**Man shall not live on bread alone** week of January 7, 2018

What evidences do **you see** of spiritual famine in Sooke; B.C., Canada?

Read Matthew 4:1-11.

John Piper says, *“Jesus triumphed over the great enemy of his soul because of the forty days he had fasted in advance of his encounter with Satan.”*

desiringgod.org – what to eat while fasting

Discuss this statement by Piper.

Why does fasting make a person strong?

What has been your experience with fasting?

Why would this be a practice that you would want to engage in?

Put in your own words, the connection between Jesus’ temptation and victory over Satan, and what he announced in Nazareth.

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.* Luke 4:18-19

Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy.

How does the context of Deuteronomy 8:1-5 enhance your understanding of what Jesus said in his reply to Satan?

What did God make his people hungry?

Does he do similar things today?

Blaise Pascal wrote: *“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”*

In the story of the Bible we learn that humans need God, like our lungs need air. We see in example after example, that life without God is woefully incomplete. The point is driven home, again and again, that even if, all of one’s physical needs are met – there remains within the human heart a great vacuum, because God is absent.

Share with one another how each of you came to be aware of the vacuum within; and how you were convinced by the Spirit that only Jesus could fill your inner emptiness.

God provided for them – he met their physical needs – in order to train them to trust in him for their spiritual needs. God wanted them to learn experientially that their deepest satisfaction was not to be found in a full belly every day, but in knowing him; in loving him; in following him… without reservation.

How has God done taught this principle to you?

I believe the truth expressed by Jesus changes how we look at people in our town when we understand our nation is in the grip of a spiritual famine.

Discuss this statement. Do you agree/disagree and why?

It would be so easy to be critical of people in our culture. But rather than condemning the emptiness of life that exists all around us, may God’s Spirit put in our hearts, great compassion for those, who because of the vacuum that exists within them, try to fill it with things, other than God; things that only bring death. Jesus would have us see people as he sees them; and respond to them as he would respond; to love them as he would love; to extend grace as he would. Jesus was the friend of sinners. This is the heart of God. This is why, we his people, his followers, also need to be known as the friend of sinners.

Pray together and ask Jesus to place such compassion within you.

Job said: *“I have treasured the words of God’s mouth more than my daily bread.”* 23:12

Jeremiah said: *“...your words were my joy and my heart’s delight.”* 15:16.

Follower of Jesus, if you don’t feed your soul every day, on the words that come from the mouth of the Lord, your soul will be anemic. You will lack discernment. Life circumstances will easily overwhelm you. You will remain self-oriented. Feeding our soul is as important as the feeding of our body. *Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

Describe your spiritual life. Do you eat every day?

Are there any changes in your priorities that you need to make?

Remember – Jesus intends that people see him in us.