

## Rooted: Scripture (Matthew 4:4) - Kevin P. Larson - Karis - 06.20.10

My wife had a friend a few years back who had a very large kid. The boy was massive - probably twice the size of other kids his age. You put him in with the others his age, and he was this crazy freight train. Other moms feared for their kids' safety around him. It was easy to think, "What's this kid's problem? He should be more mature than that!" Because he was so huge, other parents thought he was older and thought he was just ill-behaved and thought that the parents must be clueless. But that wasn't it. He was big on the outside. But he was small on the inside.

This is a good picture of most of us. We may be healthy, or at least big physically, but spiritually, we're malnourished. We're underdeveloped. We're immature. We're feeding our bodies. But we're starving our souls. In the passage we just read, Jesus says that it's spiritual food that's the most important. Christ says, in **Matthew 4:4**, "***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.***" Scripture, which is inspired by God, comes from his "***mouth.***" And we're to ingest it - not through our mouths, but rather into our hearts. Then we'll really grow. Today, it's my prayer that we'll see just how desperately we need that spiritual nourishment found only in God's word. Let's pray.

Last week, Luke kicked off our new "Rooted" series and did a great job. He took us through **Psalm 1**. **Verses 1-2** speak of the man who is "***blessed.***" That person delights in God's word and meditates on it constantly. **Verse 3** says this: "***He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.***" Picture a tree found in a dry land. That tree survives because its roots are near a water supply. They stretch down into the cool waters to get nutrients. The tree's branches grow up toward the sun. The tree produces leaves that are green. It also supplies fruit that's plentiful. This is the picture of us when we're rooted in God's word.

What is true of the plant world is also seen in the animal kingdom. About ten years ago, I brought home a tiny little golden retriever home from a kennel. Little Tozer was about eight weeks old, and I could hold him in my palm. He then started eating and eating and eating. Within a year, he became this 90 pound monster of a dog. He ate food. He then grew.

It's the same from us. In the womb, our umbilical cord is attached to mom where we get nourishment from her blood. We start eating from conception. We then come out of her belly crying for milk. Then we begin eating and growing. Life, growth, comes from food.

Jesus says here, in **Matthew 4**, that spiritual life comes through the word of God. The Lord is taken by the Spirit out into the desert to be tempted by Satan. He's fasting, says **verse 2**, for "***forty days and forty nights.***" He's really hungry, as we'd expect.

Satan says, “Hey, Jesus. You’re God, right? Why not just take these stones and make them into loaves? Eat up. What’s your problem?” But Jesus respond and quotes **Deuteronomy 8:3**. He says, “We’re not just intended to eat bread. We’re intended to eat God’s words. That’s what’s most important.” He reminds us of God’s original intention. Adam and Eve were put in the garden not just to eat of all the fruit there. They were there to live off God’s words. They were to submit to His rule. They didn’t do that, though. This is why they were kicked out of Eden. This is why they ended up dying, physically, but also spiritually. Jesus tells the same serpent that tricked them that He wasn’t going to do what those first people did. He was going to perfectly obey the Father. And He says to him, and to us, that the Scriptures, what proceeds from God’s mouth, His revelation of His nature and works to us, is the source of our life.

### **Scripture: For Our Welfare**

This is consistent with what the Bible teaches about itself. Scripture gives us life. It is for our welfare that we consume it. Mark Dever, in his great book, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, talks about his conversation with a priest, who put him on the spot at a public event. The man said, quite pompously, “We all know that the church created the Bible.” Dever responded by saying this:

God’s people have never created God’s Word. From the beginning God’s Word has always created His people! From Genesis 1, where God literally creates all that is, including His people, by His Word; to Genesis 12, where He calls Abraham out of Ur by the word of His promise; to Ezekiel 37, where God gives Ezekiel a vision to share with the Israelite exiles in Babylon about the great resurrection to life that would come about by God’s Word; to the supreme sending of God’s Word in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh; to Romans 10, where we read that spiritual life comes to us by the Word - God has always created His people by His Word. It has never been the other way around. God’s people have never created God’s Word.

**See, the word of God creates life.** God literally spoke people into existence at creation. He then called a people together, Israel, by His Word. And now He calls His church into existence. He does it as people hear His written word proclaimed or read its pages. God reveals who He is and how He has worked. We see His gospel there. We hear how Jesus has lived and died and risen to save us, apart from our works. And as we encounter that message of the Bible, God will do miracles, creating new life in spiritually dead people. Then those people, like many of us, will love and embrace that gospel hope.

In **Romans 1:16**, the apostle Paul says that he is not **“ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”** Scripture’s point is to teach us the gospel. And it is powerful. It does miracles. And what it does is create faith, spiritual life in us. Later on, in **chapter 10**, in **verse 17**, Paul says, **“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”** God will create life through His Word.

This is what a strange passage in the Old Testament, **Ezekiel 37**, illustrates. There in a vision, the Lord takes the prophet out into a dry valley covered with a bunch of dry bones.

He asks Ezekiel if the bones can live, and he's not sure. He then tells him to preach to them; Ezekiel is confused. The prophet obeys, however, and the bones suddenly come to life. Now Ezekiel believes miracles can happen. Now he understands the power of God's word. We're supposed to believe the same thing. This is why it's so key for us to give the Bible to people who don't believe. God creates life through His word. The best thing we can do for the welfare of those around us is give them Scripture.

But it's also good for those of us who already believe. **That's because the word of God also grows life.** The Bible doesn't just save us. It changes us. It helps our souls grow, much like food makes our bodies grow. It keeps us alive. It sustains us. This is what Jesus says to the Devil here. Scripture is the source of life. It helps us mature. In the language Luke used last week, it works for our sanctification. That's a theological term for spiritual growth. It's growing in holiness, being more like Jesus, being made different like Him and for Him.

That's why Jesus says, in **John 17:17**, ***“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”*** It's His word of truth that changes us. It grows us. I've already mentioned **Ephesians 5** in a couple of weddings this summer. I'm sure I'll mention that passage in another one I'm doing. There marriage is said to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the church. Men are called to sacrifice themselves for the growth of their wives. They're to do it like Christ did for His people. There, in **Ephesians 5:25**, Paul says, ***“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”*** How does Jesus sanctify us? How does He cleanse us? It's by His Word. That's why it's so critical for us as believers to hear it and read it. His word grows life.

I now have a 6-year-old boy who's starting to look like a little man. If he was talking in complete sentences, but was still 30-inches long, Amy and I would be freaking out. To live is to grow physically - at least to a point of maturity. But so often we're not growing spiritually at all. And we're ignorant or not concerned.

But this is not just an issue of ignorance. It's a matter of pride. If there's anything we should be now as Missouri Tigers, it's humble. The last few months, we've been going off about sticking it to the Big 12 Conference and going to the Big 10. We've been talking about how we deserve more TV revenue, like Texas and Oklahoma and the other teams. Our governor even talked down to the Big 12, basically saying the conference's academics were lame. But, as you've probably heard, the Big 10 asked Nebraska to join. It turns out they weren't interested in us. And then we were left to crawl on our hands and knees, begging for Texas and the other Big 12 schools to keep the conference together and let us in it. We were the little kids sticking out our tongues and then realizing that we did it too soon and now look like idiots. We were humbled. We were mocking the hand that was feeding us. And we had to come back and ask them to feed us again.

This is the Lord's point in the passage in **Deuteronomy** that Jesus is quoting here. Look with me at **Deuteronomy 8:1-5**, on page 152.

Deuteronomy 8:1 "The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. 2 And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. 3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. 6 So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him.

Israel disobeyed God and so the Lord led them into the desert where He tested them and taught them. He poured bread from heaven. He did it every day, just what they needed. But why? It was to humble them, Moses says. It was for them to get the point that just as they needed God during the desert to throw food from the sky or they wouldn't eat and live - they were that desperate - they really needed His words even worse. They thought they could do things on their own spiritually, just like Adam and Eve, but they couldn't. They needed His revelation. And it's the same way with us.

While in Rio de Janeiro last week, we took a tour of a world-famous favela, the "City of God." There we saw living conditions that were among the worst I had seen, and I've been to Haiti. We saw a little kid there who was emaciated and pretty desperate. One of the missionaries we were with gave him some potato chips and he gobbled them up. They said that the last time they had seen him, he had been digging frantically through the trash in the ditch we were walking alongside. There was nothing remotely close to food there. But the kid was that desperate. Whether we realize it or not, even if we're plump and well fed, most of us are like that kid. We're in desperate need for God's word. And we need to be fighting to put it in our hearts.

I heard that unemployment had again risen this month in America. We've gone through a recession. It's nothing like the favelas of Rio, but people are losing jobs left and right. Why has God allowed this in His providence? We have to be cautious speaking for God. But could it be that He wants to humble us? Perhaps He wants us to see that we're dependent upon Him for everything. And we especially need His word to survive. It's possible.

The word of God gives life. Look with me at **Psalms 19** for a second. It's on page 456. Look at **verses 7-9**.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

Hear the participles, the second half of each statement. The word is **“reviving the soul.”** It gives us life again. It makes **“wise the simple.”** It helps us process our world. It rejoices **“the heart”**. Yes, it serves our happiness. It enlightens **“eyes.”** It gives us spiritual sight. And that word is pure and eternal and true and righteous. It gives us life. It serves our welfare.

But is the word of God like vegetables only? Is it like brussels sprouts and peas and other things your parents tried to get you to eat as a kid? My son Hadley and I have this funny thing going now where he asks me frequently what my favorite food is. I say, “Ice cream.” He says, “That’s not a food. It’s a dessert.” And we argue back and forth for fun. Is the Bible just food that makes us grow? Just nutrition? Or is it more like dessert? More of a delight? Look also at **verse 10 of Psalm 19**. There the Psalmist says this: **“More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.”** What’s he saying? The Bible is more like a dessert. It tastes good. It’s pleasurable. Where I might say, if I were writing this, that God’s word is like the “My Strawberry Blonde” creation at Coldstone, he uses the metaphors that he knows. I guess David didn’t experience Coldstone. But in **Psalm 19** he speaks of honey. The Bible is that sweet to the tongue. It’s delicious. It’s dessert. So, hear me Karis, God wants us to see that the Bible doesn’t just give us spiritual nutrition. It gives us spiritual pleasure. It doesn’t just create life. It doesn’t just grow life. **The Bible also enriches life.** God made food to nourish us, but also bless us. He does this through His word, too.

And that’s because the Bible isn’t just this book of commands. It’s not this book of principles for good living. It’s God’s revelation of Himself. It’s Him, by His grace, willingly choosing to tell us about His nature. It’s Him giving us truths about Himself, so we can have a relationship with Him and have our identity changed by that relationship. And that knowledge of Him gives joy.

And it’s also about His work in sending His Son to rescue us. It’s a story. The Bible answers all of our big life questions: Why am I here? What’s wrong with the world? How can what’s wrong be made right? Where are things headed? Where are we now? It answers these through the coming of Jesus Christ who lived and died to redeem us along with everything. And that story is meant to make us happy. God and His gospel are glorious. We’re meant to delight in who He is. His message is meant to cheer our souls. It’s meant to be honey for our hearts.

The word of God gives us life. It creates life in us. It grows life in us. It enriches our lives. This is why we need to be people who read and study the Bible. As individuals, we need to have regular meals, where we’re in His word, putting it in our hearts, our we’ll shrivel up. We need to snack on His truth throughout the day, so that we’re growing and rejoicing.

And, as a church, we must be committed to proclaiming the word of God. That's why we typically preach carefully through books of the Bible here. If this is what God's word says about itself, why would we want to trifle with other things? Why not be faithful and "**preach the word**" as Paul says in **2 Timothy 4**? We believe it's best to do things God's way. Yes, this happens on Sunday, but it should happen all over Karis throughout the week.

Many of us don't see our need for Scripture. We don't see the sweetness of Scripture. And we don't know what to do. What we need to do is pray. I'll forever have this outline in my head that I learned from John Piper - IOUS. Piper argues we should pray for a longing for the word, and He bases this on the Psalms. Listen to this:

- "Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain" - Ps. 119:36
- "Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law" - Ps. 119:18
- "Unite my heart to fear your name" ("teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in Your truth") - Ps. 86:11
- "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" - Ps. 90:14.

Let's pray for more of His word. Let's pray He'll change our hearts, that we'll long for His revelation again. Pray, church, that we'll hunger and thirst for His righteousness, as Jesus says, in **Matthew 5:6**. Jesus says that blessing is found there. He will satisfy us. Let's ask for His word that serves our welfare.

### **Scripture: For Our Warfare**

But here's another angle I want you to see this morning: it also serves our warfare. This is what's going on in **Matthew 4**. It's war! Jesus is quoting **Deuteronomy** to the Devil, not just for fun, but to survive temptation. That's certainly instructive for us. Satan is trying to tempt Jesus, who is the God-Man, to use His divine prerogatives to take the easy win over this trial. But Jesus knows that He is meant to fight as a man here. He is undergoing temptation from the serpent, just like Adam. He's fighting him in the desert, just like Israel. And as a man, He's fighting to submit to the Spirit and obey, unlike Adam and Israel and us. Jesus was later going to defeat Satan on the cross, so that His death could cover our sins. But here He is fighting Him in the wilderness, so that His perfect life could also be given to us. He's the new man, Adam, Israel here. He's doing what they, and we, couldn't do. Jesus has to win. And He can't just play the God card, as Satan is telling Him to do.

But He does pull out His Scripture memory cards. In **verse 4**, as we've seen, Satan tempts Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus says that God's word is the real food. In **verse 5**, Satan tempts Jesus to throw Himself off the temple to show He's God. Jesus says He won't test God like that, quoting **Deuteronomy 6:16**. In **verses 8-9**, the serpent tries to get Jesus to take a short-cut to the glory before Him, a path without the cross, if he'll worship him. Of course, Satan couldn't promise this. He's a liar. But Jesus refuses to worship anyone other than the Father, quoting **Deuteronomy 6:13** this time. Our Lord is in the heat of battle and what He does in it is quote Scripture. It's how He fights.

But most of the time we don't even realize we're in the middle of a fight. David Platt, in his new book *Radical*, talks about the SS United States, a huge ship completed in 1952 to be the biggest and fastest troop carrier in the world. It was supposed to carry 15,000 troops across the globe at top speeds and without refueling, but the Cuban missile crisis came and it was never used for that. It ended up being a huge luxury liner that would carry around the President and other dignitaries. It ended up having bars, theaters, pools, and air conditioning. It never served its purpose. Platt says that this is what the church has become. We're not a people on a mission, fighting against darkness. We're comfy, satisfied people who care nothing for the world. We're meant to be on the offensive, storming the gates of hell. But we're not.

He's right. But I'll add to the metaphor. Sadly, we're the rich people on board, playing shuffleboard, getting tans, drinking margaritas, floating unknowingly into a battlefield. And the enemy is taking us out one by one. We're actually in a battle. We should be on the defensive. And we don't realize it. We have to wake up and come to terms with it. And then we have to fight back. And the way we fight is like Jesus, with God's word.

On our trip to Brazil, we led the children in a backyard Bible school. Maureen Harris did a great job of crafting curriculum that we used. She used four truths about God that come from Scripture that are developed by author Tim Chester in his book, *You Can Change*. These aren't childish truths. They're foundational statements about who God is. And if we get them, we, too, can fight against Satan. Listen to all four of these. **First, God is great.** This is taught all over Scripture. God is sovereign. He's completely in control. And He's powerful. **Isaiah 40:12** speaks of God's greatness. Listen.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

**Second, God is glorious.** **Psalm 19** says before what we read earlier that the heavens declare His glory. **Ephesians 1** says that the purpose of salvation is to show His glory. Creation. Redemption. All about His glory. He is resplendent, beautiful, amazing.

**Third, God is good.** He works for the good of His children. And this is because He is good. He's the source of all joy, blessing, and purpose. When we come to Him and His kingdom, Jesus says in **Matthew 13**, that it's like finding treasure. That's God.

**Fourth, God is gracious.** **Ephesians 1** doesn't just say salvation magnifies His glory. It magnifies the glory of His grace. He doesn't look at sinful creatures and tell them to climb out of the mess they're in on their own. He reaches down and grabs us and pulls us out. This is so His greatness and glory and goodness might be on display. That's why He works by grace. This is what the Bible shows over and over about God.

Those are four truths. And they're really important. Satan, you see, wants us to do what He tried to get Jesus to do - reject the truth about who God is and place our hope and delight elsewhere. And we have to fight Him with truths about who God is and how those truths gives us joy. So here's what Chester does with those four key truths. **God is great - so we do not have to be in control.** If He is as big and awesome as the Bible says, we don't have to worry or fear. We can trust Him. Let's say that you're without a job and you have no idea how you're going to pay your bills at the end of the month. Satan says that God is going to fail you. You have to worry. Jesus wants us to meditate on God's greatness and trust in Him.

**God is glorious - so we don't have to fear others.** If He's as beautiful and amazing as Scripture says, it's His glory we should be concerned about. If you're talking about Christ and someone starts dogging you, Satan wants you to be concerned about what they think about you. He wants you to cower and stop. Jesus, however, wants you to be concerned about how good God looks. And to have no fear of man.

**God is good - so we do not have to look elsewhere.** If God is that delightful, then we are fools to try to find joy in other places. If you're tempted toward sexual sin and you don't know what to do, the answer isn't just to stop, stop, stop. It's to start seeing how much more amazing the love of God is. Satan wants you to settle for fleeting pleasures. Jesus wants you to look only to God.

**God is gracious - so we do not have to prove ourselves.** If God is the Lord of grace, then we don't have to keep fighting to make ourselves good enough for Him or others. If you get in a misunderstanding with someone, you don't have to fight and fight to clear your name. If you stumble and sin, you don't have to beat yourself up for the next 8 weeks until you think you've paid it off somehow. Rather, you can walk in freedom. Satan wants you to try to pay your own way and be proud or depressed. Jesus wants you to walk in grace.

See how important "doctrine" is? A lot of people say that doctrine isn't applicable, that theology is a distraction. But the Lord reveals Himself to us in Scripture. He wants us to know Him and love Him and bring Him glory. And He wants that to give us great joy. That joy comes through right knowledge of God, from good theology. And the Bible ultimately speaks of the message of Jesus - that in Christ, we see God's greatness, glory, goodness, and grace - in His life and in His death and resurrection. That story again gives us joy. But knowing God and His gospel also helps us fight Satan - that's because temptation is primarily a battle of joy. **Psalm 16:11** says, ***"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*** Will we believe that full, forever joy is found in God and Him alone? If that's the case, Satan can throw anything at us.

One day back when we first got married, I came home from my seminary class a bit early. I threw my bag down and walked in to surprise my wife. She was surprised alright! She heard someone come in and got really nervous. She was upstairs and readied herself to defend the house. I started to head up the stairs, and she started to lunge at me. Then she had this point of cognitive dissonance, where she realized, "Hey, this is my husband. Maybe I shouldn't kill him!" She then calmed down and I lectured her for not calling 911. I said, "What if the bad guy had a gun?" She said, flexing her muscles, "I've got these guns."

Friends, that's how we often act in the battle. Again, we're arrogant. And we need to be humbled. Think about this for a second. If anyone had "guns," it would be Jesus, right? Sinless. Perfect. Every way. But Jesus knew Scripture and used it against the enemy. He shows us what humans were meant to be. He is the perfect man. He fully submits to the Spirit. And Scripture teaches, no matter how hard it is to understand, that He learned the Bible, that He grew as a man, and that He fought and defeated the Serpent with the Bible. If this was Christ's strategy, how much more must it be ours! Who do we think we are? We don't have "guns." We're flabby. We need God's help in His word. Friends, God's word doesn't just give us life. It protects our life. It doesn't just serve our welfare. It helps us survive warfare.

And this is why we also so badly need community. I meet Christians all the time that want to have a "personal relationship" and want nothing to do with the church. But that's suicide. Jack Bauer can go in and destroy 30 people at once. So can Jason Bourne. But, friends, they're not real. And let me tell you. You're neither one. Not physically. And not spiritually. Satan will eat you for breakfast without help. No one fights battles alone in the real world. You need other people to remind you of God's promises. You need people to tell you who God really is. You need people to preach to you the gospel.

And you need help understanding that in the Bible. The Reformation back in the 1500s reclaimed the idea that as Christians, we have the Spirit and we are all priests, and we can open up the Bible and understand it. But we've taken it too far. God gives us teachers and leaders. And He gives us brothers and sisters. Scripture is best studied in community. Personal devotions are good. But if that's all you're doing, you're headed toward heresy and destruction. If you don't realize that, you're being proud and are heading for a fall. Yes, we need to hide God's word in our heart as individuals. But we also desperately need each other. This is why our fight clubs and C-Groups are so important.

Brothers and sisters, we desperately need the word of God. Therefore, we can't go toward laziness, as Luke said last week, just saying, "Hey, God's good and He's going to grow me and protect me regardless." No. God uses means - like us reading the Bible and listening to sermons. But we also can't move toward legalism. We don't saturate ourselves in Scripture to prove ourselves to God or to look better than the people around us. No. God's not impressed with that. In fact, He's angered by that. No, we do it because it's like eating.

If we don't do it, we die. We shrivel up. Or Satan kicks our butt. We find life in God's word. And in that life, we find it, as Christ said, abundantly. We find joy. We root ourselves in God. We abide in Jesus. And God's grace comes to us. That's why we should be people of the Bible. It's to get God!

And when we fail in reading Scripture, we don't say, "Oh, well," or do the opposite and beat ourselves up. We take comfort in the fact that Jesus perfectly saturated Himself in Scripture and overcame temptation from Satan. If we trust in Him, His obedience is our obedience. We are united to Him, and He gives His perfection to us. What do we do when we fail? When we hit snooze? When we miss a week of the Bible? We trust in the gospel. We repent of our sin. And we go back to the source again.

Let me take on one question you might be having before we close. Isn't this kind of worshipping the Bible? Maybe Bible-olatry of some kind? Isn't something out of balance here? Well, that can sometimes be a just criticism of the church. There have been Christians in the American evangelical world that have been all about the Bible and haven't really seemed to know God or act like Him. But that is a tragedy and it shouldn't be the case at all. We don't worship the Bible. Let me explain. When I was in Brazil, I got some emails from my wife. In those, say she tells me about how she thinks and what she feels. She reveals to me what she's like. I'm going to pay attention to those emails. I'm going to ponder them a lot. If I'm gone a long time, I might even end up memorizing them. But it's not about the letters. It's about the person that wrote them. I don't focus on the emails for their own sake. They're not the end. They bring me to know and love her. It's the same with God. He reveals Himself in Scripture. We love the letter, because it helps us love Him. We don't worship the Bible. The Bible helps us worship.

Friends, it's my prayer that we as Karis can be people of the word of God. Platt in *Radical* talks about visiting a church in Asia, where he was planning to teach a short Bible study. He went to this underground, house church where the blinds were closed and people feared for their life, and he ended up preaching for eight hours. They asked him back and for the next ten days he would teach them the Scriptures for 10 to 12 hours per day. The people were so, so hungry. Those people in the "secret churches" were desperate. They knew without God's word they would die. But in America, it's pretty much the opposite. And we're really more needy than they are! Platt's prayer and mine is that we would have this sense of hunger for the word of God here - that we would labor to take the Scripture to them there, but we would also see the riches we freely have here. Krish Kandiah of the Evangelical Alliance UK says this:

More than 200 million people have no access to spiritual food, with no Scriptures in their own language. Yet we in the West, despite owning more Bibles per household than we will ever use, are slowly starving to death because we have lost our appetite for Scripture.

May our Lord wake us up and give us an appetite for His Word, the Scriptures.