CRAVE PURE SPIRITUAL MILK

1 Peter 1:13-2:3

Key Verse: 2:2

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation….”

When the Apostle Peter wrote this letter, believers throughout the Roman Empire faced widespread hatred and discrimination. Why? Because of their faith. While people worshiped the Emperor, the Greek gods, and idols, Christains worshiped only the one true God. While society indulged in sinful desires of flesh, Christians sought to live as God’s holy people. Because of their faith, they were rejected, casted out, fired, despised, and mistreated. Peter did not merely sympathize with believers in suffering. Rather, he encouraged and strengthened them with the truth of God, writing, “Though you are exiled in the world, you are God’s elect, God’s chosen people by his divine authority. Though you are poor in the world, you have received the salvation of your souls and a living hope kept in heaven for you.”

Believers had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and born again through the living and enduring word of God. Once they received salvation, a new birth, they needed to grow. We also must grow step by step in every respect of life: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. If we fail to mature, we risk remaining spiritually malnourished infants, merely seeking God’s grace and mercy without responsibility, blaming others in troubles, feeling burdened in doing God’s work, complaining or being unthankful in all situations. In many cases, our lack of maturity only makes matters worse. In this passage, Peter exhorts the believers to grow in their salvation. Let’s learn in what respect we should grow and how we can grow to be mature.

**First, Be holy in all you do (13-16).**

Verse 13 says, “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.” The word “Therefore” reminds us that we have received a new birth into a Living Hope and the salvation of our souls, the end result of our faith. In light of this, how should we live? We should set our hope on the grace Jesus will give us when he comes again (13b). This hope should always burn in our hearts. For this reason, our minds must be alert and fully sober. Otherwise, we will be deceived or misled.

What does that mean? The original Greeks for “with minds that are alert” means “gird up the loins of your mind” for action. Since men wore long robes in those days, they had to pull up and tie them around their waist to be ready for action. It is about having a mind-set that is ready to serve - being ready to take on any task for Christ while freeing ourselves from any worldly hindrances. This is the mind-set of a servant who is ready to serve his master. (Lk12:35) Also, Our mind should be fully sober. “Be fully Sober” does not refer only to abstaining from alcohol or some substance, but also from anything which dulls our spiritual awareness - such as lust for money, sex, power, excessive gaming, Netflix, K-Dramas, or Youtube shorts. If we are under the influence of these, we lose spiritual discernment and focus, becoming careless and self-indulgent. We become unalert to spiritual truths, numb to sin, be deceived by lies of the world, and eventually we risk losing our hope. Our drunkenness or mental intoxication with these earthly things can lead to serious consequences. Romans 1:21-23 warns “...their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became foolish and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for” all kinds of idols.” There is nothing more pathetic than a drunk stumbling and mumbling, wandering aimlessly.

How can we avoid this? This is why it is so important to set our hope on the grace to be given when Jesus comes again. Would you trade the precious living hope for the things of the world that will soon perish and fade away? Would you exchange this precious grace of salvation for fleeting pleasures? No! Let us stay alert and fully sober in mind, setting our hope on the grace Jesus will bring at his coming.

When our hope is set on Jesus’ coming again, it has a tremendous impact on our lives. Look at verses 14. Peter calls the believers “Obedience Children,” for through new birth, we became children of God, created to be like our Father God. (Ep4:24) In verses 14b-16, Peter gives practical instructions for God’s children: “Do not conform to the evil desires you have when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy, because I am holy.” As children of God, we should not conform to evil desires. Instead, we must pursue holiness in all we do. Why? Because God, our father, is holy. Not just holy, but holy, holy, holy. God is perfectly holy. Jesus also commanded in Matthew 5:48 “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

But, can we possibly be perfect, sinless in this world? Isn’t that too ambitious a goal to achieve? Should we lower the standard to something like: “Be a good, kind person when you can” or “Be holy when you feel like it” or “Be holy when you are in the church.”? No! God’s command for his children is clear: “Be Holy as I am holy.” Our standard of morality, ethics and spirituality is defined by God himself.

“Be holy as God is holy.” This is not a legalistic demand to punish sinners. Rather it is a call of divine love - to fully restore His children into his holy and glorious image so that we may have true fellowship with Him. It is God’s guidance for his children to separate themselves from the corruption of the world and to pursue a desire to be like him. When God redeemed us, he did not want us to live according to the pattern of the world. He called us to a new way of life that reflects his holiness. This is why we don’t drift along with the trends of this world like a dead fish floating downstream. Rather, as Peter says, we strive against the perversion of the world to be holy in all we do - at school, work and home. Yes. It is a high standard, but we are not alone. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in us, helps us to strive for holiness and enable us to be holy. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, “Do we strive to be holy?” Let’s accept God’s command to “be holy,” as he is holy.

**Second, live out your time as foreigners in reverent fear (17-21).**

In this part, Peter tells how to grow in God’s holiness. Look at verse 17. “Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.” Though we live in America as U.S. citizens, we should live as foreigners because we do not belong to this world - We belong to God. As God’s holy people, we must live before Him, who judges us impartially—not by American laws, but according to His Words.

When we pursue God and his holiness, we will inevitably become strangers in this world. But, we should know that our time in this world is limited; this world is not our permanent home. Our ultimate destination is eternity with God. When others worship idols and indulge in pleasures of the world, we serve and worship the one true God and strive to be holy. While others use their long weekends for leisure, we prepare special songs, music and messages to worship God in spirit and truth. While others work hard to buy better clothes, houses, or cars, we sacrifice time and resources to attend Bible Conferences and support World missions. While others pursue higher education and careers, we invest our time in studying and teaching the Bible to be shepherds and Bible teachers. Indeed, we are foreigners in this world, seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness with reverent fear of Him. When we fear God, we can resist temptation and stay focused on what truly matters.

Look at verse 18-19. This tells us the motivation to live as foreigners. “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” The world is full of people who are diligent and hardworking, achieving much and enjoying worldly privileges. From an earthly perspective, they seem successful. However, the Bible tells us that a life without God is ultimately empty and meaningless. Even a life filled with material abundance is a cursed life if it is lived apart from God.

But, God redeemed us from such an empty way of life. How? With silver or gold? With silver and gold, we can buy whatever we want in the world. But they are powerless to redeem us. Even if they could, No one would pay such a price for sinners like us. However,

God paid the price for our redemption with the precious blood of Jesus Christ - the prefect, unblemished Lamb of god. This was a high cost to pay. In this way God demonstrated his redemptive love for us. Then he raised Christ from the dead and glorified him (21). Now through Christ our faith and hope are in God. That is how God loved us -Sacrificing his one and only Son to forgive us and save us. When we grasp the depth of God’s redemptive, it truly motivates us to live a godly life. Therefore, We should not judge ourselves by the standards of the world; we should not struggle to be part of this world. The world did not die for us; the world did not save us; The world would not forgive us. Instead, let us strive to be holy - like the Holy God, who called us, saved us through the precious blood of Jesus.

**Third, love one another deeply (1:22-25)**

Look at verse 22. “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.” Love and Holiness seem to have no connection at all, but they are inseparable. “Be Holy” cannot be attained by practicing religious rituals such as long prayer or fasting, nor by wearing certain garments. True holiness is expressed through sincerely loving one another from the heart. When our hearts are purified by obeying the truth, we come to know and experience God’s sincere love for us through His son Jesus. As a result, we begin to love others deeply from our hearts. Apostle John said, “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” (1 Jn 3:16) Then he continued telling how to love practically: “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18). Being holy is to love others deeply from hearts just as God loved us by sacrificing his one and only Son. That is how we can be like God who is love.

One of the biggest obstacles to love others sacrificially is fear - the fear that if we pay the price of love, we will miss out on the pleasures and benefits of the world. If we endure wrong meekly; if we spend time and energy supporting the needs of others instead of focusing on our own; if we cover a multitude of sins rather than holding grudges; if we bless those who curse us and do good to those who despise us; if we love one another deeply from the heart, we will lose a lot. The price of such love may be that we lose a lot of money, opportunities, glories, pleasures in this world.

How can we overcome this fear of loss? Look at verses 23. “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” Here Peter emphasizes the imperishable nature of our new birth through God’s word. He also quotes from Isaiah, “For, ‘All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word that was preached to you” (24-25).

People often live as if they will live in this world forever. But in reality, they will disappear like grass. All human achievements, honors and power will fade like flowers in the field. As grass withers and flowers fall, all things will perish and fade away. However, there is one thing that endures forever - the Word of the Lord. The word of God is living and enduring; it is indestructible; it never dies; it is life-giving. We have been born again not of a perishable seed, but of imperishable seed - through the word of God. It means that we have been born into eternity through the living and enduring word of God.

This hope of eternity enables us to overcome the fear of loss in this world. This hope empowers us to love one another deeply from the heart. Loving others is not a loss. It is an investment in eternity; storing up treasures in heaven. Therefore, we may love one another sincerely and deeply from our hearts.

**Fourth, Crave pure spiritual milk. (2:1-3)**

Look at verse 2:1. “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.” These words describe elements of our sinful nature which hinder us from growing in God’s holiness and love, especially in how we love one another.

These are like cancer cells that corrupt our organs from the inside. In the same way, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander eat away at the hearts of God’s children, making them spiritually sick and weak. We must get rid of all these things.

More importantly, what must we do positively? Let’s read verse 2 “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation….” The word “Crave” is a strong word that means to have an intense desire for something. “Pure Spiritual milk” refers to the Word of God, the words of eternal life. The word of God is filled with spiritual nutrients that makes us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. The word of God is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Ti 3:15b-17).

As mother’s milk is indispensable to survive and to grow for a baby, New born believers need the pure spiritual milk to grow. So, Peter commands us to have this attitude -Craving or longing for the word of God as a hungry baby craves milk with desperation. Spiritual growth is always marked by a deep hunger and delight in God’s word. Those who have such craving for the word of God will grow like a tree planted by streams of water, constantly nourished and growing strong. Otherwise, we might be like a malnourished baby. We may ask ourselves - “Are you growing spiritually? What do you crave?”

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Verse 3 says, “…now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” After tasting the stake M. Joseph cooked, I could no longer be satisfied with any other steak. I am hardly waiting for the next Barbecue party. Do you know that the word of God is sweeter than honey? Have you tasted daily bread that is more delicious than Ihop breakfast? Weekly testimony writing and sharing is like sucking all spiritual nutritions from the word of God.

If you want to grow and to be mature. you may meditate the word of God day and night through gathering DB everyday and writing and sharing testimonies weekly. You will surely experience the power of the word of God. We may crave pure spiritual milk, the word of God, so that we grow to be spiritual giants for this generation.

Today we learned how to grow to be mature. Be holy; live out your life as a foreigner with reverent fear; love one another deeply;y from heart; crave pure spiritual milk. In this spring, we may crave pure spiritual milk and grow up in your salvation.