

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

There is a story about a young man who wanted to go to America many years ago. He worked hard and saved every cent he could for the passage on the ship from London to New York. When he finally had enough to buy his fare, he had almost nothing left, but he decided to go anyway and try to make his way in the new world. Since he was almost broke, he bought several boxes of cracker biscuits and packed those in his bag and boarded the ship for his voyage to New York.

Each day he would walk the decks and look longingly into the dining room as he watched the other passengers enjoying their meals, and then he would go below to his room and eat a few crackers and drink plenty of water. On the last day, as the ship was sailing past the Statue of Liberty, he was standing at the rail when one of the members of the crew addressed him and asked him why he had not eaten his meals in the dining room with the other passengers. The poor boy grew embarrassed and explained that he spent all his money for his fare and had nothing left over to buy food. The crew member looked astonished and said, "But all the meals were included in your fare."

This young man was starving for food he was entitled to receive and he had done without through ignorance. He did not need to be ignorant. Had he read the fine print on his ticket, he would have learned that the meals were included in his fare.

How many people today are doing without that which they could have due to their own ignorance. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Yet how many do without the gracious gift that God has so willingly offered us, due to ignorance? As Isaiah tells us, "To everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come and buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Listen, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

We feel sorry for the young man who did without food on his voyage from England to America but his loss cannot be compared to those who do without the bread of life because they are ignorant of the covenants of promise, the sure mercies of David."

Peter speaks of those who are "willingly ignorant." They don't know that they are ignorant, even as the young man did not know he was entitled to three good meals a day until it was too late. He learned his lesson the hard way that it pays to read the ticket and learn the benefits one is entitled to receive.

Do those who are missing out on God's gracious offer of everlasting life realize that they, too, could be included in the covenants of promise if only they would read the book that God has provided for us, the words which are able to make us wise unto salvation?

No. They, like the young man, do not realize that it is their ignorance, their refusal to read the rules that is standing between them and the spiritual nourishment that they so sorely need.

Could we be like the young man? When Nathan told David a story about a certain man, David was quick to condemn him. Nathan then had to inform David of the fact that, "You are the man."

Are we doing without the blessings that God is willing to bestow upon us due to our lack of faith? We have been promised that God is willing to "open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." If we are not receiving God's blessing, is it His fault? Was it the fault of the steamship company that the young man did without food? It was prepared, there was enough for him to have eaten his fill, yet he went hungry. God is willing to bless us, even in this life, a hundredfold, says Jesus, but it requires that we seek first His kingdom. Hosea tells us that "The Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Yet David observed that "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

May we have the faith to take God at His word and accept with thanksgiving His blessings which He is willing to pour out upon us. Let us however not be deceived by worldly thinking, that the blessings will be valued in worldly goods or prestige. The greatest blessings we shall receive will be faith, hope, increasing love for the Lord, humility, and peace and purpose for God. For some this may involve a life of natural hardship or suffering - but in this, if it is God ordained - we will still receive God's richest blessings.

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