

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

July 8, 2007 (Vol. 7)

Gluttony

edited

The subject of gluttony is often misunderstood. Sometimes, during the holidays or after a big meal, one will jokingly say, "I hope the preacher doesn't preach on gluttony!" At other times, preachers are accused of not preaching on gluttony; especially when he steps on a few toes concerning smoking or drinking. It is easier, after all, to accuse the preacher of sin and hypocrisy, rather to accept a valid admonition concerning our intemperate lifestyle. Friends, gluttony is a sin. What we fail to recognize about gluttony is that this sin encompasses more than merely eating too much at a meal. It is an indicator of a wrong attitude. It is excess and self-indulgence (Matt. 23:25 NKJV, ASV).

Defining The Term

The Hebrew word is Strong's #02151, "zalal". He summarizes it as "to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; figuratively, to be loose morally, worthless or prodigal:--blow down, glutton, riotous (eater), vile." The word paints a picture of loose and wobbling behavior. It is behavior that "wobbles" morally, or lacks restraint.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 says, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a **glutton**, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."

In this passage, notice the context of the word and what is associated with it: Stubbornness, self-will, rebellion, disobedience, and drunkenness. All these words show a lack of restraint, lack of self-control. They also point to one who is self-indulgent, hedonistic,

self-gratifying, riotous, uncontrolled, or pleasure-seeking. Gluttony is not here condemning eating, or even eating a large meal. It is condemning a selfish behavior. If you speak with old farmers, they will tell you of former days when they ate very large or heavy meals, especially when working hard in the fields. This was not so they could just have pleasure, but so that they could have the energy to work.

Proverb 23:19-21, "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among **riotous eaters of flesh**: For the drunkard and the **glutton** shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." This passage is especially helpful, for it has parallel statements for drinking and gluttony. In fact, Proverb 21 has much to say about eating, drinking, and entertainments in general. It directs us in how to act when visiting the rich and great. It warns against covetousness and associating with those who are. It warns, as our verse above says, against worldly entertainments and associations. These things offer inordinate or unruly pleasure, involving us in excesses which is profligacy, decadency, recklessness, dissolution, irresponsibility and carelessness. Notice in the proverb that it is not the eating of flesh that is a sin, but the **RIOTOUS** eating of it, the uncontrolled or unrestrained eating. Eating to live is one thing, **living to eat** is another. Again, this is not to say we cannot enjoy eating, but we are not to do so with abandon and without regard for what is right and good.

Also this Proverb notes that such behaviors lead to poverty. This indicates again that a self-indulgent person is one who does not like discomfort, avoids "hard" things, like work. Perhaps they are too busy partying or desiring comfort so much they are just "too tired" to actually get busy doing what is needful. Such laziness and idleness is here associated with one who is a glutton.

The word "gluttony" is also found in Titus 1:12 in the ASV: "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle **gluttons**." The word "idle" means inactive, or unemployed; (by implication) lazy, useless, barren, or slow (Strong's # 692 "argos"). Glutton means the stomach, belly or "gourmand" (Strong's #1064 "gaster"). If you are like me, you have to look up gourmand, too. It means an epicure or gastronome, or in plain English, a **food lover**.

Again, this does not say we cannot enjoy food. Consider how God's word condemns the **love of money** (1 Tim. 6:9-10), but not having and using money. God's word also condemns immorality, but not proper marriage (Heb. 13:4). And many other examples could be given of things that have a right place and use, but that are wrong when abused and misused. Consider the Israelites who were given food and covering, yet loathed the manna God provided, and wanted the food they had back in Egypt

(Num. 21:5). They were ungrateful for what God provided them. They were selfish. Indeed, godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).

Matthew 11:16-19 says, "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."

Here Jesus identifies the attitude of those who criticized John and Himself. They selfishly wanted to do things their way, and when John didn't "play" when they wanted to play, then they rejected him as a prude. When Jesus came and "played", they scorned Him as an indulgent and intemperate man. They were never satisfied because they "just wanted to be happy" and not be made to feel badly by John or Jesus' "mean" words towards them. It is in this context that they cast the word "glutton" at Jesus as an insult, to demean and discredit Him. But Jesus was not out of control in His attitudes or behavior. He was seeking to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

When we take the time to define the word "gluttony" and see how it is used in the Bible, we see that thinking of gluttony as **merely** eating too much does **not** give us an accurate picture. Yes, there are passages which condemn eating too much. "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." (Prov. 25:16) But again, even this passage hits at the lack of self-restraint that leads to the overeating. Thus, overeating in these passages is only a symptom of the larger problem of laziness, of being idle, of having a sense of entitlement, having loose principles, and being unrestrained. All of these actions are condemned by God in Scripture, and are all included in the word "gluttony".

Conclusion

When we understand what the word "glutton" means, then we must say that the subject of gluttony has not been ignored or glossed over in our preaching. When sins such as debauchery, loose or extravagant living, laziness, etc. are condemned (Acts 24:25; Phil. 4:6; etc.), then gluttony has, in principle, been condemned as well.

The question is, are we guilty of gluttony? Are we guilty of allowing our eyes to be bigger than our appetite? Biting off more than we can chew? "Stuffing our face" with things of this life? And not just with food! For anything of this world that we begin to live for can become a sin to us. For God's plan is not that we should live here for ever, nor set our hope upon earthly treasures and pleasures. Rather, we should prepare our "**mind**, be **sober** and **set your hope perfectly** on the grace that is to

be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance: but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy **in all manner of living**" (1 Pet. 1:13-14).

So, what are we living for? How are we living? Are we idle? Are we self-indulgent? Are we mostly or only happy when we are satisfying our **physical** desires? Do **spiritual** things come first in our lives? Are we happy being involved in spiritual things? Friends, gluttony is certainly a sin. However, we can be forgiven of it and can avoid it in the future by humbly submitting to the gospel (Rom. 10:3; Mark 16:1; Acts 8:22). In so doing, we are freed from a fixation on and a slavery to this world and its passing pleasures; and lay up treasure in heaven, where moth does not eat nor rust corrode, nor thief break in and steal. Ah, heaven. Home is where the heart is, isn't it (Mt. 6:19-21)?

REJOICE! Sonja Savage obeyed the gospel Wednesday evening after services. Let us all welcome her into the body of Christ!

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Marilyn Langford (foot), **Joyce Gardner** (eyes), **Johanna Fletcher**, **Othena Kinnard** (in Nashville), **Jo Miller**, **Wesley Geer**, **Mag Bumbalough** (Life Care 519), **Thelma Cunningham**, **Mary Cox** (Surgery July 11th), **Monie Petty** (breathing difficulties), **Dave Poteet** (NHC 212), **Dorris Williams**, **Robert & Betty England**, **Joe Smith**, **Mike Tenpenny**, **Thelma Klein**, **Nathan Hill**, **DeLeesa Price** (expecting) and **Alisa Fletcher** (expecting). **Lydia Poe**, **Larry Bumbalough**, **Jake Hale**, **Joshua & Misty Poteet**, **Ed & Carolyn Williams**, **Kenley Streeval & Gabriel Streeval** (White County 125). **Herbie Sims** (Ralph's brother), **Matthew Taylor** (Marci's friend's baby, leukemia).

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT (Starts July 8th, 2007! *That is today!!!*)
- **Door To Door** - Every Tuesday @ 6pm.
- **Home Bible Study** - Sat. July 21. *Are you coming?*
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. July 29
- **GM** - Raymond Castillo, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

We Invite You To All Our Services!

Sun. Bible Study 9 am Sun. Evening Worship 6 pm
Sunday Worship 10 am Wed. Evening Study 7 pm

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