



West Point United Methodist Church

J U L Y 2 0 0 9

“Jesus answered [Satan] “Man does not live by bread alone.”

Luke 4:4

Food For Thought

In classic work: *Celebration of Spiritual Discipline*, Richard Foster speaks to the spiritual disciplines needed in order to fully appreciate Christian life. One of those spiritual disciplines is fasting. Let me be the first to admit that fasting is not a discipline that I have practiced very much. However, in preparing for a routine medical procedure last month, I had to fast for twenty-four hours and take medications which, lets just say that they “purged” me. There are some things I learned from the experience that are worth noting. First of all, if you are over forty and haven’t had a colonoscopy, have one. It’s not that bad. The hardest part is in the getting ready but the procedure itself is a piece of cake and it could truly save your life. Secondly, you can indeed get full on popsicles. On a more theological note, going through this fast though has led me to conclude that we as Americans are pretty convicted about food. The day of my fast was a very long twenty-four hours. Every food related commercial I heard on the radio or saw on television caused my mouth to water. Yet as the day wore down, I found myself strangely detached from my “need” for food. As my body purged itself (with a little medical help) of toxins, I became more focused and had a new clarity that I hadn’t had before. I began to understand how Jesus could go toe to toe with Satan in the wilderness despite being well into his fast. In his humanity, Jesus freed himself from a preoccupation with food which allowed him to focus more completely on God. He knew he was hungry; he knew his physical body had needs. But he also had the faith to know that God would provide for him at the right time. As I think back to that story of Jesus in the wilderness, being confronted by Satan in the middle of that fast, I’ve come to look at food, so readily available in the United States, in a whole new light. Far too many times we either make an idol of food, or we use food for reasons that God did not intend; can you say stress eating? Can you say comfort food? I am reminded of something that Mother Teresa once said upon coming here to the United States from Calcutta. Seeing all the ads for products that would help us lose weight, Mother Teresa is supposed to have said: “Jesus is really needed here.” To close, I am not about to give up my occasional indulgence into a Reese Cup or two. I’ll not ask that of you either. What I would have you do, is consider the question: “How important is food to me next to how important God is to me? Jesus tested that theory in the desert and came up with some interesting answers. I wonder what answers you or I might come up with if we did a similar experience?

Blessings,

Pastor Jeff