

A BOWL OF SOUP

By Steve Stutzman

Sometimes we just haven't had enough of the old stuff yet.

For 40 years they wandered in the wilderness. God saw and met their needs.... There was Manna from heaven, quails, and even water when the supply ran low. But, it was wilderness. Not much grew there, at least not much worth the while. The cattle were thin and the sheep small, the fruit of the ground was shriveled, the sun was hot and miserable, and even tho they got used to it, it never was what they were looking for.

The 40 long years passed, and with it the generation that had blown their opportunity through unbelief. Now their children gathered together to hear what a new leader would say to them. Some of them knew, from stories they had heard, about a land of milk and honey, where making a living was easy, and the rain fell from heaven to water the corn. Some had nearly given up on the idea. But Joshua sent messengers throughout the host with a message: Make some SOUP.

After 40 years of practice, the people didn't need added instructions. They knew all about making this soup. They knew the stories behind it, how their father Jacob had made such good soup, that Esau sold him his birthright— and the Title to the land of Promise— for a bowl of soup. With generations of practice, and finesse of a family tradition, they made soup.

The land was hunted clean of deer. Each pot of stew was calculated and boiled just right. A pinch of this, a smear of that, and then the taste testing begins. Because, you see, this was not just ANY bowl of stew..... This was the last one. Joshua had promised that in three days, they would pass over the Jordan and begin the claiming and inheriting of true promise.

God has a Promised Land for you and I. It is also a land of Spiritual fatness, of continual connection, and a land of Spirit power and outpouring onto the barren soil of our lives, making them fruitful once more. Some of us have wandered so long in the barren wilderness of rejection and pain, we actually think we belong there. Some of us were born there, and it is all we have ever known. Yet deep inside, we know this wilderness is not where we belong.

We were born for Canaan. Our soul longs for the feast of acceptance, the grapes of joy , the wheat fields of peace, the streams of healing, ponds of restoration, olive trees of gentleness. We know we were not born to be slaves in this wilderness of turmoil, anger, fear, bitterness, rejection and pain. Our soul grows weary with the constant quarreling about the correct way to build tents in the wilderness. We long for a strong walled city with houses and rooms for all.

Then God comes. Into our strained brains He whispers that in 3 days He is going to lead us out.... Out of this existence to the Promise. And we need to make 1 more bowl of soup. It is your final bowl. After this, you will eat of the fruit of the new land. What will you put in?

Put in the pain. Stir in the rejection. Add a little Accusation to spice it up, and don't forget the immorality and shame. Soak it all in the pain of broken relationships. Pour over the top the bitter feelings attached to occultism and witchcraft, and add a dash or two of fear. Perhaps fold in a layer or two of addictions, and top it off with some physical maladies stemming from wrong attitudes.

Try putting a few rules and regulations in for flavor. Add several more just for good measure. Take everything you have grown fond of in the wilderness and throw it in the soup. Stir it up. Heat it to a point of boiling on a stove of human effort. Cook thoroughly, and serve.

Enjoy. It's the last bowl.

Now are you ready to fight? Ready to leave this place of wandering and torment? Ready to go in and possess the land that was given you by the Lord for an inheritance? Ready to face the giants that stand ominously in the distance? Ready to walk with a living God one day at a time, and follow His leading? Ready for the richness of Spirit Life?

Or, do you just need another bowl of soup? Let me know when you are tired of the soup. As soon as you are, you will find the very presence of God leading the way to the Jordan, across it, and beyond. The (Ark of the) Covenant will stabilize you as you journey, help you overthrow giants, and dash strong cities to the ground. Follow the Holy Spirit, eat of the riches of the land, and leave the soup on the other side. There is freedom for you.