

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: Milk for Babes
Text: 1 Corinthians 3: 1-2
Date: October 8, 2015
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

1 Corinthians 3: 1: And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Our subject is “Milk for Babes.” The newly born child of God is a baby in Christ, fed with milk, gradually growing so that we are fed with stronger meat.

As we go through this 1 epistle to the Corinthians, I want us to keep the context in mind. Two groups of people opposed Paul at Corinth. One group were the false preachers, philosophers, the wise and prudent, unconverted sinners. They criticized Paul for preaching basic, elementary doctrine, in a simple style. The second group were newborn believers, babies in Christ. These immature believers were influenced by the criticism of these false teachers. So they also criticized Paul for preaching basic elementary doctrine.

Paul answered both. First, he declared that when he first came to Corinth, indeed, he preached the basic doctrine of Christ and him crucified, as simply as he could. We dealt with that in chapter 2. He said he preached with simplicity, “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1 Cor 2: 5) But he added a very important point. The basic bible doctrine of Christ may be milk; it may be elementary—the A,B,C’s—of Christ and him crucified. “Howbeit” to the spiritually mature believer, even the milk is wisdom, “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect.” (1 Cor 2: 6) So if they had been truly mature, they would not have complained about Paul laying the foundation, the first principles. They would have known it was needful and would have delighted to hear it again.

Then, Paul answer those newborn immature believers in our text. He declares the reason he preached the elementary doctrine of Christ was due to their state in grace—**1 Corinthians 3: 1: And I, brethren, [speaking to believers] And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.** He says, “I, could not speak unto you as unto mature believers; but as carnal, even as unto babes in Christ, as to new born babies in Christ.”

BABIES IN CHRIST

When a believer is first born of God that believer is a baby in Christ. The new birth is like our first birth in some ways.

First, God does that which is absolutely necessary for the creation of a spiritual babe in Christ—God regenerates us. The first time we are born, it is by natural generation. But when we are born-again, the new, spiritual babe is born by supernatural regeneration.

Also, God births us, not with corruptible seed, but with incorruptible seed, by the word of God, by the preaching of the gospel. (1 Pet 1: 23-25) The first time we are born of corrupt seed—of our father, of Adam—we are born sinful. But when we are born-again, God creates a new creation of incorruptible seed—seed that lives and abides forever—which is the word of God which we preach. We are born of the gospel we hear preached. So the new spirit, the baby in Christ, is spiritual, eternal, living and abiding forever.

So when this new birth has occurred, God creates a new baby, a spiritual baby, within these dead, bodies of sinful flesh. The first time you were born you were the baby created within a sinner. But when born-again,

the new you, the true you, is that new spiritual baby created within that old sinner. But the old sinner, happens to be you also. We have a new sinless-spirit born of God and an old sinful spirit born of Adam.

Be sure to understand, being a baby in Christ or being mature in Christ has nothing to do with our natural age. Sometimes God regenerates us early in life, sometimes later in life. So a younger believer may be more mature in grace while an older believer may be a baby in Christ. Spiritual things have nothing to do with our flesh.

So to believers who criticized Paul for preaching the first principles of Christ, Paul says, “**And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.**”

BABIES MUST BE FED WITH MILK

A new-born baby in Christ must be fed with the milk of the gospel—**1 Corinthians 3: 2: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it,...**

Illustration: Naturally, a baby can only be fed milk not strong meat. So it is spiritually.

But be sure to understand, the milk of the gospel and the meat of the gospel is the same gospel—Christ and him crucified. There are not two gospels. There is not one gospel for babies and a different gospel for mature believers. The newborn child of God is fed by the same gospel of Christ crucified as the mature believer. The milk as well as the meat is the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

So what is the difference? The difference is in the believer’s ability to receive the doctrine. Paul says, “**for hitherto ye were not able to bear it,...**” (1 Cor 3: 2)

Remember, Christ said to his disciples, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” (Jn 16: 12) A newly born-again believer only has the capacity to digest the milk—the first principles—of the gospel of Christ. But as God grows us in grace, we grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Then we are able to receive the stronger meat of the gospel—to build on those same first principles.

When Paul first visited Corinth, they had never heard the gospel preached in truth. His message was Christ and him crucified. But he preached to carnal men and babies in Christ. So he preached the A, B, C’s, the elementary doctrines of Christ and him crucified. He did not preach stronger meat as he would to a congregation of experienced, mature believers. They did not have the ability to receive it.

When I preach here, I am preaching to a mixed congregation—to unconverted, to new-born babies, and to some more mature in Christ. I preach one gospel: Christ and him crucified. We always start with the basic principles. But in the same message, we build on those principles. So as the basic principles are preached, the Holy Spirit feeds the baby in Christ, according to their capacity. And as the points develop, the Holy Spirit feeds the mature believer, according to their capacity. Yet, the milk is Christ and the meat is Christ.

On the fourth Friday, when I preach to the young people, I still preach Christ and him crucified. The only difference is, because of your capacity to receive it, I do not develop the points as much as I do when preaching to the whole congregation. For example, to our young people, I preached one message on 1 Cor 2: 6-16. But to the whole congregation, we heard four messages on those verses. We got into much stronger meat in those four messages than we did in that one message. Yet, the milk and meat was still Christ and him crucified.

WHAT IS THE MILK?

What are these basic principles of the gospel which Paul calls milk? It is the truth that the Holy Spirit reveals in every newly born-again babe in Christ? Every new born child of grace it taught these same principles. It is the one and only foundation—**1 Corinthians 3: 11: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

The one foundation is Jesus Christ and him crucified. Each of these principles is taught in the light of Christ and gets its glory from Christ. Christ is the Truth and the Light. Once the foundation is laid in our hearts and we are taught these principles, we build on this foundation, we learn more about Christ in these principles. But we never leave Christ, we only learn more of Christ.

In Hebrews 6, we are told what these first principles are, this one foundation, the milk of the gospel. Later, we will deal with what is being taught here about building on these first principles. For now, focus on these first principles, this foundation. This is the milk—the first principles that every newly born-again child of God is taught when Christ is revealed in us.

Hebrews 6: 1: Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of...

He lists the first principles here. Let's look at them one by one.

THE PRINCIPLE OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

One, from the beginning, every born-again child of God is taught the doctrine of repentance and faith—**Hebrews 6: 1: repentance from dead works, and faith toward God...**

When the Holy Spirit makes us behold Christ, the first thing we are taught is that our flesh and our works profit us absolutely nothing. The grace of God is free. Grace is not based on us: not on our flesh or on any good or evil in us. Grace is according to God's own choosing.

By the Spirit of God, we are made to look to Christ and in the light of Christ: in his Wisdom, in his Righteousness, in his Holiness, in his fully accomplished work of redemption. So beholding Christ, we see and confess that our very best, most righteous deeds are all flighty rags. We could not even give ourselves life, much less righteousness! We could not sanctify ourselves! We could not free ourselves from sin and death and the curse! We could not make God accept us!

So from the beginning, we are taught that all our works for righteousness and holiness and acceptance with God, are all dead works. God freely gives us repentance. God radically turns our minds, our hearts from our dead works. And God gives us the gift of faith. God makes us willingly cast all our care into Christ's hands.

Now, as God grows us in grace and knowledge of Christ, we learn stronger meat concerning repentance and faith. We learn more of what our dead works are. We learn more about the faith of Christ himself. We learn that Christ's faithfulness, Christ dwelling in us, is the faith of our faith by which we live. We learn that Christ is the Holiness of our Sanctification who makes us holy and separate from this world for God's use. But we never leave Christ. We begin with the milk of Christ and go on to the meat of Christ.

THE PRINCIPLE OF BAPTISMS

Also, from the beginning, every new-born child of God is taught this principle: the doctrine of the sin-cleansing power of Christ's blood—**Hebrews 6: 2: the doctrine of baptisms...**

“Baptisms” is plural because it refers to the “divers washings” in the old testament, which pictured Christ’s blood which cleanses the believer of all our sins. From the beginning, the Holy Spirit teaches his child that it is Christ’s blood alone that cleanses us of all our sins.

Hebrews 9: 13: For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Also, the Holy Spirit teaches us about Christ’s baptism—his immersion in judgment and death for his people and his resurrection to newness of life.

Romans 6: 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Ro 6:4-11)

So God gives us a heart to wash in Christ’s blood through faith and to confess Christ in believer’s baptism. We go on learning more of Christ’s cleansing blood, more of Christ’s baptism on our behalf. But we never leave Christ.

THE PRINCIPLE OF IMPUTATION

Then, from the beginning, every newly born-again believer is taught the doctrine of imputation—**Hebrews 6: 2: and of laying on of hands,**

Again, he refers to the old testament type: when the priest laid his hands on the head of the substitute lamb, it pictured what God actually did in making Christ sin for his people

2 Corinthians 5: 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

When God gives us faith, through the channel of faith, God makes us know in our conscious, that he has freely imputed the righteousness of Christ to us because Christ made us the righteousness of God in him. We do not have to have this taught us again or proved to us again—we believe by God’s grace. But we are taught more and more of this glorious doctrine of our Redeemer.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE RESURRECTION

From the beginning, every child of God is taught the doctrine of the resurrection—**Hebrews 6: 2: and of resurrection of the dead...**

When Christ arose and sat down, every chosen child for whom Christ died, arose and sat down together with him at God’s right hand.

Ephesians 2: 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

This is why in time, every child of God shall be quickened and given faith to believe on Christ. And one day, Christ shall resurrect us fully to be with him forever. We learn this as milk and then we learn it as meat—learning more and more that Christ himself is the Resurrection and the Life.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ETERNAL JUDGMENT

Lastly, from the beginning, every born-again child of God is taught the doctrine of judgment—**Hebrews 6: 2:...and of eternal judgment.**

The Holy Spirit teaches every new born believer—convincing us, persuading us in the heart through faith—that we all must stand before God in eternal judgment. But believers are taught that our eternal judgment was settled at Calvary when Christ said, “It is finished.” God freely justified us in Christ so that we rejoice to know.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Ro 8:1)

As we are taught this more, the stronger meat involves learning that the eternal judgment of every elect, chosen child of God was settled in Christ before the foundation of the world. God determined the end from the beginning.

So you see this is the foundation—Christ and him crucified. These are the basic principles of Christ and him crucified that God teaches us in the new spirit from the beginning.

But be sure to understand: we never leave Christ, we never leave the foundation, we never go beyond the doctrine of Christ. We build on this one foundation. We build on these first principles. The Holy Spirit gradually teaches us stronger and stronger meat of this doctrine of Christ. We learn greater depths, greater blessings contained in these basic principles. But as we go from milk to meat, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. So this was the milk Paul preached at first at Corinth and it is why Paul preached milk at first—they were carnal and babies.

Next time, we will see that they yet had a problem. Paul said, “neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor 3: 2-3)

Amen!