need—especially when I think, “Hey, I am 68 years old—I don’t have time on my side anymore!” Of course, what I forget is that, yes, I am 68 years of age and, yet, have never (NEVER) missed a meal in my life and never failed to have a

roof over my head—thank God! Although I am not suggesting the young folks fail to save money, I do want to say to God my Father, “Thank you, my Father, for all the meals I have already eaten and all the peaceful nights I have already slept out of the rain, cold, and heat.” Investment folks are always pushing us to look ahead (you would think there's something in it for them) causing us to fail to thank God for what He has already done. My goodness! There is just so much I can (should) eat in one day and I can only occupy a certain amount of space when I sleep each night.

I am sure you've heard the story of the taxi driver who was motoring over the Golden Gate Bridge when he saw a distraught man climbing up on the bridge's railing giving every appearance he was going to jump. Jack Exum told this story. The taxi driver slammed on his brakes, jumped out of his taxi, ran toward the man, and caught him by the belt just as he attempted to jump to his death. The taxi driver pulled him back to safety and they both sit on the side of the railing and talked for awhile. The taxi driver asked, “What possessed you to attempt to kill yourself?” The man explained, “The world is coming apart. The ruler of North Korea is trying to perfect an ICBM capability of delivering a nuclear warhead on the West Coast of the U.S. The stock market is up and down. Jobs security is so uncertain. Think of all the wars going on! I am afraid a terrorist will kill me any day!! And, there is a suspicious spot on my arm—I'm afraid it is cancer!” The taxi driver and the suicidal man talked for about thirty minutes and they both jumped! Worry is contagious! What are we to do amidst life's worries regarding what will I eat, or what will I wear?

So in that regard, here is my next personal spiritual comfort food—trust God to take care of your physical needs. Did you hear? Trust God's promise to take care of you, if you put the reign of Jesus Christ first in your life! Are you one of those? OK, then don't worry about a thing regarding physical needs!

How does it work? How can we truly appropriate that comfort?

In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses spoke to the new and surviving generation of Israelites whose forefathers had left Egyptian bondage nearly forty years previously. Those forefathers were not released from Pharaoh's grip until after God had given Pharaoh, Egypt, and the world a ten-lesson Bible Correspondence Course (the plagues). After their forefathers died in the Wilderness Wanderings because of their unbelief and disobedience, Moses said to that new generation on the eve of going into the Promised Land, "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 the Lord."

Think of what Moses was talking about. He was reminding the new generation of Israelites that when the nation of Israel departed Egypt after 430 years, they had God's mighty wonders fresh in their minds. Hapi was the Egyptian god of the Nile, but he did not stop God from turning its waters into blood. Neper, the Egyptian god of grain, did not stop God from sending hail from heaven to beat down the crops or the locust from consuming them. Heket, the Egyptian goddess of frogs, did not keep those warted hoppers from entering every house when God sent them to infest Egypt. Was Bes (the Egyptian goddess of pregnant women, newborn babies, and families) asleep when Pharaoh, himself, was awoken in the night with the death of his own firstborn son against the backdrop of the screams of death reverberating over the land? And, what was that first generation of Israelites saying as they gathered up their unleavened bread in the folds of their garments and departed Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month on the Israelite calendar? "Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock. They baked the dough which they had

brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves" (Exodus 12:37f). Were they not saying, "God we believe in You—Who is able to do these ten wonders and show all the gods and goddesses of Egypt non-existent!?" Yet, exactly thirty days later, what did that forgetful Israelite nation say? "Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The sons of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger'" (Exodus 16:1-3). When Israel got out into the Wilderness, all they saw was rock and sand to eat. Then, as it were, they shook their fists at heaven and shouted, "God we just thought You could take care of us, but Pharaoh was a better provider than You could ever be!!" As Jimmy Ramsey said, "It only took the Israelites a few days to walk out of Egypt, but it took forty years to get Egypt out of them!"

Was their hunger an accident? Did God have anything to do with their hunger? Remember Moses' words nearly forty years later? "God humbled you and let you be hungry..." (Deut.8:3a). Can you imagine an Israelite standing out in that desolate Wilderness asking, "God, You let us be hungry, intentionally? Why? Why would You do that?" God's answer to that questioner would have been, "I want you to understand something." The Israelite might retort, "What do You want us to understand by intentionally allowing us to be hungry with no apparent solution in sight?" God would answer him, "I want you to understand that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." "But," the Israelite man might object, "What words

have come from Your mouth that would have any relationship to the hunger I am experiencing right now, God?” God could have answered him, “Do you remember when I sent my messenger, Moses, to Egypt promising your enslaved nation that I was going to take you to a land flowing with milk and honey? Those are the words of promise that came from My mouth.”

Instead of the entire nation shaking their fists at heaven and shouting, “Have you led us into this Wilderness to kill us with hunger?” God would have delighted in at least one person stepping up, getting everyone’s attention and saying something like this. “Listen everyone. I am as hungry as any of you, but God did not lead us into this place to die!” Many may have shouted him down asking, “How do you know that?” The believer who never spoke up could have said, “There is no way God led us here to die, because from His own mouth He promised that we are going to a land flowing with milk and honey. Hence, although I cannot imagine what God is going to do to take care of us, I believe with all my heart that we will get through this crises and not die here because of the words that have come from the mouth of the Lord who turns water to blood!” That is exactly what God would have delighted to hear—even from one man or woman. But, no such words were ever spoken. Right? Or, was there someone who did speak those words? Someone special one who believed completely in the words that came from the mouth of the Lord?

Just as the Israelites had been called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1), so the infant Jesus had been called out of Egypt (Matthew 2:15). Just as the Israelites had undergone a baptism under the cloud and in the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1, 2), so Jesus was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17). Just as Israel entered into the Wilderness for forty years, so Jesus was tempted in the Wilderness without food for forty days (Matthew 4:1ff). Just as the Israelites were placed somewhere there was no bread, so was Jesus. While the Israelites shouted, “Have you brought us here to this place where there is no bread to kill us with hunger?” Jesus stood out in His Wilderness of Temptation

having gone without bread for forty days. The devil came to Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Matthew 4:3). Could the Jesus—Who could walk on a storm tossed sea with the ease we walk down a shaded path; Who could unlock the tombs of the dead with the effortlessness we put our key into our lock and gain entrance into our homes; or, Who spoke to the winds and waves, "peace be still," and they sprouted ears to obey their Creator and Commander—have any trouble in changing a stone to bread!? Of course not!

So why did Jesus refuse to change the stone to bread? You see, Jesus had stored the word of God up in His heart so He would not sin against the Lord (Psalm 119:11). Jesus could remember back to the Israelite nation standing in an exact duplicate-circumstance as He was then standing and shaking their fist at heaven and saying, in effect, "God, we do not believe in You!" But, in Jesus' Wilderness of Temptation, He quoted the very words spoken by Moses on that occasion of the Israelites' hungry in the Wilderness. Don't you see, Jesus recognized what was happening to Him at that very moment was exactly what happened to the Israelites many years previously when they were standing in the Wilderness with nothing to eat and shouting against heaven. Yes, they were shouting against heaven out of their unbelief having forgotten the words that had come from the mouth of God that He was taking them to a land flowing with milk and honey. But, no one, and I mean no one stepped forward to say, "I know God has not brought us here where there is no bread to die, because of the words that have come from His precious mouth!!" Yet, Jesus was the special Someone who remembered the words that had come from God's mouth in His Wilderness testing by hunger for bread. Jesus answered the devil, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone,

but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”  
(Matthew 4:4; quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3).

Yet, what words had come from God’s mouth that would have made Jesus understand that the Holy Spirit did not lead Him into the Wilderness of hunger to die? You can see it, can’t you?! God did not send Jesus to die of hunger in the Wilderness. God sent Jesus to die on an old rugged cross for the sins of the world (cp. Isaiah 53). Jesus remembered God’s promise and trusted God’s eternal plan for His life.

Herein is my great comfort food regarding my physical necessities of life. I go to work. I have to be careful and wise about the use and stewardship of money. But, one thing I refuse to do is worry about my physical necessities—I refuse! Why? Am I crazy? (Don’t ask my wife!) I refuse to worry because of the words that have come from the mouth of my Jesus. What words? Jesus promised, “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But

if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:25-33).

Who, I mean, who could have imagined in a million years that God could rain bread from the sky six days a week for forty years? Nothing like that could have been conceived by man. Testifying to that fact was the question the hungry Israelites asked on the first morning they saw the white frost-like substance laying on the ground. They ask, "Manna?," meaning "What is it?" With their question they admitted in the same breathe that God had ways and means of taking care of them that had never entered their imaginations. In our lives, have you not seen time and again God delivering you, blessing you, and providing for you through ways you never imagined?!

I am comforted, my friends, greatly comforted. My business has nothing to do with worrying over bread, clothing, and water. My business is to trust the words that come from the mouth of the Lord.