

More Milk

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God the father and from the Lord, Jesus Christ.

I don't have kids. Maybe someday, but not this day. However, I do know that you can't give newborns steak; their stomachs can't handle it. Instead, you have to give babies milk. Am I right? You're all with me on that one, right? Good. Keep that illustration in mind as we walk through our lesson. Listen again to what the author of Hebrews has to say in 5:11 – 6:3.

We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, because you have become too lazy to listen. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the beginning principles of God's word all over again. You have become people who need milk, not solid food. For everyone who lives on milk is not acquainted with the word of righteousness, because he is still an infant. But solid food is for mature people, who have their senses trained by practice to distinguish between good and evil. Therefore, leaving the beginning discussion of Christ, let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith in God, of the teaching about baptisms, of the laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will do this, if God permits. This is God's Word.

This lesson was hand-picked for you and me. I feel as if I identify with the author. Unfortunately, I feel like you identify with the recipients of this letter. If you don't think so, here is some shocking data for you:

- 1) 75% of our members are not here today. Look around. Do you see 1200 people? No. Even if you argue that we have three services, so you don't see all the people who come to the other services, it's a poor argument. 377 came last week. 336 the week before. 356 the week before that. The math says that only 25% of our members attend church in a given week.
- 2) We just got back our Pulse Survey results. 120 people took the survey. (A lower number than we would have liked.) Do any of you remember taking that survey? At the end, there were 25 or so doctrinal statements where you had to choose 1 of 4 answers: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; or Strongly Disagreed. The results indicate that we are not ready to get into the meat of things just yet. There were some vitally important, fundamental teachings that we need to know without a doubt before we can move on to more difficult doctrine. Here is a sample of some of those fundamental teachings:
 - a. Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior will go to heaven.
 - b. A child is sinful from the moment of conception.
 - c. A person can be a healthy Christian even if they don't go to church.
 - d. God is satisfied if a person lives the best life he or she can.
 - e. The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit through the prophets and apostles. Therefore, the Bible contains no mistakes or errors.
 - f. God literally created the world in six 24-hour days.
 - g. Although there are many different religions in the world, most of them lead to the same God.
 - h. In the Lord's Supper the bread and wine are symbols that represent Christ's body and blood to help us remember his sacrifice.
 - i. There is only one God, but he exists in three distinct persons.

Unfortunately, we did not get 100%. If, when hearing those statements, you weren't sure whether or not you should agree or disagree, this lesson is for you. If you think you already know this, then this lesson is still for you. God's Word has a way of giving us exactly what we need no matter if we are a new Christian or a seasoned one. So, whether you are described like one at the end of Hebrews 5 who needs milk (i.e., basic and fundamental Bible teachings), or if you are described like one at the beginning of Hebrews 6 who can handle some meat (i.e., you are ready to build off the basics and digest some difficult doctrine), we can all benefit from having some more milk.

The author to the Hebrews has a problem. Did you catch what it was? He has much more to say about Christ being a high priest like Melchizedek, but, he can't. It's not because he is inadequate at presenting it, but because the people would not get it. Our lesson says they were **"too lazy to listen."**

Earlier, I said I felt like I was the author, and you were those to whom the author was writing. Does that offend you? It should! The author calls the people lazy. He goes on and says, **"In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the beginning principles of God's word all over again."** Isn't that just insulting? Let's look at the math. The average age of our members is about 55. On average, there are about 60 services a year. 50 years of hearing 60 sermons a year is a total of 3000 sermons! Let's get crazy and say on average those sermons were 20 minutes long. That means this theoretically, average aged member would have heard 1000 hours of sermons. If you do 1000 hours of something, you would be pretty good at it. What's the point? The author says that the people he was writing to have had ample time by now to be well acquainted with the basics. Yet, instead of being the teachers, they need someone to teach them! Another way the author puts it is like this: **"You have become people who need milk, not solid food."**

My dear friends, we need more milk!

I say *we*, and I want that "*we*" to be emphasized! As much as I'd like to feel like the author, I realize that I am not. I have a lot to learn too. I too have a great need to be in God's Word on a regular basis. These past few weeks, we have been learning about Jesus feeding the 5000. What we learn is that he gives more than just physical food; he also gives spiritual food. Yet, before we can build up to solid food, we first need to be able to digest milk.

For example, let's consider arithmetic. For math, you have to begin with the basics. Those basics will be the foundation for the rest of the stuff you will learn in math. You have to know what the numbers are before you can start adding and subtracting. Then, once you have addition and subtraction locked down, you move on to multiplication and division. If you don't have those basic principles understood, you can't go on understand Algebra, Geometry, Calculus, or how to solve quadratic equations. You need the basics first. Then, as you mature in your understanding and application, you build off that to go on to that which is more difficult.

The same is true with God's Word. We all need the milk first! The more milk we have the better! The more you are regularly hearing the simply truths of God's Word the better! Yet, because of our sinful nature, we have become too lazy to listen. Sometimes, it simply goes in one ear and out the other. Other times we simply refuse to hear God's Word by doing something else instead of coming to worship. The rest of the time we forget the milk and choke on the meat.

I'm guilty of this sin too. I have failed to recognize the need to for us to drink more milk. I sometimes underestimate our maturity in serving the Lord.

Maybe if I did a better job of feeding you milk, the fundamental teachings of God’s Word, we would be better equipped to serve the Lord. Maybe if I had more understanding to know how to lead you and teach you, we would be more spiritually mature. Maybe if I had more patience to train, we would be more built up in Christ. That’s an honest and open self-evaluation. It is a clear indication that I too have fallen into sin.

Here is clear indication that you have sinned: I’m preaching to a fraction of what I should be! And don’t even pat yourselves on the back and say, “Well, I’m here, so he isn’t talking to me.” Are you here every week? Does coming to church once a month or twice a year truly indicate that you are remembering the Sabbath as the 3rd Commandment orders? Do you ever get disagree with the tough things God says in his Word? Have you ever chocked on some of the meat of the Bible?

Sure you have! We all have! We are all sinners. Our sinful nature thinks it knows best. We have this little voice inside us that like to questions God’s Word. We have the world around us that our sinful nature likes to listen to instead of God’s Word. And we have Satan whose sole purpose is to get us to stop believing God’s Word.

We need as much milk as we can get! There are spiritual forces at war that we know nothing about. Our only chance is God’s Word. That milk is what makes us grow. I urge you, drink more milk! When you think you are full, keep going! You can never get enough of God’s Word. In it, God gives us the wonderful knowledge of his Son, our Savior. This Savior, is Jesus Christ who lived and died and rose again to save us. He committed no sin, yet he bore all our sin. He was innocent, yet he carried out guilt. Because of him and through faith in him, we are forgiven. You are forgiven! This is the most important and fundamental truth that we all need to know! And it is clearly said to us in His Word.

The Word clearly indicates that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. We need this Savior because we are all sinners from the moment of conception. We need to come to church because we are not spiritually healthy when we give up meeting together. God isn’t satisfied with your best—only Jesus perfection and innocent is acceptable. This is because, since the Bible is God’s Word, it contains no mistake or errors. So yes, God really created the world in six, regular, 24-hour days. Other religions don’t lead to this God. To assure us that we are forgiven, God has given us his true body and blood in the Lord’s Supper; the bread and wine are not a symbol. All of these truths come directly from the Word of God who is the one and only true God who reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹

¹ This paragraph weaves together all of the doctrinal statements mentioned at the beginning of the sermon. Here are the proper responses:

- a) Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior will go to heaven. **Strongly Agree.**
- b) A child is sinful from the moment of conception. **Strongly Agree.**
- c) A person can be a healthy Christian even if they don’t go to church (i.e., those who are able; not included are the homebound, those in assisted living, or those in the hospital). **Strongly Disagree.**
- d) God is satisfied if a person lives the best life he or she can. **Strongly Disagree.**
- e) The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit through the prophets and apostles. Therefore, the Bible contains no mistakes or errors. **Strongly Agree.**
- f) God literally created the world in six 24-hour days. **Strongly Agree.**
- g) Although there are many different religions in the world, most of them lead to the same God. **Strongly Disagree.**
- h) In the Lord’s Supper the bread and wine are symbols that represent Christ’s body and blood to help us remember his sacrifice. **Strongly Disagree.**
- i) There is only one God, but he exists in three distinct persons. **Strongly Agree.**

At first, it might feel insulting to be told that we need milk and not solid food. Essentially, it means that we are spiritually immature. Notice, however, that the author of the letter to the Hebrews has an encouragement for them and us: “let us press on toward matters that require greater maturity.”

Don't forget the milk. Realize we need more milk. At the same time, let's grow from the milk, continue to drink that milk, and then, as we are filled up on that milk, let us mature together as we eat some steak. Are you hungry for some steak? Me too. You know what goes great with steak, milk!

Amen!

“The peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”(Php 4:7).