

“How to Find the Real Food Network”

Text: Luke 9:10-17

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How many of you watch the Food Network channel? You can watch the shows on this channel from morning to night and learn all about food. Two of my favorite shows are:

- “Diners, Drive-ins and Dives” – The host of this show takes the viewer to “greasy spoon” spots all over the U.S. It’s a favorite among “boomers”.
- “Unwrapped” – The host of this show takes you behind the scenes on how American classic foods are made. Foods like lunch box treats, soda pop, movie candy, Holiday candies and more.

What you see in these shows is the appearance of an abundance of food and recipes. Something for everyone. But is that reality?

Let me describe to you another picture: These are statistics about hunger in Alameda County in 2008:

- 1 in 3 children in Alameda County faces the threat of hunger each day.
- 9.5% percent of Alameda County residents live below the poverty line. A family of three with an income of less than \$16,242 per year lives below the federal poverty line; for a family of four the federal poverty line is \$20,516.
- More than 325,000 individuals (both adults and children are vulnerable to the indignity of hunger, frequently skipping meals or eating too little.

One last statistic, PBPC gives away 60 Safeway \$10 gift cards a month. We are now running out by the end of the third week of each month, the demand being so high with people out of work.

I’ve just pointed out two different sides an important need we all have: food. One of the great injustices in the world is hunger. The reason it is an injustice is due to humanity’s greed and hunger for power that keeps food from so many. It’s a way to control people. Food is a need we all have, here in the U.S. and around the world.

We continue our series “Journey to Justice” looking at the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. This morning’s title is “How to Find the Real Food Network”. The reading from the Bible this morning will come from Luke 9:10-17, Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand. I want you to think about this question, “What is the morally right thing to do concerning the people’s needs according to God’s word?”

Read Luke 9:10-17 & Pray!

Jesus' 12 disciples have just returned from their first short-term mission trip of being sent out by Jesus to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. They're excited about what has taken place and tell Jesus all that they had done. Now Jesus takes them to a quiet place where the disciples can be debriefed and get some rest. But the people around them had different plans. I want us to look at three principles from this passage to help us respond like Jesus to the needs we see around us.

1. The Need to be open to interruption.

- A. Luke 9:11 "... *but the crowds learned about it (where Jesus was going) and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.*"
- B. Jesus had tried to slip quietly away from the crowds, but they found out where He was going and followed Him. Instead of showing impatience at this interruption, Jesus welcomed the people and ministered to their needs. How do you see people who interrupt your schedule—as nuisances or as the reason for your life and ministry?
- C. How we respond to people's needs comes down to our world view. What's at the core of who you are? What motivates you in life? Let's look at these two different views of life:
 - 1. See people as nuisances – Philippians 2:21 "*Everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*" Self-centeredness, where I am the center of the world, sees the needs of people as a nuisance.
 - a. Worker at Eastern Washington
 - 2. See people as the reason for your life and ministry – James 2:14-17 "*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if a person claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to the person, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*" Jesus' life and ministry was all about people. To live as a follower of Christ is to see people as the reason for your life and ministry.
 - a. Mother Teresa, UCLA
- D. We need to train ourselves to see interruptions as divine appointments. It's all about God and people.
 - 1. Carol's work and people in need.

2. The need for generosity.

- A. Luke 9:12-13 "*Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, 'Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.' He (Jesus) replied, 'You give them something to eat.' They answered, 'We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.'*"

- B. Jesus was concerned that people were hungry. The only food the disciples could find was bread and fish. Where did the five loaves of bread and two fish come from? John 6:8, *“Another of his disciples, Andrew...spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish,’”*
1. We get a clue about the economic status of the boy with the five small barley loaves. Barley loaves are cheap bread, the food of the poor. The boy was most likely poor.
 2. What we see here is the disciples contrasted with the youngster who brought what he had. They certainly had more resources than the boy, but they knew they didn’t have enough, so they didn’t give anything at all. The boy gave what little he had, and it made all the difference. If we offer nothing to God, there is nothing to use. But God can choose to take what little we have and turn it into something great.
 - Pianist at Lord’s Lighthouse Celebration – He gave what he had to the Lord. It encouraged us to continue to care for those in need.
- C. There ended up being more than enough food for everyone. God is like that. God created a world where there is more than enough for all, if people will share.

3. The need to care for people’s physical and spiritual needs.

- A. Luke 9:11 *“He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.”* We see over and over again in Jesus’ life and ministry two key elements in His ministry to people: proclamation and demonstration. He would care for people’s spiritual need by proclaiming the kingdom of God and then He would demonstrate what He proclaimed by caring for people’s physical needs.
- B. Philippians 4:19, *“And my God will meet all your needs...”* In Jesus all human beings’ needs are supplied. Jesus is concerned with every aspect of life—the physical as well as the spiritual. As we work to bring wholeness to people’s lives, we must never ignore the fact that all of us have both physical and spiritual needs. It is impossible to minister effectively to one type of need without considering the other.
1. George in Honduras
 2. Man at Christmas
- C. We need to understand that in everyone there is a hunger of the soul; there is a longing to find something in which they may invest their lives. Our hearts are restless until they rest in Jesus.
1. The mother who has spent a lifetime cooking meals for a hungry family.
 2. The nurse, the doctor, the friend, relation or parent, who has sacrificed life and time to ease another’s pain; the social reformer who has burned him- or herself out to seek better conditions for men and women—they have all preached more effective sermons than the eloquent orator.
 3. How much time did Jesus spend, not talking, but easing people’s pain and satisfying their hunger?
- D. Just as Jesus was concerned that people were hungry, He calls us to care for humanity’s basic need—food. God wants to partner with us as we take steps of faith out of our comfort zone to serve those in need around us.

- E. Are you willing to take a step of faith to supply someone else's needs? The Easter Food Drive is a wonderful opportunity not only to participate personally in providing food for people who are hungry in Alameda County, but people around you who will hear about this will want to get involved. Why? Because people are looking for something meaningful in which to invest their lives.
1. PBPC is to be known in our communities as a church that cares about people's needs, and is willing to do something about it.
 2. Besides the Easter Food Drive we can connect with our neighbors on March 28th from 9-noon. We have the privilege of letting people know that we care for the hungry, and we want them to join us in being part of the solution through the Easter Food Drive. We'll also invite them to join us for our Celebration service on Easter Sunday morning.
Physical/spiritual needs!

The Real Food Network is Jesus Christ. Through Him there is an abundance of food both physically and spiritually.

PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, thank You for Jesus' love and concern for all people, for both their physical and spiritual needs. Thank You, Jesus that You're concerned that people are hungry and that in You all people's needs, both physical and spiritual, are supplied. You have called us to partner with You in caring for people's needs. Help us to become more of a church family that looks outside itself to the plight and needs of people around us. Help us to be people who respond well to the interruptions in our lives, seeing them as divine appointments. Help us to want to be generous people with all that You have given us. And help us to want to be people who care for other's physical and spiritual needs. Show us the way and teach us how to follow Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen.