

Desire and Delight

Proverbs 27:7

One of the most well-known passages in the bible is Psalm 139.

In that Psalm David reflects on God's knowledge of everything in his life, he speaks about how the LORD is present with him no matter where he might go, and he tells us about the LORD as the Author of life.

He says, "...you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

It is very easy to read that upside down.

It is very easy to listen to those words in Psalm 139 and put the emphasis on how amazing human beings are.

Human beings are amazing there is no doubt of that.

The complexity of our bodies is incredible.

You only need to begin a study of our eyes, hearing, nervous system, circulatory system, organs, or bone structure to appreciate how incredible human beings are.

If you add to that our capacity to think, feel, communicate, and build things it is easy to conclude that we are marvelous creatures, but if that is what we focus our attention on we miss David's point altogether.

What strikes David with awe here as he thinks about how he came to be is the greatness of his Creator.

People have been 'fearfully and wonderfully made'.

We have been designed by the all-knowing, all-powerful, present everywhere, unchanging, eternal, and self-existent God of the universe.

Being designed and created means there is purpose in making us and there is purpose in how we have been made.

One of the ways that the LORD has made us is to have a need to eat food.

We see that right in the very first thing God says to humanity where he gives them "every tree with seed in its fruit" Genesis 1:29

Food was central to the LORD's command to Adam concerning the Garden of Eden.

"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat..." Genesis 2:16-17

Eating is critical to the sacrificial system in the Old Testament.

The goodness of the land Promised to Abraham and His children is largely described in terms of food. It is, "...a land flowing with milk and honey." Exodus 3:8

Jesus took elements of the Passover meal, bread and wine, and set them apart for us as a constant

reminder of what His body and blood accomplish for us before a Holy God.

Jesus speaks of feasting with His people in eternity and in Revelation 22:2 the tree of life and its fruit are a part of the new creation.

If you read the bible cover to cover you will discover that people eating food comes up on a regular basis which raises an important question, “Why did the LORD make us to eat?”

Two major reasons come to mind. First, food is a constant reminder that we are dependent creatures.

We need stuff outside of ourselves to exist and our greatest need is to know the LORD because everything in existence depends upon Him.

Secondly, food is a constant reminder that we are people of desire and taste.

If we go without eating long enough we become hungry and as hunger increases so too does our desire to eat.

Closely related to desire is taste. Different foods are experienced in different ways. Everyone has likes and dislikes when it comes to eating.

[The LORD could have made us to live without food. He could have made us without the feeling of hunger or the ability to perceive taste, but instead He designed us to eat and experience food in incredible ways. Our text for this morning **Proverbs 27:7** reminds us of that. This verse focuses in on our desire for food and how that relates to our experience of it. I am convinced that the physical reality that this verse speaks to us about is intended to point us to spiritual truth as well. The truth that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” means that there is intention and purpose to how we are made and that remains true even in the brokenness of the world that we currently live in. That is what Proverbs 27:7 has to teach us this morning. There are two clear lessons from the way our bodies work that also apply to our souls in this verse. Here is the first...]

Point #1 – Abundance can create a distaste for what is good.

When we fill ourselves with material things it often grows a dissatisfaction with things that ought to be treasured.

Let’s begin by considering the physical lesson that is taught here and then consider how we might apply this spiritually as well. Listen with me to the first half of Proverbs 27:7

The person spoken of in the verse is described as ‘One who is full’.

That is to say this individual is stuffed to the brim so that they could not eat another bite.

[When I read this, the idea that comes to mind is the restaurant buffet. Those places are dangerous for me. At a regular restaurant I order my meal, it comes to the table, and when I finish my plate that is usually the end. At a buffet when my plate is empty I can go back get a new plate and fill it up with a whole new combination of deliciousness. I usually justify myself by saying, “I have to get my money’s worth!” I have on occasion arrived at the place where I am in significant discomfort and feel like another bite is impossible.]

That is the idea here, the idea of abundant fullness.

Now, look again at the result of that condition. (**Verse 7a**)

In the time and place we live in the ability to fully appreciate what is being said here is somewhat diminished.

When we think of honey today we probably don’t think of it as candy or a treat.

We live in the age of refined sugar. We live in the land of M&M’s and Dr. Pepper, of Twinkies, ice cream, cake, pie, and donuts.

In the ancient world there was nothing remotely close to those modern day culinary essentials.

In the ancient world most of a person’s intake of sugar came from natural sources like dried fruits and honey.

Most of us here this morning could have honey on our table every day if we wanted.

In the ancient world it was a rare treat for the average person and only the wealthy got to enjoy it on a somewhat regular basis.

The point is honey was considered to be among the most enjoyable foods in the world at the time.

Under normal circumstances honey would be delighted in, but to the one who has stuffed his stomach, honey is a loathsome thing.

[Too many platefuls at the buffet and you can end up at the place where you can’t even look at another piece of coconut cream pie.]

This lesson applies to much more than food, as John MacArthur says, “This proverb extends...to things in general.”

The Hebrew word that is translated as “one” in this verse is most often translated as “soul” or “life” in the Old Testament.

Typically when we think of the word ‘soul’ we think of the immaterial or spiritual aspect of a human being, but commentator Allen Ross points out that the word used here likely means the ‘whole person’ or everything that makes up who we are.

When a human being stuffs his soul full of created things, when he denies himself nothing that this fallen world has to offer than his desire for what is good can very easily turn to disgust.

[Solomon the author of this proverb knows it firsthand. Just read the book of Ecclesiastes. He essentially had everything the world had to offer. He filled his stomach and soul to the brim with earthly treasure and delights and he concluded it was all vanity. Honey became a loathsome thing.]

That is one of the greatest dangers of our own day and culture.

The average person in our society likely has more wealth than the average citizens of any civilization in the history of the world.

What has that by and large produced?

As far as I can see it has produced a great deal of dissatisfaction.

There is as much envy today as every before.

Entitlement, bitterness, and jealousy abound.

With all the entertainment and technology we have and increasing distaste for real relationships.

We are trying to satisfy ourselves with things that are fake and are increasingly struggling to delight in what is real.

Of course the greatest consequence of all of our fullness in things of the world is a loathing for the things of God.

That is not to say that there is a lack of consuming things that the unconverted heart perceives as spiritual.

The idolatry factory of the human heart is in overdrive these days.

With the assistance of google and chat GPT you find no end to articles and videos that will feed you what you want to hear and help you deceive yourself into thinking the god of your imagination is what you need to fill up your soul with.

The one who does that will loath the true honey of the Word of God.

[There is great danger brothers and sisters in abundance if we do not first and foremost delight ourselves in the LORD. I like what Franz Delitsch says about this, he says, “*Let the man whom God has richly satisfied with good things guard himself against ingratitude towards the Giver and against an undervaluing of the gifts received; and if they are spiritual blessings let him guard himself against self-satisfaction and self-contentment, which is, in truth the worst poverty; for life without God is constant hunger and thirst. There is in worldly things, even the most pleasing, a dissatisfaction felt, and a dissatisfaction awakening disgust; and in spiritual life, a satisfaction which supposes itself to be full of life but which is nothing else than the decay of life.*” Abundance is a blessing but it is a dangerous one because it can easily turn into a

distaste, even a hatred, for what is good. That brings us to the second part of this verse. Having warned of abundance, Solomon turns his attention to show us a potential benefit of having little. He shows us that...]

Point #2 – Great need can create unexpected delight.

When we are deeply aware of that we lack something essential to life, it can change our perspective on things we might otherwise reject.

In the second part of this verse hunger is contrasted with the abundant fullness in the first half of the verse. (Verse 7b)

Everyone has things they enjoy eating and things they would rather avoid.

Show of hands kids, how many of you have ever come to the supper table and there is something there that you don't like?

Anyone want to share the food that they don't like?

[I like to say that I am not a picky eater I am just particular about a few things. For example, I am not a fan of cheese or mayonnaise on a hamburger. I know that makes me weird but to me is just doesn't taste good under normal circumstances, but I can remember one occasion many years ago I had been working hard on a construction site all day and hadn't stopped for lunch and I was feeling a pretty hungry. Someone stopped by with a fast food burger for me and it had cheese and mayonnaise. For the sake of being polite I did not peel it off but ate it as it was to my surprise my hunger substantially improved the taste of the burger.]

I read a German proverb in one of my commentaries that said,
"Hunger is the best cook."

I firmly believe that is true. All of my children will tell you that I have said something along those lines many times.

Like all parents I have often heard the line, "Dad I'm hungry!"

One of my common replies especially in their younger years has been, "That's good, being hungry is good for you!"

I know that sounds mean, but it is true.

I would explain that being hungry and thirsty makes us appreciate food and water.

All of the sudden things that we may not be particularly fond of taste a whole lot more delicious when our bodies are crying out for food.

Just like the first half of this verse, this second half applies spiritually as well.

When we have stuffed ourselves full of worldly things and we are satisfied in our own wisdom and understanding we create gods in our hearts that conform to us.

When such a person is confronted with the sweetness of the truth of the Bible they find it disgusting.

Never before in the history of the world has there been such a fast food view of spirituality.

If you are so inclined it is very easy to find someone to say what you want to hear.

On the other hand, if God the Holy Spirit has according to His mercy and grace put in you a hunger to truly know the One True most glorious God of the universe, if He has given you a sense of His holiness, then you will be unsatisfied with the spiritual food of false religion.

When you feel that kind of spiritual hunger in the depths of your being, then you will understand why the Bible describes itself a honey, and bread, and pure milk for your soul.

Things that were once bitter, things like coming to grips with our wretched condition, things like sacrifice, selflessness, and humility will become sweet to you.

Someone once described the human condition as being that of a poor beggar in need of bread and realizing that the LORD Jesus is the only one able to supply our need.

Jesus will not change to suit you, but He did die for you in order to set a place at His table for you if you are willing to humble yourself and come.

What is the condition of your soul this morning?

We live in a land of great plenty and I fear many have stuffed themselves to the point of loathing the Word of God.

At the same time we live in a land of great misery, fear, anger, and disappointment because that is what happens when we fill ourselves up with created things and lose our taste for eternal things.

All of us here are poor beggars, the question is do we realize it?

It is amazing when we do because then we will find a Saviour who stands ready to give us things that truly satisfy.

Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” (Matt. 5:6 ESV)*

The next time you are hungry, perhaps that is right now, remember God made us that way to teach us about something more than food, He made us that way to show us our need of Him.