

SERMON 24th MAY 2020
1 Peter 2: 1-10

Friends:

After birth, every new parent wonders the same questions: How “much milk” does our baby “need”? How often should we feed our baby? At birth, the baby’s stomach is the size of a “cherry”, and it can hold 5-7 ml of milk.

- At day 3, it’s the size of a “walnut”, holding 22-27 ml.
- Day 7, the stomach is the size of an “apricot”, holding up to 60 ml of milk.
- By day 30 of the baby’s life, it is the size of a “large egg” holding between 80-50 ml of milk!
- This is the “reason” you much constantly feed your “newborn”: the “stomach” grows very “quickly” each day!
- Peter says in Verse 2:
“Like newborn babies “crave” pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation”.
- The “Christian life” often seems like a “battle” between living as who we truly “are” – “children of God”, and living how we used to: as “citizens of the world”!
- “How” can we “grow up” into “salvation”? **(V2)**
- Peter “encourages” his readers and also us this morning that the Living Word that “initially” saved them is the “same word” they need, to keep growing into their promised salvations!
- Peter argues that if someone has indeed tasted that the “Lord is good” **(V3)**, they will “crave” for that “word” by which they will continue to grow “until” they “obtain salvation when the Lord returns”!
- Peter “tells” us that we are to “rid ourselves” of all ‘malice’ and all “deceit’, ‘hypocrisy’ and ‘envy’ and all ‘slander’! Verse 1
- “Malice” is a general word for “evil” that carries with its hostility and possibly even an intention to cause harm!
- “Deceit” is concealing or misrepresenting the truth!
- “Hypocrisy” is pretense; just pretending to be good!
- “Envy”: jealousy: feeling resentment against someone because of that person’s rivalry, success or advantages.
- “Slander”: hurtful talk, talking about others behind their backs!
- It’s “interesting” that all these “sins” are evils that “harm” relationships and “destroy” community!

Friends:

The goal of our salvation is God's "glory" and the very opposite of these sins in **(V1)**: as we have seen, we are to "pursue" a sincere, unhyprocritical – brotherly "love"!

- "Rid yourselves" in **(V1)** can be used in reference to "taking off your clothes", and laying them aside!
- This is "something" we did when we first believed in Christ; we "died to sin" "put on Jesus' righteousness"!
- Peter says it is "also" a present command!
- "Day by day" we are to identify these "sinful deeds" and "get rid of them"!

Friends:

You will "never" "glory in God" till first of all God has killed "your" "glorying in yourself"!

(C.H. Spurgeon)

- The "problem", as we 'know too well', is that far too often we "fail miserably" at "putting away" our "former passions"!
- We don't "notice" them, we "ignore" them, so we don't take them off!
- Or we "do put them off" but leave them "close enough" to pick them up again!
- Because" our hearts naturally tend towards "sin"; we often grow "complacent about our sin" and easily compromise our "obedience to God"!
- We "fail" to treat a "command": "Rid yourselves" **(V1)** with "any seriousness"!
- Peter goes on in **(V2)** to show us "how" we can fulfill the "command" to "put away our sin"!
- God used "His Word" to save us "initially" and He uses His word to "sustain" us "day by day"!

Friends:

You "never" outgrow your "need" for the gospel"!

- You "never" graduate to a course where the gospel should "not" be the centre of the curriculum!
- There's "no post gospel" graduate school in the Christian life!
- We are to "centre" our lives and faith on God's Word!
- When the Bible "speaks", God "speaks"!

- The “Bible” should fill your “memory”; rule your “heart” and guide your “feet”!
- “Ignorance” of the “scriptures” is ‘ignorance’ of “Christ”!
(Jerome)
- It is “God” who “Initiated” our salvation and it’s “God” who “initiates” our growth!
- Though ‘not’ mentioned directly in Verses 1-3 the “agent” of our spiritual growth, our “sanctification”, is the “Holy Spirit”!
(John 16:7)
(1 Cor. 6:11)
(2 Cor. 3:18)
- God’s “Spirit” is the one who “applies” salvation to us that was “planned” by the Father and “accomplished” by the Son’s “death and resurrections and ascension”!
- But “notice” ‘unlike’ our ‘new birth’; we “do have a part” in our spiritual “growth”/”sanctification”!
- God works and we work!
- We work “because” God works!
- Paul “says” in Philippians 2:12, “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling!”
- So ‘our part’ in ‘holiness’, in ‘sanctification’; in ‘growing’ to be more like Jesus according to **(V2)** is to “long for” the pure spiritual milk!
- We are to “crave” with great intensity” the pure spiritual milk as a new born baby craves its mother’s “Milk”!
- A newborn baby “needs” its mother’s milk to “survive”! She is “dependent” on the “mother” for this food and for growth! In “fact”, the baby craves it naturally, because she knows it is what she needs, and “all” she needs!
- In the “same way” Christians who “desire” “growth” should naturally ‘crave’ that “milk” which is “essential” and “sufficient” for growth!
- “All Christians”, “regardless of maturity”, should passionately crave the same “WORD” that saved them in order to keep growing in saving faith!
- The ‘milk’ of God’s Word is “pure”! Meaning “unadulterated” or “without deceit”!
- “Impure milk” is “not” helpful for growth!
- In fact, “impure” milk may even be harmful; “stunting growth”!
- And sadly, “impure milk” is readily “available”!

- It was readily 'available' to Peter's 1st Century readers! In Peter's 2nd letter he warned of "false teachers" among you, who will "secretly" bring in destructive heresies, even denying the "Master" who bought them!
(2 Peter 2:1)
- "And" it is "readily available" "still today" in "Australia", in our town "Kiama"!
- We also "see" the "rotten teaching" on radio, on television, on line, in books and "sadly from church pulpits"!
- We must be "sure" that the "milk" we "crave" is "unadulterated"!
- The 'growth of Christians' must be in the truth of the "apostolic word"!
- We are to "crave" the "whole will of God", as we find it in the Old and New Testaments!
(Act 20:27)
- Christians must be "addicted" to the "Bible"!
- "Growth" in God's Word is always growth in "faith"!
- The "Word" of the Lord "constantly presents" the "Lord" of the Word!
- Coming to the Bible is "coming" to the LORD!
- To "separate" a living LORD from a "dead" book or a Divine LORD from a merely human book is to "reject" the "apostolic gospel"!
- When the apostle Paul "describes" how the church is built up in faith, he "begins" with the ministry of the Word!
(2 Tim 3:15-17)
- Peter and Paul may "plant and water" the "seed", but it is "God" alone who gives the "growth"!
(1 Cor 3:5-7)

Friends:

Peter and Paul are "servants" in the church!

(1 Cor 3:5)

- In "Scripture", all Christians, not just clergy are involved in the ministry! "All" are given gifts by the spirit! All are expected to have a "function": a "service that God uses"!
- I "believe" one of the "glories of the church" is that "nobody" does the same thing!
- God uses our differences, backgrounds, to work together and 'needing' on another.
- One thing "Covid-19" has shown we "need" one another to "survive"!

Friends:

"Your" are "needed" in "our" church! We "all" need to "use" our gifts for the good of others!

(1 Cor 12:7)

- "But" let us "never" forget only God gives increase! Only God opens the mind, changes the heart and makes people different!
- Let's "continue" to "pray" that the Lord Jesus will "use each one of us" to share the good news of Jesus with people who we come in contact with!
- And "never" "forget" it is "God by His Spirit" who "opens and converts" the human heart!
- What "quickens our desire" for the life giving Word of God? **(V3)** "now that you have "tasted" that the Lord is "good!"
- Peter's "answer" is that we "know the taste"!
- Our "culture" makes the "image clear": advertisers spend millions of dollars to promote the taste of "cola"!

Friends:

Reading the Bible is "addictive" when we begin to get the "taste"!

- What we "taste" in Scripture is "not" simply the variety and power of the language; what we "taste" is the "LORD"!
- Of course Peter is referring to "Psalm 34:8" – "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes "refuge" in Him!"
- King David is saying:-
"Try it, you'll like it!"
- David "urges" us to experience what he has discovered: "the goodness of God and His Salvation"!
- God is "good" when life is fine and dandy!
- God is "good" when life is a complete struggle!
- God is "good" when I get cancer!
- God is "good" when I enjoy a delicious meal at a restaurant!
- God's Word shows us that the Lord is "eternally good"!
- His words are sweeter than honey to taste "because" in them the Lord gives himself to us!

(Ps 119:103)

- If you “feel that God “hasn’t” been good to you, then you are “not” tasting and seeing God’s “handiwork” in your life!
- The “pillow” that you lay your head on at night.... the “comb” that you pick up to run through your hair in the morning.... the soft “rug” underneath your feet.... the “dirty dishes” you washed BECAUSE you had food to eat.... that “breath” you just took are “all” a part of the goodness of God and the mercies of our Lord!
- Verse 4 “As you come to him, the “living stone” – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him!”
- “Stones” speak of strength and solidify!
- “Stone churches”, like our “own”, “speak” of age and durability, and it is this “aspect” of the “stone” to which Peter refers in 1 Peter Chapter 2!
- Christ is “portrayed” as the “living stone”¹ **(V4)**
- “Petros” means a small rock, a pebble!
- Petra is used to describe bedrock, a major rock outcropping!
- In Verse 4 “lithos” is a stone dressed for use in “building”! It has “but” on function, “construction”!
- “Christ” is the “foundation stone”!
- Verse 6 calls Christ the “cornerstone”, and this places Him at the “foundation” of the Christian church!
- God’s church is built upon “Christ” as the “stone”!
- Jesus is the “living stone”! (V4)
- He is the “source: of “real” living!
- “Eternal life” is “available” only in “connection” with Christ!
- The great Jerusalem “temple” was comprised of “dead stones”, but the Christian church is made up of living stones, “you and me”, who “derive” our life from the Living Stone Christ!
- Jesus is a “chosen” ‘Stone’! **(V4) (V6)**
- We’ve already seen in 1:20 that Peter sees Christ as “chosen” before the creation of the world to be the instrument to “redeem” a fallen human race, as “yet” “uncreated”!
- Jesus is a “precious” Stone! **(V6), (V4), (V7)**
- Jesus is highly “valued or esteemed”!

- This is God's evaluation of His Son, and it should be "ours as well"!

Friends:

A "good builder" would invest much time and energy in choosing and shaping the perfect cornerstone; Jesus is the Precious Stone in God's church, the "foundation stone" and "esteem" our Lord Jesus "this morning"?

- Jesus is a "dangerous" "Stone"! **(V8)**
- "a stone that causes people to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall!" (Is. 8:14)
- Those who 'reject' Christ are "eternally condemned"! They have "failed" to discern His "preciousness" and His "position" and have "not obeyed" His teaching 'nor' believed on Him!
- Our "Lord Jesus" said these "sobering words":
"Enter through the "narrow gate". For "wide" is the "gate" and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and "many enter through it!" : "Matthew 7:13"
- In Matthew 21:42 and Acts 4:11, the builders were the "Jewish leaders" who "rejected" Christ, "but" now Peter writes more broadly of "all" who "reject Christ"!

Friends:

There is "one cornerstone" but "two destinies"!

- "Jesus" is the "dividing factor"; some "come" to Christ by believing His Word and are given "honor" in the future; this is not outside of God's sovereign will and when some reject Christ by disobeying His Word and face "judgment" in the future; neither is this outside God's sovereign will!
- The "sovereignty of God" is not easy to comprehend: God is "incomprehensible"; we "never" learn all there is about God in this life or in the next! (Rom 11: 33-36)
- So God is "incomprehensible", but the Bible also teaches us that God is "knowable"!
- Jesus 'prayed' this truth in John 17:3:
"Now this is eternal life: that they know you; the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent!"
- So we "cannot" know "everything" about God "but" we can know "enough" about God to be saved and grow in His love as we serve Him!
- As we repent, as we humbly believe Jesus death and resurrection, as we place our sin on Christ's shoulders; Christ "draws" us to the Heavenly Father and we trust Him for forgiveness and hope and eternal life!

Friends:

Let C.H> Spurgeon's "prayer" be "ours" this morning:

"Oh for a spirit that bows always before the sovereignty of God!"

Verses 9 & 10: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light".

- "Once" you were "not" a people but now you are the people of God; "once you had not received 'mercy', but now you have received 'mercy'!"
- I "suspect" that your "view" of the "church" is "too small" – because I know that my view of the church "was", and sometimes still is, "too small"!
- Just think "about" "why" we "go" to church?
- A very "good question" at the moment because we are "not allowed" at the moment!
- For some, 'church' is their "tradition"! "Maybe" you go to get a "weekly pep talk"! "Maybe" you attend 'church' because you want a "pop-psychology chat" that helps you become a "better person"!
- It's possible you "attend" church because of the "relationships", the "teaching", the "peace" you receive!
- In "essence", we can "boil" all these 'reasons' down to "on word": "Consumerism"!
- When we 'think' of the church, we think of what it can do for "us"! And whenever and wherever we adopt a "consumer mindset", it reveals and reinforces a "view" of the "church" that is "way too small"!

Friends:

If we truly understand what God has called the "church" to "be" and to "do", we will never "view the church" in the "same old way"!

- The "church" is "not" incidental to God's plans: it is "central" to them!
- God has "not" given "you" the 'church' to fit "your plans" and "priorities"!
- God has given "you" to the church to serve His 'plans' and His 'priorities'!

Friends:

"Society" is shaped largely by "individualists"!

- Life can be "all" about "Me"!
- We spend all our time about our "own" 'concerns', our "own" 'leisure', our "own" 'needs'!

- “Individualism” also “infects” the Christian church!
 - “Evangelicals” have placed heavy “emphasis” on the personal relationship between Christ and the believer! This is rightly so because salvation is “only” found in Jesus’ Name!
 - But what “about” the “corporate aspect” of Christianity?
 - When God “saves” us by His “grace” we are taken into the “body” of Christ, into a “family”, into a “church”!
 - God’s “people” have “been” “chosen” for their position! **(V9)**
 - We are “endued” with “royalty” because by faith we are children of the King of Kings! **(V9)**
 - As God’s people we have a “priestly” role!
 - Every “believer” can come “directly” to the throne of grace! We don’t need a human priest or pastor, nor a pope nor the Virgin Mary!
 - “Jesus Christ” is the “only” mediator “between” ‘God and you and me’!
 - God’s people are His “special possession”!
 - God paid the full price to purchase His people in the sacrifice of His eternal Son!
 - We “belong” to God!
- (Rom 14:8)*
- We didn’t ‘earn’ it, we didn’t ‘buy’ it, we didn’t ‘plan’ it, God “chose” us because of His “desire and love” for us!

Friends:

What “incredible” “privileges” all these amazing truths are “for us”!
However with “privileges” comes “responsibility”!

“that you may “declare” the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light”! **(V9)**

- Kiama and the world will “only” hear God’s saving work as it is proclaimed by God’s chosen people – “you” and “me”!
- The ‘church’ is the great ‘intermediary’ between ‘God and man’; “because’ the church has been ‘entrusted’ with the ‘one saving Gospel’ of the Great Mediator “Jesus” himself!

Friends:

By God's "work" we who were "nobodies" have been made "somebodies"!

- By God's "work" we have been "ennobled" as royal "agents" of a ruling God.
- Charles Spurgeon said:
Every Christian is either a "missionary" or an "impostor"!
- Do you want to "store up" treasure in Heaven? "Invest" your life in getting people there!

Friends:

If you had the "cure" for 'coronavirus' wouldn't you "share" it? You have the "cure for death"....
So get out there and share Jesus Christ!

Let's Pray!