

Christian “Crumb Snatchers”: Eat From the Whole Loaf

by Steve Barwick

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

When one of my sisters was a young mom, she used to refer to her younger children as “crumb snatchers.” It always cracked me up.

“Look at that little crumb-snatcher,” she’d say, pointing toward one of her little ones sitting in a high chair with its tray firmly in place. “He’s got a whole graham cracker sitting there in front of him on the tray. But he won’t touch it. Instead, he’ll sit there for an hour with his stubby little fingers clumsily trying to snatch up those tiny little crumbs on the tray that are scattered around the graham cracker. He’s mesmerized by the crumbs. He’d starve himself to death over those little crumbs when instead he could just pick up the entire cracker and eat to his heart’s content.”

Looking back, I can’t help but think of that as the perfect analogy for all-too-many Christians I see online each day, wasting hours and hours of their time in social media “Bible study” forums as they dig through the myriad thousands upon thousands of posted comments and answers searching, ostensibly, for little gems of truth.

They think they’re partaking of God’s Word by spending so much time on those groups and forums. But if they’ve allowed their participation on those social media groups to replace their daily in-depth Bible studies, they’re actually *starving themselves*, spiritually speaking.

Like the little child snatching at crumbs when they have a whole cracker in front of them, all these online Christians are getting for their effort are crumbs, scraps and fragments of truth. They could partake of the *whole loaf* of the Bread of Life, which is to say, the Bible. But they’re so mesmerized with (and addicted to) the cacophony of often dramatic and sensationalistic posts and endless comments bearing the thoughts and opinions of hundreds of different Christians at one time, that they don’t even realize they’ve replaced serious Bible study with convoluted social media “fellowship.”

Which is precisely why, in my opinion, they have to spend *multiple hours* a day on these social media “Bible study” groups in the first place. After all, spiritually speaking, it takes hours and hours of time to filter through enough tiny scraps, crumbs and fragments of truth to feel full. Instead, they could absolutely *sate* themselves with God’s Word of truth in about an hour a day or less if they’d just tune into their Father’s Word with discipline in lieu of participating in all of that social media chatter and clamor.

Understanding the Scraps and Fragments

Biblically speaking, the difference between taking your spiritual sustenance from social media “Bible study” groups and taking your spiritual sustenance directly from God’s Word, is the same

as eating from the baskets of scraps left over for the multitudes after Christ multiplied the bread and fish in the wilderness v/s eating from the whole loaf, which is the Word of God itself.

Please allow me to show you, straight from the Scriptures, why I say this. With a Word of Wisdom from our heavenly Father, let's start this study in Luke chapter 9, where Christ is teaching the multitudes:

Luk 9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

Luk 9:8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

Herod had heard about the miracles Christ was performing. But Herod was perplexed by the varying opinions among the religious leaders regarding who this miracle-working individual was. Some said Jesus was John the Baptist having been raised from the dead. Others said Jesus was Elijah the prophet, returning to pave the way for the Messiah. Still others claimed Jesus was one of the Old Testament prophets such as Enoch or Jeremiah returning to fulfill Scripture.

This wide variety of opinion and argumentation among religious leaders as to the identity of Jesus added to the confusion. Yet Jesus had walked among these people doing the specific miracles spelled in the Old Testament as being signs of the Messiah. He healed the sick, including the blind, the deaf and the dumb (Isaiah 35:5-6). He made the lame to walk (Isaiah 35:5-6). He raised the dead. Yet in spite of the fact that these miracles were clear signs of the Messiah's arrival, the people were perplexed about who Jesus was, and the hodge-podge of opinion and speculation perplexed Herod as well.

Everyone had their own personal opinions, ideas and misgivings. And in spite of the Lord's miracles being clear signs that He was the promised Messiah of God, the cacophony of religious feelings and opinions simply added to the confusion surrounding His identity, just as the cacophony of religious feelings and opinions on social media groups today engender confusion about the Word of God.

Luk 9:9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Herod wanted to see Christ. Or more specifically, he wanted to see some of the miracles he'd heard about. Herod was a fleshly man. But he had a sincere curiosity for religious doctrine. That's why he had so frequently called for John the Baptist and spoke with him about religious matters before eventually having John beheaded over a disagreement. Unfortunately for Herod, his religious curiosity was never mixed with faith. He just flitted from one religious doctrine and opinion to the next, hearing them all with equal curiosity. And of course, like today, there were plenty of religious opinions, doctrines, conjectures and arguments to partake of.

Luk 9:10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

Christ had sent the apostles out on a preaching mission. And when the apostles were finished, they returned to meet with Christ in a deserted place so they could rest and talk about everything that had happened.

Luk 9:11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

The people of the surrounding areas found out where Christ and His disciples were, and followed after Him. And He graciously received them, teaching them about the kingdom of God, and healing those in need, once again, fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures regarding the Messiah's first advent.

Luk 9:12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

They were way out in the middle of nowhere. Not a Taco Bell in sight. So the disciples implored Christ to send the multitudes home so they could get something to eat and rest before it got too dark to travel.

Luk 9:13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

The job of Christ's faithful servants is to feed the people the spiritual food they need to make the journey home to the heavenly Father. The disciples were *with* the Bread of Life, which is to say, the Life-Giving Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. But they were thinking strictly in the flesh rather than in the Spirit of God. They'd seen His miracles. Yet they were so focused on having to spend their last few shekels on feeding such an impossibly large multitude of people that they didn't grasp the idea that Christ Himself – representing the Bread of Life, the Word of God -- could feed them all.

Luk 9:14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

Luk 9:15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

The kingdom of God is all about *order* and *discipline*. This was no rock concert. If you want to feed the hungry, which is to say, if you want to feed God's Word to His wayward children and others who seek it, then first and foremost you need order and discipline – *BEFORE* you start feeding them. You cannot teach in an atmosphere where everybody is running around doing their own thing, or where everyone's shouting at once to be heard, as you find on most social media "Bible study" groups.

Luk 9:16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

Once order and discipline were established, Christ went to work. He miraculously multiplied the bread and the fish, fulfilling the prophesy “The meek shall eat and be satisfied (i.e., satiated): they shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your hearts shall live forever” (Psalm 22:6).

Luk 9:17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

Here’s what we came for. Twelve baskets of *fragments* were taken up from the five loaves of bread and two fishes that Christ had blessed and multiplied. Keep in mind the subject matter from the start has been people’s *varying religious opinions* about who Christ was. Fragments of bread, then, *symbolize the religious opinions of the multitudes of people regarding the Lord and His Word*.

Luk 9:18 And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

We’re back to the very same subject matter we started with in verses seven and eight above, i.e., who did the multitudes think Jesus was? What were the varying opinions?

In addition to healing the sick, making the blind to see, making the lame to walk, raising the dead and casting out demons, Jesus had now fed the hungry multitudes in the wilderness. Again, these were all Old Testament signs of the coming of the Messiah of God – the Christ. They were signs of the kingdom of God having arrived (Luke 11:20).

Luk 9:19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

The apostles reiterated to Christ the great diversity of opinion about who the people believed Him to be. Some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist, raised from the dead. Some thought He was the return of Elijah the prophet. Others thought He was Enoch or one of the other prophets of old having been raised from the dead or perhaps returned to this earth in a transfigured or angelic body.

These diverse (and thoroughly *incorrect*) opinions are representative of the crumbs and fragments of bread taken up from among the people after Christ had blessed the five loaves and two fishes, and had multiplied them in order to feed the people.

The point is that even as Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah – the Christ – the people couldn’t grasp who He was. And that’s because they were Biblically illiterate. In their personal religious lives, they had not been eating directly from the *whole loaf*, which is to say, the Bread of Life which is the Word of God. They had been eating from the

fragments – the doctrinal opinions, arguments and teachings of mere men. And that always leads to one thing, and one thing only – *confusion*.

Luk 9:20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

Peter had eaten from the whole loaf. He was not a crumb snatcher – a fragment eater. He partook of his spiritual food *straight from the source*, which is to say, straight from the Living Word of God. Therefore, he “got it.” He understood from the Word of God – the Scriptures of old -- that Jesus was the Messiah of God, the very Christ Himself.

Luk 9:21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

It was not yet time for Jesus to be revealed as the Christ. In order to fulfill the Scripture in God’s great plan to save His children, He would have to give His life for the sins of the world. And if the people had believed He was the Messiah, they would have never allowed Him to be crucified because they didn’t understand God’s great plan of salvation.

Again, they were Biblically illiterate. Much like Christians of today, they were *very* religious people but they didn’t know or even remotely understand God’s Word. Their understanding came from the diverse and often incorrect or incomplete doctrines and opinions and arguments of men and not from the whole loaf, which is to say, from the Bread of Life itself, which is the Word of God, which is the source of all true knowledge and wisdom.

Leaven of the Pharisees

Let’s take a quick look at an incident that happened shortly after Christ had multiplied the bread and fish in the wilderness, and see what more we can learn on the subject of where to get your spiritual sustenance from. Turn with me to Mark chapter eight:

Mar 8:13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

In the preceding passages, Christ had just been cornered by the Pharisees, who demanded of Him a sign from heaven. “Put on a miracle show for us,” they basically implored. But He chastised them for running around looking for signs. After all, they had the Sign of all signs standing in their presence, and they refused to recognize or acknowledge Him even though He was fulfilling all of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah’s first advent.

Mar 8:14 Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

In all of the hustle-bustle of dealing with the multitudes earlier, and preaching throughout the land afterwards, the disciples had forgotten to bring enough bread for the remainder of their journey with Christ.

Mar 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Here, directly after having been confronted by the Pharisees, Christ is warning His disciples to beware of the leaven – meaning the foundational religious doctrines and opinions -- of the Pharisees and of Herod. In other words, He’s saying the religious and political power structure are almost always wrong when it comes to spiritual understanding.

He expects His disciples to understand what He’s saying. But as usual, they were thinking in the flesh and not the Spirit. Again, keep in mind that the scraps and fragments of bread and fish in the incident with the multitudes were symbolic of the diverse religious opinions of mere man.

Mar 8:16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

Mar 8:17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

The disciples should have understood immediately that He wasn’t talking about physical bread, but instead, *spiritual doctrine*. Again, Christ had just been confronted by the Pharisees. Therefore his words regarding the “leaven” of the Pharisees should not have been difficult for the disciples to grasp.

So Christ asked them, basically, if their minds had been hardened to the spiritual nature of His question. He was trying to get them to understand that the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod was composed of *the mixed opinions, arguments and advice of mere men being foisted upon the multitudes as religious doctrine*.

For example, the Pharisees studied the oral traditions of the elders, meaning the vast compilation of often conflicting doctrinal opinions and arguments that had been passed down through the generations from rabbi to rabbi, and that would later become the written Talmud.

Herod was also thoroughly acquainted with the religious traditions of Judaism. He was a seeker of truth, but in the sense of a moth being drawn to a flame. He was spiritually unstable, constantly listening to the religious opinions of others rather than studying the Word of God for himself.

Any doctrine that came from these two corners of the religious and political power structure of the day was bound to be corrupt, being composed of fragments of truth mixed with misguided opinion and religious arguments and tradition, then wrapped up in a pretty bow and called...*religion*.

Mar 8:18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

Here, Christ alludes to both Jeremiah 5:21 and Isaiah 6:9-10, in which God calls the multitudes of Israel “foolish people” and chides them for having eyes and ears, yet being so wrapped up in the flesh that they were spiritually deaf and blind to His Word.

Christ is likewise chastising His disciples for being so spiritually dull-minded. He’s basically saying, “Are you part of the great multitudes of God’s spiritually deaf and blind children, or are you *My* disciples?”

Next, He draws their attention back to the fragments that symbolically represented the mixed doctrinal opinions of mere man.

Mar 8:19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

Mar 8:20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

Mar 8:21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Rom 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

Rom 15:6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the account of this incident found in Matthew 16:11-12, Christ is a little more specific. He says, “*How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?*”

Then the Scripture concludes, “*Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*”

In other words, the disciples finally “got it.” They finally understood that the leaven which makes bread rise is, spiritually speaking, symbolic of the false religious doctrine of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herod. The fragments of the bread, therefore, are representative of people’s fragmented understandings of those false and often conflicting religious doctrines.

Christ was warning His disciples not to take their teachings from anything based on the leaven of false religion which leads to the fragmented religious traditions and opinions of mere men.

The multitudes of people in Israel didn’t realize Jesus was the Messiah. And the religious and political authorities of the day didn’t *want* to believe He was the Messiah because it would have undermined their own authority over the people.

Likewise, they had no idea the Messiah had to die for the sins of all mankind and return to heaven. The people thought the Messiah’s

first advent was the *only* advent, and that when the Messiah came, He would instantly restore Israel to its glory of old.

Why did they believe this? Because everything they'd ever been taught was based on the leaven (false doctrine) of their religious and political leaders, and on the *fragmented understanding* of those false doctrines that were passed down from generation to generation. Just like today, in Christianity.

The multitudes would have been much better off if they'd have studied their Father's Word for themselves instead of flitting from this good rabbi to that good rabbi until their understanding of God's Word was so convoluted they couldn't see or hear the actual Truth of God's Word – even if it was standing right in front of them, in human form, healing the sick, opening the ears of the deaf, opening the eyes of the blind and feeding the multitudes.

Likewise, today, Christians would be much better off with their noses in God's Word, rather than flitting from preacher to preacher, or worse yet, from online social media "Bible study" group to group, where thousands of often unlearned and thoroughly undisciplined voices *compete for attention with each other all at once*. Can you *truly* learn God's Word in such an atmosphere?

Spending hours of time each day on social media "Bible study" groups to pick up crumbs and fragments of doctrine from zealous but often misguided Christians is no different than what Christ describes in the verses above.

Spiritual Gems?

I had a good Christian friend once who spent the majority of his free time each day on social media "Bible study" groups. When I asked him why he spent so much time sifting through those myriads of posts and comments instead of taking the bulk of his teachings directly from the Father's Word, he said, "Sometimes you can pick up some real spiritual gems from those groups."

Well, yes you can. *Sometimes*. But you can pick up some real spiritual gems quite literally *every time* you open up your Father's Word and put your face into it. It's virtually guaranteed. No matter where you turn in the Book of life, the pages are riddled with astonishing gems of truth like deep veins of gold running through a productive gold mine.

My response to my friend was this, "What about all of the gems of truth you're *missing* from your Father's Word each day while you're spending hours wading through those social media "Bible study" groups and sifting through thousands and thousands of comments in search of that one or two little gems that might be there?"

The *whole loaf* of God's Word is a far better place to get your daily spiritual sustenance than the crumbs and fragments of man's opinions, ideas, feelings and misunderstandings. The bottom line is this:

If you're spending hours and hours each day on social media "Bible study" groups as an easy *substitute* for putting your face into your Father's Word each day and studying it with discipline, you're going to end up with a very fragmented and convoluted understanding of your Father's Word of truth. And thus you'll *never* experience the comfort and confidence of walking in His daily counsel.

Christians love taking the softer, easier way out. The daily discipline required to actually study Father's Word is just too much for many of them. And the social media "Bible study" groups give them an easy alternative. A substitute for actually studying God's Word. And in such a case, they're taking their doctrine from what amounts to little more than an "instead of God's Word." Think about it.

Bread of Faces v/s Facebook

In the Old Testament, one of the implements just outside the Holy of Holies was called the "table of shewbread." In the Tabernacle, the table of shewbread was always placed directly in front of the Holy of Holies, and directly across from the lamp stand containing the seven golden lamps. Exodus 25:30 tells us that the showbread was to be set before the Lord "always."

Why would it be set before the Lord "always"? Because of what it's *symbolic* of.

In the original Hebrew, this term shewbread means "bread of faces." And spiritually speaking, it represents God's faithful servants who stand before Him daily with their faces in the Bread of Life (i.e., Word of God). They're not found eating from the crumbs and fragments of the multitudes. They take their spiritual sustenance *directly* from the whole loaf – the Bible. They're in His very *presence* when they're in His Word.

In other words, your choices are this: Put your face in the Book of Life, or put your face in "Facebook" and other social media forums. But remember that the latter is a mere modern-day *substitute* for the other. One provides the pure truth of God's Word – the whole loaf, so to speak. The other provides the crumbs and fragments from that loaf, symbolic of the opinions and fragmented understanding of the masses and multitudes. Do you get it?

Fellowship With Whom?

So *why* do Christians spend so much of their time on Facebook and other social media "Bible study" forums when instead they could be studying God's Word with discipline and learning straight from the source of all truth?

When I ask my fellow Christians this question, they inevitably answer "It's for the fellowship with like-minded Christians."

Listen, I understand that. I too enjoy being around like-minded Christians, even if it has to be online. I know it's often difficult to find like-minded Christians in your local neighborhood. But don't let online "fellowship" draw you away from your personal and disciplined study of God's Word. As Christian overcomers, we're supposed to possess "the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians

2:16). And the *only* way to do so is to put your face in the Book of Life, partaking of it on a regular daily basis (“Give us this day our daily bread”). The Word of God imparts the mind of Christ to you. A Facebook group (or other social media group) simply cannot. It is a weak substitute for the whole loaf, which is the Word of God.

That’s why I absolutely refuse to sacrifice daily fellowship with my heavenly Father (through disciplined daily study of His Word) for “fellowship with like-minded Christians.” Those Christians can’t save me. Only God’s Word of truth can...and *will* save me...but only *if* I stick with it and don’t get drawn away to *substitutes* for daily study.

And that’s what sincere Christians need to grasp. They need to study God’s Word daily, for themselves, with discipline. They need to get their faces back into the Book of Life and start eating of the Bread of Life, and quit spending so much precious time on those social media sites with which they’ve become so mesmerized with scraps and fragments of truth under the guise of “having fellowship.” I’m not saying to abandon such social media “Bible study” groups entirely. I’m just saying never let them become a daily substitute for your walk with your heavenly Father through disciplined study of His Word. Never.

There’s an old saying that one worships with one’s *attention*. In other words, where you put the bulk of your attention is a good indicator of what you *really* worship. Some people put the bulk of their attention on the Word of God – that deep, never ending gold mine with thick rich veins of gold (i.e., pure unadulterated truth) running through it from one end to the other. But all too many Christians today put the bulk of their attention on online “Bible study” forums, which I’d liken to glittering fields of fool’s gold. They’re mesmerized by the sparkles and specks of man’s opinions and arguments.

The only way to learn the pure unvarnished truth of God’s Word is to put your face in the Word and study it with discipline.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Look, you don’t have to be a loner to be a Christian. And visiting social media “Bible study” groups from time-to-time is not a sin. Again, I do it myself, from time to time. But I never allow it to become the focal point of my daily Bible study time. I never allow it to become a substitute for putting my face in the Book each day, with discipline, and actually studying my Father’s Word.

You have to be honest with yourself. If you’re *constantly* snatching crumbs on Facebook “Bible study” groups or other online social media forums instead of satiating yourself each day from the whole loaf – then you’re lying to yourself about who and what you really worship. Those who love God love His Word far more than they love the fragmented and conflicting opinions of the multitudes.

Fellowship with your heavenly Father can *only* be gained through disciplined study of His Word. And *that* kind of fellowship is far more spiritually satisfying and rewarding than “fellowship with like-minded Christians.” At least, it *should* be, if you’re a true Christian.

When I've made this argument to individual Christians, they often respond to me with "Doesn't the Bible say 'Where two or more are gathered in My Name, there am I in the midst'?" And I reply, "Yes, it does." But again, be honest with yourself. Do you really see, hear or feel the presence of the Lord in those online social media "Bible study" groups?

Again, I visit those online social media groups from time-to-time. And when I do, I watch carefully to see what kind of information "like minded Christians" are posting. And frankly, nine times out of ten, it's little more than a hornet's nest of conflicting opinions consisting of fragments of truth mixed with doctrinal error and blended with the chatter and clamor of people's "feelings."

And that's usually interspersed with a cacophony of ongoing arguments...rumor-mongering...back-biting... infighting...gossip and innuendo...frivolous accusations...name-calling...personal attacks and other forms of discord...serious doctrinal discrepancies...misunderstandings...and finally the constant airing of one's personal problems and dirty laundry in public (usually disguised as "prayer requests"), which in reality is little more than an immature cry for attention from people who have not yet grown up emotionally because they really don't study their Father's Word and have never learned to lean on Him when problems strike.

That's really the crux of most of those online social media "Bible study" groups. And that is *not* from our Lord and Savior. It's *not* an indication of His presence. In fact, these things are indications of the *lack* of His presence. And that's because He won't hang around too long where there's no *disciplined instruction*, but instead, clamor and uproar and discord and fragmented opinion.

Psa 119:15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

Psa 119:16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

If most of these online social media "Bible study" forums were churches, they'd be absolute mad houses. Lunatic bins.

When I visit some of those online social media forums, it's clearly not a "need for fellowship with like-minded Christians" that I see as the driving force behind them. Instead, it's a need

for incessant drama, argumentation and rank sensationalism which can only lead to spiritual confusion.

Indeed, most of the online social media "Bible study" groups I've visited routinely violate the basic Biblical precepts for both "study" and "fellowship" which include things like civility ...respect...orderly conduct...unity instead of division...and one person speaking at a time instead of dozens of voices clamoring for attention at once.

If you're a member of a social media "Bible study" group that's nothing more than a hodge-podge of argumentation, personal opinion, division and other nonsense, perhaps you need to consider spending more time alone with your heavenly Father, *in His Word*, and get to know *Him* better. It's a much more richly rewarding experience.

And if you instead find that you just need the drama and sensationalism...the constant barrage of conflicting opinion...the daily airing of dirty laundry...the shrieking cries for attention disguised as “prayer requests...

(“Oh my God, people, please pray for me!!!! Yesterday my next door neighbor came by to borrow a cup of sugar, and she promised she’d return it today. And she didn’t!!! Can you believe that??? After all I’ve done for her. I needed that sugar to bake a cake today for my daughter’s birthday party tonight. And I told her I’d need it back first thing this morning. Yet she won’t even answer her phone when I call. I can barely contain myself. I need your prayers right away. Please!!!”)

...then you can always return to those social media “Bible study” sites and eat from the sensationalistic crumbs and emotional fragments to your heart’s desire.

You can *always* be a Christian crumb-snatcher, if you prefer, instead of eating from the whole loaf each day and being in the presence of your heavenly Father as one of His faithful “bread of faces.” Being a crumb-snatcher won’t get you anywhere with your heavenly Father. But if it makes you feel good...do it...*right?*

Technology is good and useful for the dissemination of God’s Word. And as Christians, we’re definitely supposed to disseminate His Word to others. But like most things in this life, it can be a two-edged sword. God’s Word can easily get drowned out in the cacophony of opinions, feelings, arguments, misunderstandings, misguided notions and worse.

Fellowship is fine. Nothing wrong with it at all, either online or offline. It’s important, *to a degree*. But where are you spending the vast majority of your spiritual time? And could you be learning a *lot* more if you spent a little more of that time in your Father’s Word? Those are questions only you can answer. But answer them you should.

The Online “Talmud”

Christ told the Pharisees that their oral religious traditions ended up drowning out the truth of God’s Word. In fact, He said their religious traditions and opinions “made void” (i.e., empty, or of *no impact*) the Word of God because they became quick-and-easy *substitutes* for God’s Word in the minds of the people.

I submit that if Christ were here today, He’d tell Christians the same thing about many if not most of these social media “Bible study” groups.

In fact, if you think about it, the written Talmud of today is composed largely of the written back-and-forth *opinions* and *arguments* of the Jewish religious leaders going back hundreds and even thousands of years.

Yes, the bulk of the Talmud is composed of tedious arguments between Jewish religious authorities over Old Testament law. In the Talmud you’ll find that rabbi so-and-so says such-

and-so about a certain aspect of the law, but rabbi such-and-so disagrees with him and says so-and-so. And a third rabbi might step in and try to reconcile the differences between the first two rabbis by blending together their opinions into irrational and confusing doctrine. And the reader is left in a spiritual limbo between conflicting opinions and traditions.

And that's what I dare say most of those online social media "Bible study" groups have become, as well. Christian Talmuds. Just a mumbo-jumbo hodge-podge of opinions, thoughts, feelings, arguments, and more, *substituting themselves* for God's Word and the personal diligence and discipline it takes to dig out the hidden gems to be found within it.

In the words of Dr. E.W. Bullinger, one of the top Christian scholars of his day, who wrote the phenomenally informative marginal notes in the *Companion Bible*:

"The Word of God may, in one respect, be compared to the earth. All things necessary to life and sustenance may be obtained by scratching the surface of the earth: but there are treasures of beauty and wealth to be obtained by digging deeper into it.

So it is with the Bible. All things necessary to life and godliness lie upon its surface for the humblest saint; but, beneath that surface are great spoils which are found *only* by those who seek after them as for 'hid treasure'."

-- Dr. E.W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible*

So put forth the effort it takes to study your Father's Word in detail. You'll never find the deeper spiritual truths it contains on Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter or other social media sites, beloved. They're *only* in God's Word. And they're revealed to you by the Holy Spirit *as you study the Word with discipline*.

If you constantly and for hours each day have to go to Facebook to find someone to spoon feed you the truths you're supposed to be mining from the Scriptures for yourself, I can almost guarantee you that you're not going to make it as a Christian overcomer by the time Christ's Second Advent gets here.

When your spiritual sustenance is obtained largely from the crumbs and fragments of the multitudes, you just won't have the spiritual strength it takes to make it all of the way to the end. You're being spiritually malnourished, whether you know it or not.

When Satan arrives, who's going to be there to spoon feed you the truth? At that time, those faithful Christians who constitute the "showbread" -- which is to say, those who have kept their faces in the "whole loaf" of the Bread of Life instead of eating from the crumbs and fragments in online "Bible study" forums like Facebook -- will have a mission to accomplish on God's behalf. And frankly, they'll be too busy working to fulfill that mission to stop and spoon feed full-grown Christians who never got past the crumbs and fragments stage.

I believe the story of the five foolish virgins makes that abundantly clear. Let's take a quick look as we close out this study...

The 5 Foolish Virgins

As it's written of the five foolish virgins in the great book of Matthew:

Mat 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

They all had lamps, meaning they all had eyes to see God's Word. And they were all still spiritual virgins, meaning they had not yet fallen off to Satan's great deception. They had not spiritually wed the false Christ.

Mat 25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The Lord considered *half* of these virgins to be wise, and half foolish. Since a virgin is one who has not been spiritually seduced by Satan, this means He's speaking of half the elect being foolish, beloved. The Greek word translated "foolish" here is *moros* (i.e., Strong's G-3474) meaning "dull or stupid." It also means "blockhead." And it's the word from which we derive our English word *moron*.

That's pretty harsh language. But it's our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is delivering this parable to His disciples, so we should pay heed to what He thinks of these five foolish virgins, and try to ascertain *why* He's so unimpressed with them. What is it about them that makes the "foolish"?

Mat 25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

The oil being spoken of here is olive oil. Pure, beaten olive oil is used as *fuel* to keep the lamps burning. It's spiritually symbolic of the pure truth of God's Word which is needed to keep the lamp of your mind and your spirit burning so you can successfully navigate your way through the darkness of Satanic deception that engulfs this earth in the final days of this flesh earth age.

Olive oil is made through a very disciplined and tedious process called pressing. This process is representative of the disciplined, in-depth study of God's Word. Just as you have to press the olive in order to extract the pure golden oil (symbolic of truth) from it, so too you have to "press" the Word of God – which is to say, dig deep into it and mine it – in order to extract the precious oil, which is representative of the deeper truths contained within. In other words, it takes concerted *effort* on your part. Disciplined daily effort. You can't get this "oil" from a social media "Bible study" group, no matter how good it might be.

Each of these ten virgins had been granted eyes to see by our heavenly Father. But five of them never exercised those eyes in God's Word, with discipline. In my opinion, they spend most of their time with their eyes in social media "Bible study" groups eating from the fragments and crumbs, instead of in the Book of Life digging out its splendorous hidden truths – pressing it for its vast hidden reservoirs of pure "olive oil."

Mat 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

The wise virgins knew the difference between God's Word of truth, and the *substitute* for God's Word of truth. They chiefly kept their faces in the Book of Life instead of Facebook or other social media venues composed of fragmented opinions and arguments. They pressed the oil (i.e., rich truth) from the Word of God, and allowed it to filter into their minds. With diligence and discipline they mined the rich veins of truth hidden within the Word. They tapped into the vast reservoirs of truth, like a deep oil well that's tapped into a hidden gusher.

Mat 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

All ten virgins took their spiritual rest – some in the Lord's Word, some in other venues and playgrounds *instead* of His Word. Yes, I'm talking about those social media "Bible study" sites. If you're spending more time on them than you are in your Father's Word, you're going to have problems understanding His Word when it comes time to head out for the kingdom wedding. It's that simple.

Mat 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

The midnight hour is the hour of the kingdom wedding. Christ's bride will now go forth to meet her Bridegroom, the Lord, at the wedding festival.

Mat 25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

The ten virgins began getting themselves ready to take the journey to the kingdom wedding. They fixed their eyes on the prize. They were heading out to receive their reward from the Lord for their faithfulness – participation in that spiritual marriage that will make them "one" with the Lord forever. All ten of them remained believers at the midnight hour. In other words, if you really think about it, at this point they'd basically made it through the tribulation of the antichrist.

Mat 25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

Again, the oil is the pure truth of God's Word. The foolish virgins were a bit short. They didn't have enough truth in their minds to make the journey all of the way to the kingdom wedding. They were too used to being spoon fed little snippets and crumbs and fragments of truth on Facebook and Snapchat and YouTube and other social media venues that are poor substitutes for God's precious Word of truth. They ate from the crumbs and fragments instead of the whole loaf. They were Christian crumb-snatchers.

Mat 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

Again, this is a parable. But Christ is teaching it. And its meaning is deep. There comes a time when the spoon feeding must end. You either do what it takes to learn God's Word with

discipline and determination so you can make it all of the way to the kingdom wedding at the end of this flesh earth age, or you *don't*. It's that simple.

The five wise virgins send the five foolish virgins back to Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and other social media venues where God's Word, and the plethora of opinions and arguments about God's Word, are being bandied about by the multitudes. Little crumbs and fragments. Here you see that the wise virgins refused to be distracted from the kingdom wedding by the blockheads (Christ's terminology, not mine) who preferred eating from the crumbs and fragments each day to eating from the whole loaf.

Mat 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

The word "ready" in the above verse is translated from the Greek word *hetoimos* (i.e., Strong's G-2092) which means, basically, "fit through adjustment."

Just as every bride spends days and even weeks before the wedding making adjustments to her wedding gown so it's perfect, so God's faithful servants study His Word with discipline, and as they learn more and more, they make the proper adjustments in their lives to be fully ready for the kingdom wedding.

By staying within God's Word of truth in an orderly and disciplined manner, the wise virgins had been able to adjust themselves over time so that they were fit to be wed to the Lord on the day of His second advent. Because they spent the bulk of their study time in His Word rather than on social media "Bible study" sites, they were better suited to weed out the garbage of false religion and religious tradition and to embrace the full truth of God's Word instead. And that's what made them "ready" (i.e., fit through adjustment) to go into the wedding "with Him."

The five foolish virgins were not "ready" to go into the wedding "with Him." They were *not* fit through adjustment because instead of studying God's Word with discipline each day they largely depended upon the crumbs and fragments of truth from others that just don't give you the rich spiritual sustenance, strength and knowledge to make it all of the way through to the end in a manner suited to be wed to the Bridegroom, which is Christ Jesus.

The kingdom wedding then begins. God's faithful servants who had kept their nose in the Book of Life instead wasting hours and hours each day in Facebook and other social media sites receive their reward. They become "one" with the Lord, in spiritual marriage. And they will rule and reign with Him forever.

Mat 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

Oh, look. It appears that at the last minute the five foolish virgins managed to get just enough oil (truth/direction) from their online social media "Bible study" sites to make it all of the way to the door of the kingdom wedding. But what does the Lord tell them?

Mat 25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Ouch. He never saw their faces in the Book. Instead, their faces were in Facebook. They had preferred the daily barrage of fragments and crumbs to the whole loaf, which is to say, to the precious Word of God itself.

You don't believe it? The word "know" in the verse above is translated from the Greek word *eido* (i.e., Strong's G-1492), and it means, properly, "to see." Yes, He told them "I saw you not," and refused them entry into the kingdom wedding.

As we studied earlier, when you're a part of the table of shewbread, you're operating in His direct presence. The showbread is to be set before the Lord "always." (Exodus 25:30). It's in His direct line of sight, between the Holy of Holies and the seven-lamped candle stick. And the only way to achieve that position in your personal life is to have your face in His Word, the Bread of Life, daily and with discipline, studying. Otherwise, He can't *see* you, spiritually speaking. And if He doesn't see you in His Word each day, you're not fit for the kingdom wedding.

Mat 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Simply put, there comes a time when it's just too late. You can't wait until the very last minute to dive into your Father's Word and make all of the necessary adjustments to your life to be considered a fit bride. He won't let you into the kingdom wedding at that late hour. You'll have to go through the Millennium teaching period to learn the difference between the fragments and crumbs and the whole loaf...and to learn the discipline needed to function effectively within the kingdom of God.

Yes, I personally believe the five foolish virgins of Matthew 25 will largely be composed of people who take the bulk of their "Bible" teaching from among the oft-times confusing and conflicting *crumbs* and *fragments* of truth offered through online social media "Bible study" groups.

And I believe the five wise virgins will largely be composed of those who actually break open their Bibles, their Strong's Concordances and their other Bible study tools, and *study* the written Word every day, with discipline, taking their spiritual sustenance straight from the Word of God (i.e., the whole loaf), and not from among the crumbs and fragments.

In short, the five foolish virgins represent Christian crumb-snatchers. The five wise virgins represent the Old Testament shewbread that stood in the sight of the heavenly Father at the entrance to the Holy of Holies. That is to say, the five wise virgins *are* symbolic of the Biblical "bread of faces" – those who keep their faces in the Bread of Life and take their sustenance from it rather than from the tiny crumbs and fragments that fall from it among the multitudes, representing fragmented truth.

Yes, the online forums are okay for a bit of fellowship with like-minded people from time-to-time. Again, I have *zero* problems with that. I do it myself every now and then. But if you're

depending upon those groups for your daily spiritual food, it's a horrific waste of your time. For the most part, they merely give people the *illusion* they're learning something Godly, when in reality they're just becoming more and more confused by conflicting online opinions, emotions, argumentation, sensationalism and more.

There are just too many opinions and too much conflicting information...too much ego...too many arguments...too much rank speculation without substantiation...and too many weird posts about conspiracy theories and alien encounters and comets getting ready to crash into the earth and footprints of alleged 35 foot high giants and other National Enquirer-like nonsense.

And by the time you sort through all of the rank sensationalism and junk and try to make heads-or-tails out of all of the conflicting opinions and "feelings" being posted, you could easily have completed a nice, long and thoroughly satisfying *personal Bible study* that would have really put some "meat" on your spiritual bones.

Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

A real Bible study is where you sit down at a desk with a specific purpose in mind (i.e., for example, to learn about the seven seals, or to learn about what anointing means, or to learn what really happened in the garden of Eden, or to learn what differences there might be between, say, the Book of John and the Book of Mark, etc.) and open up the Bible along with some good Bible study tools and actually delve deeply into what the *Word of God* (i.e., the whole loaf) says on the matter *without the interference of dozens*

of even hundreds of "voices" all yelling (i.e., posting) at once about what they believe something means or doesn't mean.

The online social media "Bible study" forums originally had a good purpose. We are indeed supposed to teach the Word of God to the multitudes, just as the disciples passed out the bread and fishes that Christ had multiplied. But it has to be done with *discipline*. And if you call those online social media "Bible study" groups "disciplined" then you don't know the meaning of the word.

I know that the Christians who run those online social media "Bible study" sites mean well. Some of them are my good friends, and have been for many years. I've known a few for decades. Their hearts are all in the right place. They're very good people. In fact, they're *my* kind of people because they sincerely want to help other Christians learn God's Word.

But if they have one failing, it's that they often mistake the bustling *activity* of their social media "Bible study" sites as a sign of success and progress on the Lord's behalf. And to increase activity (i.e., posts and comments) they often fail to exercise proper discipline on their sites and keep Christians in line with the straight truth of God's Word.

So ultimately the moderators of these social media sites end up allowing their sites to become post-and-comment free-for-alls. They nearly always degenerate into an undisciplined morass of crumbs and fragments of truth and arguments and opinions being bandied about by multitudes of

people at once rather than working to discipline sincere Bible students and drive them back into the whole loaf which is their Father's Word of truth.

Bottom line: When Christians say they want to learn God's Word, I tell them they need to get their faces out of those online social media "Bible study" forums, and open up their Bibles and study tools and actually study the Word of God with discipline. If you need it, do your studies in conjunction with a well-studied Bible teacher like Pastor Dennis Murray or Pastor Arnold Murray of the Shepherd's Chapel daily Bible study ministry.

Partaking of Father's whole loaf *with discipline* is spiritually refreshing and invigorating compared to trying to get spiritual sustenance from the crumbs and fragments -- the jumble of opinions and arguments and shrill voices on the online "Bible study" forums.

Just remember: Where you put the bulk of your attention is indicative of what you *really* worship. Is it the Word of God you worship and follow -- Jesus is the Living Word? Or is it "fellowship with like-minded Christians" you give more of your attention to, in *place* of studying God's Word with discipline?

Take your daily spiritual nourishment from the whole loaf, not from the fragments. As King David of old once wrote of his personal daily learning and meditating on God's Word of truth:

Psa 119:97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Psa 119:98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

Psa 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

Psa 119:100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

Psa 119:101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

Psa 119:102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

Psa 119:103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psa 119:104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Psa 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psa 119:106 I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

If you can get all of that from online social media “Bible study” groups, then I urge you to go for it. But if you’re honest with yourself, you know such benefits as those King David describes above can *only* be mined from disciplined study of the riches and depths of God’s Word of truth, which is to say, the *whole loaf* rather than the social media crumbs and fragments. Don’t be a Christian crumb-snatcher. As it’s written in the great book of Isaiah:

Isaiah 2:5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The light of the Lord is the Word of God, beloved.

Psalms 119:103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119:104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Psalms 119:105 NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:106 I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

Stay in the light of His Word beloved. You can’t keep (i.e., preserve) His righteous judgments by snatching crumbs of understanding from the comments on social media “Bible study” groups, for that, by definition, is *fragmented understanding*. And in the end, it won’t get you to the Kingdom Wedding.

Don’t eat from the fragments. Take your spiritual sustenance from the whole loaf. Those social media groups are fine if you need the fellowship. But even then, *only* if the group is disciplined and not a hodge-podge of contradictory “feelings” combined with a cacophony of conflicting egos and opinions.

The bottom line is that your daily source of wisdom, knowledge and understanding should be the *whole loaf* of the Bread of Life, which is the Word of God. If that’s your main source of spiritual nourishment, you’ll do just fine.

-- End --

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