

1 Tim 4:1-5 FOOD to be RECEIVED with THANKS

PRELIMS. Paul is writing to the young Timothy regarding his ministry! Having just **exulted** in praising Christ as God manifested in the flesh, he now gives some teaching regarding **food**! He actually teaches it in the **context** of **heresy**! He mentions it in regard to some who *will depart from the faith*! Even on the subject of **food**, God has some important things to say to us! As you know today we give thanks to God for another year of good harvest and many mercies!

Paul tells us that some people are *devoting themselves* to wrong doctrine - teachings which originated from *deceitful spirits and teachings of demons* [1]! Yes, people can be **devoted** to teachings about food from demons! Important to realise that they do **not** do so **deliberately**! No one **deliberately** serves the **devil**! That is the great **subtlety** of the devil - you do **not** know it is him who is leading you!

No one deliberately believes a lie and **devotes** themselves to what they think will destroy them! Those who are so blinded, believe that they are either not deceived, or what they are doing is not evil or will not bring judgment to **them**! In one way or another it is 'ok' for **them** to be doing what they are doing - they have their reason/excuse!

A person whose conscience is **seared** [2], is **not aware** of the **danger** of sin. He is **immune** to it. He is **not frightened** to sin! A person who is **afraid** to sin, **believes** in sin and its **consequences**! There is **hope** for that person - if he **repents**. It's the person who sins **unashamedly** with **impunity** that there is **little hope** for! That person must be brought to **deep conviction** of sin! He is **living dangerously**!

Far more people have their consciences seared than we think! When you/I sin with **impunity**, our consciences are seared or hardened with respect to **that sin**! You can be hardened regarding one sin (but it is usually far more). Hebrews warns us that we *may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin* [Heb 3:13]! People are deceived in thinking because a sin is commonly practiced in a culture, then that sin is not a big sin or a sin at all! God's Word is the standard!

Paul **defines** the **theology** of those he is talking about! They **forbid**

lawful things! Things like *marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving* [3]! It is amazing how man, in **his** wisdom can **reverse** God's principles!

Of course **some restrictions were** applied to food in the OT - many laws regarding certain types of meats etc. But that was in the **past!** Just as we place restrictions on **children 'under age'**, so God placed temporal restrictions for His ancient people who were *under age!* Paul says, *an heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave though he is the owner of everything.* But this is just discipline and training, for *in the fullness of time...we might receive the adoption as sons* [Gal 4:1-5]! Israel were God's children 'under age' before the full revelation from God regarding Christ was manifested!

But Paul reminds us that *everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected* [4]! It is **man** that has **corrupted** the earth! Everything in the earth **was** good until man came along! Man spoilt it! Man can devise strange rules/regulations in order to '**feel**' holy! God's Word says *the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit* [Rom 14:17]! True and real Xnity is **not a list** of 'do's and don'ts'.

It has nothing to do with **ascetism**, the doctrine of denying ourselves legitimate things! People can devote themselves to fastings and principles of not eating this or that, *abstinence from foods* and all sorts of formulas for **diets!** Bible says, just **eat less!** Mail this week **Faye Dunnaway** takes a scales to weigh each portion and stays slim!

True spirituality and true godliness is a matter of having the **peace** and **joy** of God's Spirit - **enjoying God!** Not denying His mercies and the things He has created for our **enjoyment** and **good!** Things which He has created *to be received with thanksgiving!*[3] True holiness is being **thankful** for **all** God's mercies and seeing every good and perfect thing **as a gift** from **God!** *everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man* [Ecc 3:13] + *Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God* [Ecc 5:19] A person who is

unthankful has not seen the **glory** of God. He does not know **who** God is! To be unthankful is a **great sin**. Do you know that Paul taught: *give **thanks in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God...for you* [1Thes 5:18]! Life is full of good things!

So - to have **food** all spread out on the table when a worker comes home how lovely, how wonderful! This is a **gift** from **God**! Yes, you thank your wife for preparing it, but it is a gift from God! It is specially wonderful when we consider: When man fell, he lost not only the **'right'** to **good** things, but also to **'necessary'** things! Food is a necessity! Food **sustains** us and keeps us alive. Thus the history of mankind is often a history of struggle for the **necessities** of life. Primitive man lived by hunting and fishing for food and water. He had to be constantly **alert** for opportunities to catch game, pick fruit. As God said *by the **sweat of your face** you shall **eat bread*** [Gen 3:19]

So how **thankful WE** should be - when did you/I last have **nothing** to eat? There **are** people **today** who have nothing to eat! Never! **That** is because of God's **grace** and goodness to us! We do **not** **deserve** it. There **are far more deserving people** in the world than you/I who are **without** food! At Ephesus we met people, one old wrinkly woman, bent over, sitting at the road-side with her hand out, begging - no one gave her anything - and as we passed, she **smiled!**

Now the whole world is **dependent** on suitable **weather** throughout the year in order for the world to be fed. The ground, despite being **cursed** produces food **for us!** Job said *As for the earth, **out of it comes bread*** [Job 28:5] Fruit and vegetables need rain and sunshine. *You (God) **cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart*** [Psa 104:14,15] God **causes** it!

God **loves** His creation! That is why He has also provided for the sustenance of **all** His creatures - the **animals** He has created ***He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry*** [Psa 147:9] The shortage food is **not** related to **overpopulation** but mankind's **distribution** of it and politics/war! 'The Myth of Over-Population'!

Now - if God **loves** His creation, animals who are **not** made in **His image** - how much **more** does He love those who are made in His image? It is because of **God's love** that we **enjoy** so much blessing - not only of the necessities of life, but also of the **luxuries!**

Now He **expects a response!** The response of **faith!** Ie, the belief that all the good we have, is from Him - because He **appointed it** from a past eternity. He has of course, also appointed the **means** through which we obtain it, viz, seedtime and harvest, sun and rain, manpower to pick/dig/fish/shoot/gather/cook, etc

Three ways faith reveals itself: by **deliberate thankfulness!** Every time we **enjoy** something, our hearts **ought to exude thankfulness to God** from whom every good gift comes *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father* [Jam 1:17] Unless we see **God** behind each blessing we are not truly thankful! God **acknowledges** our thankfulness for **small mercies**. Nothing is too small to give thanks for *nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving* [3,4] Paul *whatever you do in word or deed ...giving thanks to God the Father* [Col 3:17] Thankfulness is **not** simply a good feeling that we will not go hungry! Thankfulness is **recognising GOD's love** to you in **appointing** good things for **you specifically**, in **past eternity** and **arranging** for it to happen in **time!**

2nd way faith reveals itself is: by praying and speaking God's Word as we eat and drink! *it is MADE HOLY by the Word of God and prayer* [5c] Our eating/drinking is made holy! Do you give thanks/pray/read at meal times - family worship at meal times?

3rd way faith reveals itself is by **practising kindness!** Having received mercy, we in turn show mercy! Parable of man who **owed** 10,000 talents and was shown **mercy** - but did **not** show mercy in return to his debtors. Jesus said *and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?* [Mat 18:33] If you/I have enough and to spare, we **must** give to those who do not! How can we say God's love is in us, if we are not kind to the poor? *if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?* [1J3:17]