

Lord, Make Me Ready for Meat!

Key Scriptures:

*“...like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word,
so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation...” 1 Peter 2:2 (NASB)*

*“And I brethren could not speak to you as spiritual, but as unto carnal.
I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it.
Indeed, even now you are not yet able...” 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 (NASB)*

*“For though by this time you ought to be teachers,
you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God,
and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness,
for he is an infant.” Hebrews 5:12-3 (NASB)*

Today's Portion for the Journey:

Paul confronted the Corinthians for continuing to walk in the flesh and for their lack of growth in the faith. He attributes this shallowness to their lack of ability to receive solid food from the Word and lack of application of the elementary teachings of the Word. New believers need to begin with the milk of the Word but are chastised for not growing beyond milk and taking in solid food. The Word is full of exhortations to believers to take heed to their spiritual condition and make sure that they do not remain in a carnal state. (Rom. 13:11-14, Eph. 4:14-15; 5:7-16) What is keeping these believers from growing and maturing in their faith and their relationship with the LORD? What are the signs of a carnal or fleshly believer? It is imperative as believers that we know whether we are walking in the flesh or the Spirit, not only for our sake but for the sake of those we are called to reach. If we are walking in the flesh it is important to become attentive to one's dangerous position. (Heb. 4:1-11)

Paul's word to the Corinthians is very reminiscent of God's word to the Israelites who had been instructed to take possession of the Promised Land and dwell in it. This was the land flowing in milk and honey God had promised Abraham and his heirs. God called them to take possession by driving out the enemies who held the land. But over 40 years later, the Israelites had still not entered the Promised Land. God delivered them from the slavery of Egypt but instead of entering the Promised Land, they remained in the wilderness. Joshua asked, "How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you? Josh 18:3; Num 33:53 (NASB)

In his book, "The Master's Indwelling," Andrew Murray examines these same "Key Scriptures" and discusses the fact that many believers never progress in their faith to the point where they walk in the fullness of God's promises. Most do not move beyond being a carnal or fleshly Christian--a baby in the faith. It is very sobering because believers are often unaware of their true condition or know there is so much more for them in the faith. Others believe there is more but do not know how to grow beyond

their present level. He attributes the lack of growth from carnal to spiritual as the source of feelings of failure and frustration that many believers experience in their walk with the Lord. The book, "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" quoted a man who had been a Christian for 22 years, but instead of being a 22 year old Christian, he was a one year old Christian, twenty-two times. Do you ever feel like you are wandering in the wilderness repeating the same mistakes over and over? How can we grow in the "Normal Christian Life?"

Andrew Murray describes four marks of a carnal believer from the book of Corinthians.

- 1) **A condition of protracted infancy.** In the new believer the characteristics of infancy are normal and a part of our growth in Christ, but when the person remains in this state of infancy, receiving only milk year after year it is a matter of grave concern. Andrew Murray says, "Now such is the condition of many believers. They are converted; they know what it is to have the assurance of the faith; they believe in pardon for sin; they begin to work for God; and yet, somehow, there is very little growth in spirituality, in the real heavenly life...there is nothing of the beauty of holiness or power of God's Spirit in them. This is the condition of the carnal Christian." They are continually dependent upon others to help them. He goes on to say that a little child cannot help himself, but must always depend on others to serve him. He can do nothing to help his fellow man. Many feel they are constantly going backwards and the joy of their first conversion and first love is gone.

- 2) **There is sin and failure continually.** Paul explains that when they see works of the flesh in their midst that they are still carnal. He points out the strife and division among them shows they are still carnal. The sins of the flesh continue to win a victory in the carnal believers' life. The Fruit of the Spirit is absent or in very limited evidence. Andrew Murray says, "You ask, Why is it, that for twenty years I have been fighting with my temper, and cannot conquer it?" It is because you have been fighting with the temper, and you have not been fighting the root of the temper. You have not seen that it is all because you are in a carnal state and not properly given to the Spirit of God. Jesus can give us a total victory over sin.

Signs of the operations of the Flesh: Gal. 5:19-22; Rom. 1:28-31; 13:13; Col 3:8-10; Gal. 1:10; Mark 7: 20-23

Hatred	Immorality	Impurity	sensuality
Envy	Idolatry	Sorcery	Enmity
Divisions	Strife	Jealousy	Outbursts of anger
Wrath	Selfish ambitions	Heresies	murders
Bitterness	Disputes	Dissensions	factions
Unforgiveness	Drunkenness	Carousing	Adultery
Fornication	uncleanness	lewdness	contentions
Strife	revelries	gossip	malice
w/o understanding	slanderers	untrustworthy	unloving

w/o mercy	unrighteousness	wickedness	greed
Evil	deceit, lies	haters of God	insolent
Arrogant	prideful	boasters	inventers of evil
Sexual promiscuity	man pleaser	Abusive speech	disobedient to parents
Fear	worry	Anxiety	coveting

- 3) **Lack of operation in the grace of God.** Gifts and graces are different. We must not mistake the operation of gifts in ones life as a sign that one has conquered sin in one’s life. The Corinthians were said to have manifested many gifts but the victory over the flesh through God’s grace was minimal.
- 4) The last mark of the carnal believer is that he is **not able to receive spiritual truths.** Paul said that he could not feed them meat. Meat is defined as the deeper spiritual truths that one is able to understand through having one’s senses trained to discriminate between good and evil.

THE GOOD NEWS is that there is a way to move from being a carnal Christian to a spiritual Christian who is fully matured. We are meant to grow and move beyond the elementary principles of the faith, but we must make sure those the foundational principles are applied in our lives. See Hebrews 6: 1-2; John 14:21; James 1:21-22.

It is important that we pray for the Church to come into the fullness of all that God intends for His Bride in this day! The Church has a mighty work to accomplish and we cannot accomplish it in the flesh. We need to be filled with His Spirit and power. Most of the prayers of the New Testament are prayers for the Church. As we see the end of the age coming we need to ask the LORD to grip our hearts with a love for His body and to pray for the Church to fulfill the commission that He gave in Acts 1:4-8.

The Scriptures in our lesson today describe a condition of the Christian’s heart which prevents growth in Spiritual matters. As we examine these Scriptures, we need to follow the principle that Jesus taught, to first take the beam out of our own eye and then to seek to remove the splinter from others’ eyes. It is sometimes easy to see how a message applies to others, and be unaware that God is seeking to show us the same thing in our own lives. It is good to pray according to Ps. 19: 12-14; Ps. 51 (entire chapter); 2 Cor. 13:5; Galatians 6:4 (Amp); Ps. 26:2; Ps. 119:59; Ps. 139:23-24. When we ask the Holy Spirit to send His search light into our heart, He does so without condemnation, but instead to bring us into His glorious light and freedom! His Gospel is good news. When He shows us our sin, He wants us to confess them to Him (agree with Him) in a spirit of repentance (turn away completely) and then believe and receive the cleansing He has promised. 1 John 1:9.

Digging Deeper in the Word:

Scripture interprets and defines Scripture. Read the Key Verses for our lesson and answer the following questions:

- 1 An analogy is a comparison between two situations that is intended to show the similarities. The Lord often uses analogies based upon the physical world or common life experiences so we can have a

deeper understanding of spiritual truths. What do we know about “milk” as a food? Meditate on the mother’s milk provided for an infant and see how this relates to the new baby believer vs a carnal believer who continues to rely on milk rather than advancing to solid foods. Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 3:1,14:20; 1 Pet. 2:2.

2. A carnal believer is defined as one who has received Jesus as Savior but who continues to walk in the ways of his flesh or old life. What are the characteristics of a carnal Christian? John 6:63; 1 Cor. 1:3-4; John 6:63; Rom. 6:19; Rom. 7:5,18,25; Rom. 8:1-13; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:20; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 3:3; Gal. 5:16-17, 19-24; Gal. 6:8; Eph. 2:3; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:23; 1 Pet.2:10,18; 4:2; 2 Peter 2:10,18; 1 John 2:16;

3. There are also signs that one is walking in the new life of Jesus Christ. What are these signs? Gal. 5:22-25; Col. 3:10-17

4. God also provides us with examples in His Word which are meant to be studied so we can learn from them. In addition to providing us with a history of His people, the Word says that all Scripture is profitable for instruction and equipping the believer in understanding for salvation that comes through faith. Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (AMP); Romans 15:4 (NASB).

Look at the broad pictures given in OT and be alert to the messages that God spoke to Israel so we can learn from their lives.

Egypt is a picture of the world and the old life we live before salvation. A life of hopelessness, captivity and slavery!! We need a Savior to get free. How did a slave mentality prevent them from hearing the Good News of their salvation from captivity? (Ex. 6:9; Lev. 26:13)

Red Sea: By the blood of Jesus we have a clear line of passage into salvation. We are free and forgiven, cleansed but still held by old mindsets. The Israelites needed to overcome the slave mindset. (John 15:15; Rom 6:6, 16-18; Heb. 11:29)

Wilderness: A place of wandering and a place of testing, but also place of training and preparation meant to be a place of growth and faith. Jesus frequently withdrew to the wilderness to meet with the Father. John the Baptist was trained in the wilderness for his ministry. For Israel, the wilderness became a place of wandering for 40 years and many did not make it to the promised land. Why not? (Heb. 3 (entire chapter); Hebrews 4:11; 1 Cor. 10 (entire chapter))

Promised Land: God brought us out of slavery and death that He might bring us into His Kingdom. The land God promised Israel was said to be flowing in milk and honey, it is a place of great fruitfulness. A place where we receive the promises of God and walk in the fullness of His blessing and peace. The writer of Hebrews, quoting OT writers, calls this “entering His rest.” It is a perfect place where we rest from our own labors and efforts and allow Him to fight our battles and win all of our victories. Heb. 3:11, 4:1-16

Evil Inhabitants of the Promised Land: There were giants to be overcome before Israel could rest in safety. The LORD made it clear that they were not to allow these “giants” to dwell amongst them, they all needed to be completely eradicated and without mercy. Interestingly, the evil inhabitants of the land all represent aspects of the flesh that we must overcome in order to dwell in the fullness of God’s promises for us! (Deut. 7:1 Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites (“seven nations greater and stronger than you.”) Read Joshua 3:10. Note that God promised to give them victory over their enemies, so too will He fight for us to give us victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

How can we enter the Spiritual Life? Andrew Murray gives four principles that we can apply:

1. **Believe that such a life is possible that it is within our reach.** Ask God to help you be rid of any unbelief that would prevent you from receiving this truth. When God says, “Be filled with the Spirit,” do we believe it is possible for us personally, to be filled? We need to study His Word and take home God’s Word to our hearts so that we have such an assurance that we not only can live the spiritual life of belief in God’s promises, but that it is our duty to live in such a way. Believe that if God has called us to do this, He will give us the ability to live in this way! “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (See also Rom. 5; Rom. 6:11)
2. **Repent of our dead works and sins of the flesh.** Repent for having not lived in the Spirit, allow the LORD to release conviction for our unfaithfulness, unbelief and disobedience that we have not given ourselves utterly over to God. A man cannot grow without continual conviction of sin. (Hebrews 6)
3. **The Cross of Jesus Christ is Central to all spiritual growth:** Make one step, ONE STEP, to break with the flesh, give up the flesh into the crucifixion death of Christ, to see that the flesh is totally accursed and that we cannot deliver ourselves from it, then claim the slaying power of Christ’s cross within him and receive the resurrected life of Jesus into which we can now live and find victory. This does not mean instant perfection, but it places us into a right position so we can grow. Andrew Murray says, “One simple act of faith in the power of Christ’s death, one act of surrender to the fellowship of Christ’s death as the Holy Spirit can make it ours, will make it yours, will bring deliverance from the power of your efforts.” John 15:5; Prov. 3:5; Ps. 37:3-6
4. **Walk by faith in the victorious power of His resurrection from this day forth!** Believe **everything is different and forever changed!** (2 Thes. 1:10; Col. 1:13; Gal. 5:5,16; 2 Cor. 5:17) Believe and trust God that through the Cross He has set you free and that He will sanctify you (make you holy and perfect)!! (Gal. 6:14; Ezek. 36:26) This life is to be lived by faith not in what is seen, but what is unseen, in God’s promises and His Word. (Rom 1:17; 4:3; 6:11,13; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7) Bring everything to Him and allow Him to fight the battles for you. Resist temptation to go back to Egypt!! Determine once and for all that your own efforts are of no benefit...be still and know that He is God and He is able. Put your faith in Him and His promises! Renew your mind to believe that you are a new creation, that old things have passed away and that He has

made all things new. You are no longer in Egypt!! Believe and trust God that He has done it and let Him fight your battles from this time forth. Gal. 2:20; Gal. 3:2-11. You are now a son or daughter of the King, and you have been given the keys to His Kingdom. Meditate on the verses that show His promise of victory: 1 Thes. 5:23; John 6:63,64; Rom. 8:1-4; Ezek. 36:26

Meditate on the following verses and ask the LORD to show how they apply to you personally. Then pray them for others in the Body of Christ!

2 Cor. 5:17
Rom. 8:1-2
Lev. 26:13
Phil. 4:6-7
Ps. 27:1
Col. 1:11
Heb. 7:25
Ps. 118:5
Hosea 11:4
Ps. 143:8
2 Cor. 3:18
Eph. 5:8
2 Cor. 5:7
Ex. 14:20
Gal. 5:16
Heb. 12:1-2

What has God spoken to me through this message?

How will I respond to HIM?