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Are You Hungry for God

1 Peter 3:15

Prayer: *Father, again we just give thanks to you for who you are, for what you have done for us. We thank you for the cross, we thank you for your Son, we thank you for your word. We just continue to pray that you would again as we open your word give us the ability to by your Holy Spirit's presence take it in and again make it of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, this is part three of a three-part series that we're doing based on Peter's exhortation in 1 Peter 3:15 which is: *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.* We pointed out last time that being prepared involved three things: It involves prayer, it involves proclamation, and it involves personification. And we've looked so far at prayer and proclamation. And just to recap briefly, we said this about prayer. God tells us that we can plant a seed, he tells us that others can nurture it but that God alone is the one who makes it grow. That makes successfully sharing the gospel an endeavor that

has to begin first with prayer. And so I said do you ask yourself, do you ask yourself like Paul asked in *Colossians 4:2*: *Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ.* Do I ever pray that God would open the door so that I could proclaim his message? You see I believe with all of my heart that we have to understand that without prayer, God has no reason to bless our efforts in evangelism and I firmly believe in corporate prayer but I also believe that our attitude towards everyone that we meet should be one of anticipatory prayer. And again I wasn't suggesting that you get down on your knees before some astounded stranger but that you have this prayerful attitude in mind as you meet someone, an attitude that simply asks: God, will you give me the opportunity to share the gospel with this person? Will you open the door? Will you help me find a topic? Can you give me an opening in which I can give an account of the hope that's within me?

And secondly we have proclamation. We have prayer and we have proclamation. We need to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God and that involves our hearts and our heads. And as I spoke the last time, I said I think one of the greatest impediments we have to sharing the gospel is fear. You know it's fear of looking goofy, fear of being thought of as some kind of religious nut who loves to shove the gospel down people's throats. I think we all

fear that kind of person but I also think we've gone to the opposite extreme. We have let our fears dictate our desires when it comes to sharing the gospel. See, a person who is well-prepared to give an answer for the hope that's within them is someone who's been able to replace the fear that he has in his heart with hope. And it's not the wishful thinking kind of hope that we've come to think of when we hear that word but instead it's this confident expectation that Jesus truly is the answer to all of life's problems. We also said that our greatest fear is what ultimately rules our lives. And as long as that fear is the right one, that is the fear of God, well then all other fears will fall into place. And Jesus told us exactly what the proper fear is all about in *Luke 12*, he said this, he said: *"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: Fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!"* Well Jesus tells us to fear God first and foremost. Now if you're a child of God then you need to have no fear whatsoever of God. That doesn't mean that God is not fearful. Again we believers have no need of fear for one specific reason, according to *1 John 4:18*, it says: *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.* Well God says fear has to do with punishment but we know that our punishment's already

been taken, it's been taken by Jesus. We know that a perfect God became a man, that he went to the cross and took all of our punishment upon himself, so therefore we have no need of fear for ourselves. The one fear that all of us believers should have though is fear for those who will not come to a saving knowledge of God. You see, the punishment that Jesus absorbed on our behalf is not going to be absorbed for them. Instead it's going to be poured out on the heads of those who reject the gospel. It is this fear that drives us to want to share the gospel. And it's also what makes this idea that hell is simply a primitive aspect of the gospel that's now gone by the wayside a truly damnable heresy. You don't remove the fear of something by denying its existence. You don't declare that a rattlesnake is now a kitten simply because you don't like the fear of snakes. Instead you advise people on how to avoid rattlesnakes altogether. You see part of proclaiming the gospel is declaring the consequences of rejecting that gospel. It's giving people the means to avoid that consequence which is hell itself. I mean I know for myself, I live in holy fear of the consequences of rejecting the gospel, particularly among those of my family and friends and generally among every single person I come in contact with. And what Jesus is telling us is that we need to get our fear priorities correct, and that the only one that we really need to fear is the very same God who loved us enough to die for us. And when we love -- when we fear nothing less than

disappointing God and quenching his Holy Spirit, then we can say we really do have the heart part down. But that's only half the proclamation battle. There's still another half and that's the head part, that's the disciplined, study, do your homework part. And we looked last time at the lives of Peter and at Stephen and at Paul and we recognize that two out of three of these men, they were not formally trained theologians. I mean after all, Peter was a fisherman and all we know about Stephen was that he waited on tables and yet God used all of them powerfully to proclaim his gospel. And we saw that God chooses to reveal the deepest, the most complex truths to the simplest of minds so that people will know that this is God at work and not the action of man's intellect.

We looked at *1 Corinthians 1:18* which says: *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* And then down at verse 26 it says: *For consider your calling, brothers: Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.* Well here's our

biblical qualifications, I mean, God chooses the weak, he chooses the foolish, the lowly, and the despised and he does so so that no one's going to mistake where the power in the gospel comes from. God also tells us that our wisdom comes from Jesus Christ and because it comes from Christ, there's no such thing as an unqualified child of God. There is, however, an unprepared child of God. And to prevent that we need to take steps to discipline our minds to learn scripture, to understand God's ways enough to be able to communicate them. Hence the need for serious Bible study.

Our task in being prepared to give an account involves prayer, it involves proclamation, today we're going to look at the third part which is personification. It's a life that imitates Christ. Peter told us that we are chosen to be this holy nation of royal priests, a people that God claims as his own. *Romans 8* tells us what God's goal is for his people. It says: *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.* What that means is this, if you are one of his own, God is using every single event in your life to shape and mold you into the image of Jesus Christ. And the strongest proclamation there is of the Son is a saved life. It's a life that reflects Christ. You know someone once said, "Show me your redeemed life and I'll believe in your redeemer." It was Martin Luther who was said to have referred to Christians as "little christs" because that's what we're

supposed to be. Paul says it plainly in *2 Corinthians 5*. He says: *Now then, we are ambassadors in Christ, as though God were pleading through us: We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.* Just think about that for a second. God is actually willing to plead his case to the world through us. And how we personify Christ will determine whether God proclaims his gospel through us or in spite of us. And the fact is that even though most of us want the former, we often wind up with the latter. And much of it I believe is because we've lost our understanding of what it means to proclaim the gospel as ambassadors for Christ. I mean to understand how critical it is, we first need to understand how God wants us to personify Christ as we present the gospel. Make no mistake about it, God presents his gospel to the world through human agency but he's never limited by human agency.

I said last week the gospel is a freight train moving from eternity past through the present to eternity future and you can get on board or you can ignore it but you will never, never change its course. Jesus made it quite clear in *John 15* who's in charge here. He said we don't choose him, he said he chooses us. He says: *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.* We love to think that we chose God but just imagine what kind of God that would be. Instead of being the sovereign Lord of mankind,

he'd be a God who's now subject to mankind's desires. And he could never be certain that his children were real because up to the moment of their death he'd be subject to their decision processes. You know he would be figuratively biting his nails hoping that we would choose rightly, but ultimately he'd be subject to our decisions and not his. Now you might say well that's not true because God knows the future. I mean, he knows all of who will come to him of their own free will. But God very clearly says in Romans 3 that these people coming to him freely, they don't exist. *Romans 3:10 says: As it is written: "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS; THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS AFTER GOD."* Now you might be thinking to yourself well, that's just not true, I mean, I came to God myself and I remember, I remember how much I sought after him. Well, here's the point. If you truly sought after God, it's only because God planted that desire in you in the first place. Now I often quote *Ezekiel 36*. God says: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.* Now it's pretty obvious in that passage that it's God who is doing the moving first, that it's God who first works in our lives to remove our stone cold hearts, that it's God who gives us the very capacity to love him. And God says in that verse that

after removing our heart of stone he's going to give us a brand new heart, a heart of flesh. Now can you imagine God just waiting for hearts of stone to cry out to him? It's just not going to happen. I mean can you imagine the whole salvation promise resting not in God's hands but in man's? You know God enters time and space as a boy, he lives a flawless life, he dies as a sacrifice for our sins in the vague hope that we will somehow turn our hearts of stone towards him? Furthermore, why would God trust the eternal destiny of our mortal souls to the fallen sinful abilities of our fellow humans? How would you like to be standing before God on judgment day and he tells you that his intention was that Bob or Bill or Sue or Sally was supposed to present the gospel to you but on that day they just chose not to obey. So you didn't get to hear the gospel and now you're doomed. Sorry. A god who gives that kind of freedom to us becomes a god who is limited now by our free will. That god is not truly sovereign. You see we believe that when God fixes his love upon you, when he chooses you, he fits you with a brand new heart and a brand new spirit and it's a one-way gift. *Ephesians 2:8* says: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast.* You see, the love that we oftentimes interpret as some kind of action on our part is in reality nothing of the sort. In fact it is a reaction to God's action, because God always moves first. *We love because he first*

loved us.

Well now you might be thinking, okay, what does all of this have to do with personifying Christ as we proclaim him? Well, the answer is everything. You see we don't save anybody but God saves through us and he is the freight train, he is the freight train and if we're on board, God blesses us and our fellow man through us. But if we're not on board, trust me, God is not stymied. He'll just go around us or he just might use us in spite of our sin but he will never be subject to human whims, sins or follies. Paul says: *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.* You know what that means for you and me? For one thing, it means we don't save anyone. This is God's job alone. Now you may have heard that verse a dozen times but there's a vital connection there we almost always miss, it's that it is God alone who saves and not us.

We tend to divide the task of evangelism into two extreme camps, neither of which hit the target. On the one side we have the soul winners and on the other side we have these silent saints. Soul winners reduce the freight train of the gospel to a formula that I don't see at all as helpful. You know we've come a very long way from Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" in the

18th century to "God loves you and has a perfect plan for your life" today. That's what happens when the gospel becomes subject to human will. I was talking to a friend once who had just gone to an evangelism conference put on by a major denomination that emphasizes evangelism. And she was telling me that the first thing they did was they taught her was the rule of five. She was told all you have to do is save five people and all those five people have to do is save another five people and all those people have to do is save five more and before you know it, everybody on the earth is saved. She left the conference at the first break. You see, with all due respect, this is not what Jesus meant when he left us the Great Commission. In *Matthew 28* he said: "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" You see, making disciples is not at all the same as making converts. And teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded is not something you normally do in ten minutes or less. There's an overarching principle that governs everything that Jesus did and everything that we do, including evangelism. It's *1 Corinthians 10:31*: *So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.* You see, Jesus made disciples not to show us how to become soul winners but to bring glory to God, and Jesus' disciples brought glory to God

not by their quantity, I mean, he only had about a dozen, but by the quality of their lives. It wasn't an altar call or a sinner's prayer or a signed card that marked them as belonging to Jesus, it was simple obedience. And Jesus couldn't have made it any plainer when he said in *John 8:31*: *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."* In *John 15:8* he says: *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."*

Even soul winning is about the glory of God. And a system that focuses on quantity instead of quality constantly run the risk of trading the quality that God alone can produce for a quantity that looks like success. You know Billy Graham rallies were famous for producing great quantities of converts, 95 percent of whom fell away. And it may look wonderful to see a thousand people coming forward for an altar call but what if only fifty of those thousand are real? How does that glorify God? And what happens to the 950 who've not only fallen away but are now convinced for the rest of their lives that they're right with God simply because they went forward at a meeting? I remember a book I once saw in a Christian bookstore many, many years ago, it was entitled "Soul Winning Made Easy." That's just not true. I mean it's not easy, it's not even hard, it's not possible, because it's something that God alone can do. It is our privilege to be part of that process. But when you

reduce evangelism to techniques and strategies alone, you run great risks of thinking that your efforts are what is key and they're not.

But you know there's another extreme represented by another camp that's in reaction to soul winners. I call them the "silent saints." Some other the folks call them the "frozen chosen." It's those who believe that God's going to save who he's going to save and we have nothing to do or say about it. Our job is simply to lead good and decent lives and if God wants to make people approach us and ask us how to get to heaven, well then by golly we're going to tell them. But don't expect anything more than that. You know we'll send money to people on the other side of the world to tell people about Jesus but here in my local neighborhood we practically believe, well, God's got it all taken care of and he sure doesn't need me. It's an astounding fact now that there are countries around the world that are sending missionaries here because they recognize what a huge mission field we've become. Silent saints are the folks who love to quote St. Francis even though it's highly doubtful that St. Francis ever said this, and the quote is:

"Preach the gospel always and if you must, use words." Well Matthew 5:16 points out the problem with that thinking. *Matthew 5* says: "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*" You see if you

don't or won't or refuse to use words, then people have no idea whether to glorify the Father or your own goodness or Buddha or some other religion, whatever. Doesn't matter. *Romans 10* says: *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* If you're not telling folks the word of Christ, they can't know the gospel that you're preaching. They can't know what the point of your light is. I mean we are to let our light shine among men so they can connect those good works to God's glory, and if all men can see is the good works without that connection, then the only one I wind up glorifying in the end is myself.

Have you noticed how often that word "glory" keeps popping up? You see we're looking at how we can personify the Lord Jesus when we proclaim his truth, and what I'm saying is we don't really need to focus in on good techniques or good deeds, we need look no further than that five-letter word "glory." Glory was Jesus's passion. Glory consumed him. We have all kinds of models for personifying Christ as we proclaim them that range from soul winners to silent saints and every degree in between but we have almost no model for the way Jesus actually was. And the best way that I can put it is to say that Jesus was hungry for God. His consuming passion was to do the will of his Father. It resonated to the very core of his being. It wasn't a technique or a method or a theory that drove Jesus, it was literally a hunger for God.

I mean you remember when Jesus met the woman at the well? I'm still stunned at the imagery that that story kind of puts out. You have the Lord Jesus Christ who's the creator, sustainer and ruler of the universe and the story describes him as being hot and tired and thirsty. And so he sits down by a well and he winds up getting into a conversation with a woman there and while he's having this conversation, his disciples return from a journey into town where they were looking to buy food. They know that it's been a very long time since Jesus has eaten and they urged him to eat and Jesus responds to their urging by saying in *John 4:32*: "*I have food to eat that you do not know about.*" Well the disciples were absolutely mystified. In verse 33, it says: *So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?"* I love how incredibly human, how down to earth their thinking is, you know, "Did he get a sub while we were gone or what happened," you know. Verse 34 he says: *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."* I mean, listen to what Jesus is saying. He's saying he's literally hungry but for God. He puts it in the most elementary terms there is. His drive to obey his Father's will is as strong and as ever present as our drive is to feed our bodies. I mean if we really seek to be ambassadors for Christ as though God himself were speaking through us, we need to know who it is we're seeking to imitate. And as we look to Jesus, we find this overwhelming hunger

for God. We think of evangelism as something that we do or don't do, a technique that we follow or reject but in reality that misses the point. The point is to be like Jesus.

As I said last week, the gospel is a freight train going from eternity past through the present to eternity future with God at the helm and God will still drive the freight train either with us or in spite of us because he makes all things work together for good. And I've seen God use soul winners, I've seen God use silent saints and everything in between to advance his kingdom. I've seen all kinds of problems that emanate from trying to figure out which method works best. It's like trying to figure out the mind of God when the real question about proclaiming the gospel by personifying Christ is much more personal. The question is: Are you hungry for God? I'll be the first one to tell you how important it is to follow Peter's command to always be prepared to give an account for the hope that's within you, and we've already spent two messages speaking about how we can be prepared but there's something far more important than simply having good answers to hard questions. It's being hungry for God. Jesus was hungry for God. His food literally was doing God's will. And I suggest to you that that hunger is the real key to evangelism. We've said all along that being prepared to give an account meant first being prayed up, knowing how critical prayer is to genuine evangelism; secondly, we

pointed out how important it is to study God's word to accurately proclaim what the real gospel is; but this third part, this ability to personify the Christ we proclaim all comes down to our spiritual appetite. It's not a hunger for religion, it's not a hunger for philosophy or even for church, it's much more basic. It's a hunger, it's a genuine appetite for connecting with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I mean if you have that appetite, you picked up the Bible more than once since last Sunday. If you have that hunger you pray every day, in fact probably many times during the day. If you have that hunger, you come to church not out of obligation or habit but for the joy of feeding that hunger to meet with God in corporate worship. And the key to all of those things is that you do them not because someone's looking over your shoulder or breathing down your neck, you do them because in your heart of hearts you actually love doing them. You're hungry for God.

Now let me tell you what I just didn't say. I did not say you have to read your Bible a certain amount of times. I did not say you have to pray x-amount of times a day or that you better show up for church or else. See, I'm not talking about what we do. I'm talking about how and why we do it. Why do we read the Bible? Why do we pray? I mean why do we go to church? I mean you may think these are ridiculous questions. We seek God 'cause that's what

we're supposed to do, I mean, that's what good Christians do, isn't it? Well, when you look at scripture you find out that Job did it because he was hungry. In *Job 23* he says: *I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.* We find that the psalmist does it because he's thirsty. In *Psalm 42* he says: *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.* And we find Jesus himself saying: *"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."* We also find Jesus promising that he was God's answer to both hunger and thirst. In *John 6:35*: Jesus said to them, *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."* Okay. What does Jesus mean when he tells us we're never going to go hungry or thirsty? What's he getting at? What he's saying is the most basic primal need a human being has is not food, it's not clothing, it's not shelter, it's not sex, it is God. We were created and designed to bear the image of God. Our greatest joy and deepest pleasure lies in glorifying God. That's now become a very difficult truth to understand because we're so alienated from God. Sin and rebellion has cracked and shattered the image we now bear and because of the fall, humans now fear, they loathe the very one we were created to worship. Jesus Christ came to die in our place so that we could be redeemed and restored to our original purpose and that is to bear

the image of God. This is God's promise to his children. Listen to what he says, says: *For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* See as Christians, being conformed to the image of Jesus is what we were designed for. It's what we long for, it's what our primal appetites are, it's what we hunger for. And when Jesus says he who comes to me will never be hungry or thirsty, he means being shaped into his image is the food and drink that will satisfy your deepest appetites.

What does that have to do with evangelism? Well, evangelism is about addressing appetites. And it's important to understand what appetites non-believers have. You see it's easy to make the mistake of thinking everyone has an appetite for the truth, but we know that's not the case. I mean after all Jesus was nearly stoned for saying: *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* And it begs the question who doesn't want to be free? Well, the answer is all those who don't know that they are enslaved. And that accounts for every non-Christian you and I will ever meet. God says in *1 John 5:19: We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* We've got a problem. The problem is they don't see it. *2 Corinthians* says: *The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of*

Christ, who is the image of God. They don't know that. They don't know that and they won't believe it even if it is proven to them. That makes evangelism a very difficult enterprise and oftentimes our idea of evangelism addresses a hunger almost nobody has. People may not have an appetite for doctrine or theology or scripture, but whether it's expressed or not, they do have an ever-present sense of their own spiritual starvation. When Jesus Christ said in John 6 that he was the bread of life, he wasn't just providing us with a lovely metaphor. He was stating a bedrock fact. Jesus is what human beings must have or they will starve. The opposite of John 6 is also true, he who does not come to Jesus will always go hungry and he who does not believe in him will always be thirsty. In fact if we look around us, we recognize it's that never-ending hunger and thirst that drives our entire economy. Everything in our culture presupposes a hunger humans can fill either with power or status or pleasure and we all know that none of it lasts. It's what keeps our economy going. It was an unbeliever who said, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." He was right on the money. No amount of money or status or pleasure will satisfy a spiritual hopelessness that lies just beneath most folks' consciousness. But one of the most powerful evangelical forces in the kingdom of God is the life of a person whose deepest hunger has been satisfied by Jesus. Someone who can actually give an answer to the question for the hope that's within

them. Somebody who's curious might just ask you about doctrine, someone who's interested in Christianity might ask you about theology and scripture and those are positive things, I mean, curiosity and interest are good. But the real questions about Christ are the questions that are driven by hunger. Give me a reason for the hope that you have. That's not idle curiosity or passing interest, that's genuine need. How many times have you heard someone describe encountering Christ by first encountering a believer who had something, something these folks just couldn't put their finger on but something they knew they wanted? You know what that something is? That something is hope. Again it's not the wishful thinking kind of hope but the confident expectation that there is a place where man's deepest hunger and thirst will be met, and that place is actually a person. It's the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's something else about being hungry for God as a means for evangelism and that is if you think about it, folks have no defense for it. You know it goes over or under their radar. They might dismiss theology, they might dismiss doctrine but they cannot dismiss genuine hope. They might examine it, they might even reject it but they won't dismiss it because they can't. You know why? Because all of us come from the very same place. Deep inside of us we all have the same hunger and thirst and nothing will satisfy it but the bread of life Jesus Christ.

And so the question I would like us to ponder this morning is the same one that Peter presupposes when he asks us to account for the hope within us. And the question is this: Are you hungry like Jesus was hungry for God? I'm not asking you about church, I'm not asking you about Bible study or prayer, they are not the end, they are a means to an end. The end is being conformed into the very image of God's own Son. It's becoming like Jesus. That's our deepest appetite and it's also our greatest need. It's also one of the most powerful forces that God uses to advance his kingdom because it is the hope within us. Do you have that appetite for that hope within you? Well you can, you know. You know, you might think, well, that's well and good for some of the great saints but I'm so far from that, that seems impossible for me to even get there. Well I've got good news for you. All you have to do is ask. All you have to do is ask. I mean that's what David did. He said, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*" You know, if you don't have the heart that you think you need, you can ask God for it. Lord, create in me a heart for these things. Give me a hunger to be made into the image of your Son. You know of all the requests that God receives, a hunger for God must be up there as a request that gives God great joy. And even that request gives glory to God. See it all goes back to that heart transplant that we talked about at the beginning. God removed our stone hearts and he gave us a heart of flesh in the

first place, a heart that is hungry for God. So hunger itself is a gift from God, but it's also a habit. And like any habit, the more you feed it, the more the hunger grows. Listen to what God says, God says -- we sang it this morning, he says: *Taste, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!* And God's pleading with us, he says, "Try me!" Taste and see, develop an appetite for me and I will feed, satisfy and grow that appetite all at the same time. He says: *Delight yourselves in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.* See our appetite for God delights the Father because it personifies the Son in whose image we are being made. It also makes believers hungry for the hope that we have. So ask God for the grace to enable you to pray like Christ prayed, to proclaim the gospel like Christ proclaimed it, and finally if you want to grow your ability to share Christ with the world, ask God to make you more like him, ask him to make you hungry for God.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. Let's pray.

Father, we want to be hungry for you. We don't want to be hungry for churchy stuff, we don't want to be hungry for externals, as good as they are and as powerful as they are and as necessary as

they are, but we want to be hungry in our hearts, in our souls for you. And we recognize, Lord, that you alone can produce that hunger. And Father, I just want to pray for each and every one of us sitting here, for those who are saying I've never felt that, I have no hunger for that, I'm here because I know I'm supposed to be here and I just, I do what I'm supposed to do and I kind of go through the motions, Lord, I pray that you would create in each and every one of us this hunger, this joy, this depth of feeling that just grows and grows once it's being fed. Give us the ability to ask you for that hunger, give us the ability that trusts that you will give it to us, and give us the ability to glorify you in that we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.