

TITLE: Responding to the Word of Grace (Part 4)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:25b - 2.1

THEME: The Believer's Response to the Word of God (the Gospel of Christ)

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Read Passage

One common element that comes up again & again t/o this passage is t/priority of God's Word.

It's called "the truth" that purifies souls in v. 22

" "imperishable seed" in v. 23

Also in v. 23 ==> "Word of God" that's living and abiding

In v. 25 it's called "the Word of the Lord" & t/ "Word" that was preached.

2:2 ==> "pure milk"

Because of t/centrality of God's Word in this passage our main point t/o this text has been ==>

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

It's a passage that asks ea. & ever one of us, "How do you respond to t/voice of God's Word?" James would put it this way (1:22), "Are you a doer of the Word, or a hearer only?"

My hope would be that if TAP were alive today he might say of Clarkson Community Church what he said of the Thessalonian church ==>

1 Thessalonians 2:13 . . . we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

It is ==>

. . . *God's Word, which performs its work in us who believe it.*

But it's easy for us to grow cold in our affection and appreciation for the Bible isn't it?

Sometimes you read a story or illustration that hits you like a cold slap in t/face. One such story comes from the annals of the Puritans.

I am going to take you back in time to the 17th c. Puritan Preacher John Rogers is warning his congregation about neglecting the Scriptures by telling them what God might say. In dramatic fashion, Rogers plays the part of God speaking from heaven saying, *"I have trusted you so long with my Bible . . . it lies in [some] houses all covered with dust and cobwebs, you care not to listen to it. Do you use my Bible so? Well, you shall have my Bible no longer."*

Rogers then picked up his Bible and started walking away from the pulpit. Then he stopped, fell on his knees, and took on the voice of the people who pleaded, *"Lord, whatever you do to us, don't take away your Bible from us; kill our children, burn our houses, destroy our goods; only spare us Your Bible, take it not away."*

"Say you so?" Rogers replied, again impersonating God. *"Well, I will try you a while longer; and here is my Bible for you. I will see how you use it, whether you will search it more, love it more, observe it more, and live more according to it."*

A well-known theologian of the day, Thomas Goodwin, was in the audience. Goodwin was so moved by Roger's dramatic presentation that when he left church he wept upon his horses' neck for 15 minutes before he felt strong enough to mount it." [cited by Joel Beeke in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds, 229-30]

Might we pray to have such a tender conscience, sensitive & responsive to the moving of God's Spirit.

This is ==>

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

Having a heart that says, "*Lord, take whatever you wish from us, but take not away your precious Word; for w/o it we perish.*"

As it relates to this passage in 1 Peter, we've said that the main idea ==> "Responding to the Word of Grace Will Bring God's Blessing in Your Spiritual Race."

It's a passage that speaks of how God has worked in our hearts through the "*seed that is imperishable, that is, though the living and abiding word of God*" (v. 23).

It echoes the words of Jesus in John 14:15 ==> "*If you love me you will keep my commandments.*"

As it relates to our journey through this passage in 1 Peter, First Thing we saw in v. 22 ==>

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

You are to ==>

A. Rekindle Your Love for the Brethren (22)

Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love each other from a pure heart.

{restate}

Secondly, vv. 23-25 ==>

B. Remember Your Response to the Word (23-25)

There are three things we are to remember in this passage ==>

1. Remember the Word that Saved You (23a)

You have been born again not out of perishable seed, but imperishable: through the living and abiding Word of God.

2. Remember the Nature / Character of that Word that Saved You (23b-25a)

. . . **not out of perishable seed** (seed of men/animals/plants), **but imperishable: through the living and enduring Word of God.**

1) Imperishable Word; 2) Living Word; 3) Enduring Word; 4) it's God's.

a. In Verses 24 - 25 ==>

Peter Illustrates the Nature of this saving Word; idea that God's Word is eternal seed as compared to the seed of men which is temporal. He does so by quoting Isaiah 40:6-8. Peter quotes Isaiah partly from the LXX & partly from t/Hebrew.

(1) It's a Passage in Isaiah that speaks of the faithfulness of God's promises

Isaiah was written during t/time of Israel's division into N. & S. K.D.s. Isaiah prophesied that, due to their continued rebellion against God, t/southern K.D. of Judah was to be taken captive by of Babylon (N. K.D. of Israel had already be taken captive by Assyria in 722 BC).

(a) In chapter 39, God tells King Hezekiah==>

'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' – and even your children shall be taken away!

Yet, after these predictions of judgement - Isaiah 40 begins by saying **"comfort, comfort my people."** IOW - God is faithful; he will restore them. He will keep his covenant with the people regardless of how powerful t/nations of the world are; these nations are pawns in God's hands; they are like grass and the flower of the grass, which perish when the wind blows upon them. It is God's Word/Promise that last forever.

Peter takes this passage in Isaiah & applies it to our hearts as a New Covenant people. God will keep his promises to us because His Word is faithful and true.

Again, by way of review . . .

(2) Look at verse 24==>

FOR ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS . . .

(a) "All flesh" = "all of humanity"

And "all of humanity" is like grass." Common field grass; that which lasts for a season & then dies.

. . . AND ALL OF HER GLORY IS LIKE A FLOWER OF GRASS. . . .

(b) "her glory" refers to the "glory of men"

Success/prestige/power/celebrity status. All of that in God's eyes is like the flower of grass.

Some of us are plain old grass (hay), a few are flower (stand outs).

. . .THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWER FADES (*dies*) . . .

Whether it's grass (all men in general) or the flower (those men who are prominent/celebrities) they all alike wither and fade away. Whether it be Presidents, Kings, Hollywood celebrities OR the poor, seemingly insignificant average among us – we all are subject to the same death. Death is the great equalizer.

(c) This is the life cycle of humanity in miniature

FOR ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS , AND ALL OF HER GLORY IS LIKE A FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWER FADES.

i. As I said two weeks ago ==>

Life cycle of things that don't live long give us a quick glimpse into what our lives are like. Like t/leaves of the trees. They bud in the spring (birth), they unfold and bloom (adolescence), reach full maturity in the summer (prime of life). Then fall comes. They begin to wither & even get age spots (they become senior citizens). They turn brown and quickly die. They fall off and are forever gone. Cycle starts all over again in the spring with brand new leaves. A new generation.

That's a preview in miniature of what our lives are like. I was a baby, then a child, then an adolescent, young man, a middle aged man, an older man, an elderly man. Then one who withers away and falls to the dust of t/earth.

THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWER FADES

But note verse 25==>

BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD REMAINS FOREVER.

(3) How long is "Forever?" How long is "eternity?"

We can't fathom how long eternity is. Here's a feeble illustration==>

The Rock of Gibraltar, located off t/southwestern tip of Europe is the largest such rock in the world. It stands nearly 1400 feet high. Picture a raven who comes once every year to scratch his beak on that great rock. He scratches for 15 seconds and leaves to come again the next year. How long will it take for t/scratching of that raven to wear the rock down to a pile of dust? The time that this takes will not have even got you to the doorway of eternity.

THE GRASS WITHERS AND THE FLOWER FADES BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD REMAINS FOREVER.

{Pause/Break}

3. Remember the Preaching of the Word that Saved You (25b)

... **And this is the Word which was preached to you.**

a. Among other things, this passage speaks loudly to the role of preaching in the church

Ends up being a statement on t/primacy of preaching as well as t/method.

If the Word is the truth that purifies souls (v. 22) // means of new birth (v. 23), and if it's t/imperishable Word of God that abides forever (vv. 23-24), then our preaching & teaching better reflect and exalt t/truth of God.

Mark Dever, Preaching Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, writes in his book - The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel ==>

"When I was interviewing with Capitol Hill Baptist Church, before they called me to be their pastor, someone asked me if I had a program or plan to implement for growth. Perhaps to this person's surprise . . . I responded that I didn't really have any great plans or programs to implement. I was just armed with four P's – I would preach, pray, develop personal discipling relationships, and be patient. Maybe even more surprising to some, I said that I was happy to see every aspect of my public ministry fail if it needed to . . . except for the preaching of God's Word. Now what kind of a thing is that for a pastoral candidate to say to a church? What I wanted to get across was that there's only one thing that's biblically necessary for building the church, and that's the preached Word of God. . . . This would be the fountain of our spiritual life, both as individuals and as a congregation. God's Word has always been His chosen instrument to create, convict, convert, and conform His people. . . . The Gospel is God's way of giving life to dead sinners—and to dead churches (Ezek. 37:1-4). He doesn't have another way. If we want to work for renewed life and health and holiness in our churches, then we must work for it according to God's revealed mode of operation. Otherwise we risk running in vain. God's Word is His supernatural power for accomplishing His supernatural work. That's why our eloquence, innovations, and programs are so much less important than we think . . . and that's why we need to be teaching our congregations to value God's Word over programs. Preaching the content and intent of God's Word is what unleashes the power of God on the people of God, because God's power for building His people is in His Word, particularly as we find it in the gospel

(Rom. 1:16). God's Word builds His church. So preaching His Gospel is primary." [Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel, 33,35]

To bring it back to the context of 1 Peter - any preaching that is not solidly centered on God's Word is fading grass preaching. It may be slick; it may draw the masses (like the "flower"), but like the flower it too will fade into nothing. The only preaching that can endure is that which is grounded on that which endures: God's Word.

(1) I would define it this way, along these three lines

Historic, Biblical, Expository Preaching should first of all be Exegetical. (exegetical means that it seeks, in scholarly fashion, to determine what a given passage of Scripture means). Goal is to accurately proclaim what God is saying in t/Scripture; not reading into it what isn't there. To do that is to misrepresent t/voice of God (something I don't want to be guilty of).

Secondly, preaching is to be theological. Bad theologians cannot be good preachers. I don't know how many times I've heard someone say about a preacher, "Well, his theology is a little off, but he's a good speaker and usually has some good things to say."

We've got guys on TV that hold heretical views regarding salvation & t/Trinity & well-meaning, but deceived Xns uphold these men (sometimes women) as cutting-edge spokesman for t/CH. *Bad theologians cannot be good preachers.*

Someone once said that theology is to the preacher what anatomy is to the doctor. You can't be a good doctor with a poor understanding of anatomy. I believe that preachers should be every bit as equipped in the field of Bible and theology as a doctor is in the field of medicine. Doctors deal w/physical health; we deal w/eternal.

Someone from the media once asked John MacArthur during t/televangelist scandals of the 80s, "who polices your movement?" IOW - you've got bad representatives who are hurting your cause. Who's responsible to take care of it. That's a good question. Not a good answer; every CH & denomination is responsible to handle things in a God-honoring, biblical manner. Many don't.

If we had a governing board (not suggesting this) like t/AMA I know that there would be many pastors, theologians, church leaders who would guilty of spiritual malpractice!

(exegetical/theological)

Thirdly, preaching is to be practical. Touches not only the head but the heart.

John Murray once said that the goal of good preaching is "intelligent piety." balance between accurate theology & passionate life.

Speaking of passion, tears came to my eyes when I read for t/first time the story of worker in Robert Murray M'Cheyne's church in 19th c. Scotland.

The worker couldn't help but notice t/awe on the face of a visitor during M'Cheyne's sermon and afterward the man invited the visitor into M'Cheyne's study. The visitor asked the man, "Tell me, having sat under this godly man's ministry, what is the secret of his success." The old sexton told the visitor to sit at M'Cheyne's desk. Then he asked the man to put his hands on the desk. Then to put his face in his hands and weep. Next the two men walked into the church sanctuary and ascended to the pulpit. "Lean over the pulpit," the worker said. "Now stretch out your hands and weep." [Cited in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds.]

When I read that I thought to myself, I want to be able to view my ministry like that: to have such a high view of God's Word & its importance in t/life of this church that I would bring forth each message as with tears.

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

A. Rekindle Your Love for the Brethren (22) "What is the Depth of my Love?"

B. Remember Your Response to the Word (23-25) "What is my Perspective on Scripture?"

C. Resist Your Sinful Temptations (2:1) "What am I Putting Aside?"

I'm going to read both verse 1 and 2 since they go together as a unit.

Therefore, putting aside all malice, and all deceitfulness, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow with respect to salvation—

1. Go back to verse 1

Therefore [in light of all that you've seen in vv. 22-25] [put these things] aside . . .

Five specific sins that follow ==>

all malice, and all deceitfulness, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander

In ==>

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

2. You are literally to remove these from your life as one would remove filthy garments

a. Greek verb ἀποτίθημι - literally of taking off clothes

Remember the account of the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of t/early church in Acts 7. Verse 58 says that ==>

... when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (ἀποτίθημι)

I don't know if any of you have ever had a run in with a skunk. I had an uncle who lived in Buffalo & several years ago their neighborhood was inundated with skunks. He trapped one. But he didn't use the right kind of trap & as he ran holding the trap the skunk rode alongside of him spraying him as he went. He got rid of the skunk. He also had to get rid of his clothes.

Why? They stunk. In fact, they were so bad that they couldn't be cleaned. They were defiled and putting them back on would defile the wearer. Get the picture?

[remove from yourself the garments of] all malice, and all deceitfulness, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander . . .

If you are a believer you are a new creation in JC. Those old clothes don't fit you any more. You are no longer to walk in the filth of your old nature (cf. John 15:3).

This picture was represented in ancient Xn baptismal ceremonies. When a new believer was baptized, he wore old clothes which represented his old life. When he was raised out of the water, t/old clothes were removed and he was given a pure white robe which represented his new life.

b. What things are we to take off or remove?

Peter lists 5 specific sinful characteristics. These are categorical, not exhaustive & you might compare Ephesians 4:22-31 which uses t/same imagery of putting off t/things of t/old nature.

There's some debate as to whether these things were a problem in the church itself. Were CH members acting this way toward ea. other? Or is this a general warning to guard oneself from these things? I can say from experience that as far as t/CH is concerned, each one of these is like a cancer cell which can metastasize and destroy a church.

(1) First ==>

... [put aside] all malice ... (note the use of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ w/the first two)

(a) $\kappa\alpha\kappa\iota\alpha$ - very general word that can be used for all sorts of wicked behavior

Just about every translation of the Bible renders it "Malice." A malicious attitude. Unforgiveness. Holding a grudge against someone. Bad blood between people.

This has no place in our lives, especially in t/CH. Don't forget t/context.

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

A. Rekindle Your Love for the Brethren (22)

(2) Second ==>

... and all deceitfulness ...

(a) Word $\delta\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ was used in hunting "To trap with bait"

To be deceitful is to trap others. It's to represent t/hook as being a worm. Often translated "guile." "Guile" is an old French word meaning "sly, cunning." To be duplicitous. I looked it up in t/dictionary and a few

words down from "guile" I found "guillotine." I'm not sure what t/relationship is other than both are French in origin. Both are deadly.

(b) Could look at it this way ==>

... **[put aside] all malice** ... is to be t/opposite of malicious ==> kind.

1 Peter 3:8 ... **let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;**

... **and all deceitfulness** ... is to be the opposite of deceitful, honest.
Colossians 3:9-10 **Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.**

(3) Third (next three are actually in the plural in the Greek)

... **and hypocrisy (hypocrisies)** ...

(a) This word comes to us directly from the Greek ὑπόκρισις

This is word from the Grk. theater. Actors wore masks and were known as hypocrites. That's what hypocrisy is: it's to act like something or someone you aren't.

Hypocrisy stands at the top of the list of the world's criticism of Xns. This is a tough one; no one of us is perfect. We all suffer from a little hypocrisy. In fact, any time we don't act in keeping with what we believe or profess, we are suffering from the disease of hypocrisis! But that doesn't mean we are hypocrites.

The warning here is against an utter contradiction between what a person says & what he does. The difference between profession & practice.

(b) Romans 2:17-24

(4) Fourth ==>

... **and envy** [pl. lit. "envies"]

This is to be jealous. Sometimes it's referred to as the "Green-eyed-monster" and a monster it is.

One of the sins that plagued the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 3:3).

One of the sins that delivered X into Pilate's hands was "envy" Matt. 27:18 says that Pilate knew that t/Jews had delivered Jesus to him out of envy.

It is a violation of the last commandment of the decalogue, Exo. 20:17 =>
"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Also a blasphemous attitude against God's providence in that it says that I should have what He has given to another.

(4) Fifth (last) ==>

... **and all slander.**

(a) καταλαλιás

κατα (down or against) + λαλιá (speaking) Lit. "to speak down upon or against."

James 4:11 **Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it.**

Some CHs are plagued by backbiting, slander, gossip.

The tongue weighs practically nothing, But so few people can hold it.

The story is told of a young man during the middle ages who went to a monk, saying, "I've sinned by telling slanderous stories about someone. What should I do?" To which the monk replied, "Put a feather on every doorstep in town." The young man did it. He then returned to the monk, wondering if there was anything else that he should do. The monk said, "God back and pick up all the feathers." It was a windy day and the man replied, "That's impossible! By now they've all blown away. I could never retrieve them all!" To that the monk replied, "so have your slanderous words become impossible to retrieve. Slander no one again."

Calvin Coolidge who was nicknamed "silent Cal" due to his quiet demeanor, once remarked: "I have never been cursed by the things I have left unsaid."
[Knight's Illustrations, 411]

Is there any greater mark of X-likeness and humility than for someone to scrutinize your life and say ==> "I have never heard him/her say anything bad about another person."

[remove from yourself the garments of] all malice, and all deceitfulness, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander . . .

c. Peter sums up all of this in chapter 3 (vv. 8-12)

I. Rightly Responding to the Word of Grace (1:22-2:3)

A. Rekindle Your Love for the Brethren (22)

B. Remember Your Response to the Word (23-25)

C. Resist Your Sinful Temptations (2:1)

This 3rd point actually is a transition to the 4th and last ==>

D. Renew Your Spiritual Hunger (2:2) "What Taste is in my Mouth?"

James 1:21 **Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.**

I desperately wanted to finish verses 2-3 this AM

Sin in our lives is to hunger for the Word what a magnet is to another magnet when their polarities are opposite. How many times have I seen a Xn, or a professed Xn, who starts to dabble in sin and his or her heart is lured away from the faith and they stop coming to church. You cannot walk in darkness and then love the light (cf. 1 John).

D. Revitalize Your Spiritual Hunger (2:2) *"What Taste is in my Mouth?"*

a. Have you Tasted of God's Goodness? (v. 3)

b. Long for That Which Brings Spiritual Growth (v. 2)

Like newborn babies, long for the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow with respect to salvation,

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Like newborn babies (ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη)

βρέφη (βρεφος - an unborn or newborn child, baby * Nom. Neut. Pl.). Predicate Nom. This word would be enough, but with the adj. (ἀρτιγέννητος - newborn) added it implies a just-born baby ready to feed on its mother's milk for the first time. Sole or desperate hunger.

This continues the "new birth" analogy that is in the greater context. Cf. 1:23. Metaphor in keeping w/1:23. The emphasis is not on the fact that the baby is young, but on the fact that the baby is hungry. A healthy baby longs for milk.

Some claim that this either: 1) refers to the fact that the readers were recent converts; 2) they were immature (cf. use of "milk" below). I don't believe this is the case (cf. entire epistle for their spirituality). This is simply the analogy that Peter chose; it is applicable to all of us regardless of maturity level. (What is maturity anyway? - we all have areas of immaturity or at times act immaturity; none of us has arrived as Paul reminds us in Phil. 3 and Romans 7).

2 Timothy 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

long for the pure spiritual milk, (τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιποθήσατε,)

ἐπιποθήσατε, (ἐπιποθεω - to long for * 2PP Aor. Impv. Act.). Imperative of command. The prefix ἐπι intensifies the verb. It is to strongly desire something. Cf. Phil. 2:26.

Two characteristics of this "milk" - it is "pure" and "spiritual."

λογικός, ἢ, ὄν (a favorite expr. of philosophers since Aristot.; Dit., Syll.3 803, 5. Not LXX, but oft. Philo) rational, spiritual λογικὴ λατρεία a spiritual service Ro 12:1 (cf. Herm. Wr. 1, 31 λογικὴ θυσία 13, 18; 21; Epict. 1, 16, 20f the singing of hymns is the religious service of man, as a λογικός=a being endowed with reason; 3, 1, 26 τὸ λογικὸν ἔχεις ἐξαίρετον, τοῦτο κόσμει καὶ καλλώπιζε. Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 277 God places no value on sacrificial animals, but on τοῦ θύοντος πνεῦμα λογικόν. Test. Levi 3:61. καὶ ἀναίμακτος προσφορά [v.l. θυσία]; Euseb., H.E. 4, 23, 13 Schwartz; cf. the paraenetic pattern of Plut., Mor. 478d-e.-Rtzst., Mysterienrel.3 328f; Ltzm., Hdb. exc. on Ro 12:1; B Schmidt, D. geistige Gebet, Diss. Bresl. '16; OCasel, Jahrb. f. Liturgiewissensch. 4, '24, 38ff; CFDMoule, JTS n.s. I, '50, 34f). Most likely τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα 1 Pt 2:2 is to be taken in the same way pure spiritual milk; it is to be borne in mind that λ. means spiritual not only in the sense of πνευματικός, but also in contrast to 'literal', w. the mng. 'metaphorical' (cf. Pel-Leg. p. 20: the bishop is the shepherd τῶν λογικῶν προβάτων τοῦ Χριστοῦ; Euseb., H.E. 1, 1, 4 ἐκ λογικῶν λειμώνων).—Gerh Kittel, TW IV 145-7. M-M.*

λογικός, is an adjective that comes from logo". It can mean spiritual, rational, or pertaining to the word.

ἄδολον (ἄδολος - genuine, guileless * Accus. Neut. Sing. Adj.). Pure as opposed to contaminated.

Was almost a technical term for corn that was free from contaminants [so Barclay, 192] Cf. tainted dog food problem here in Rochester.

"'Pure' milk meant that it had not been mixed with anything else; the term is used in business documents for sales of unadulterated foods. Pure 'spiritual' . . . milk is a possible translation, but the adjective here more often means 'rational' and could well be rendered 'milk of the word'" [Keener, 712]

Contaminated milk resulted in thousands of deaths, mostly in children, prior to the process of pasteurization. The sickness was called, "Milk Fever." Many Christians are suffering from "milk fever" due to drinking contaminated milk. The milk is to be "pure" (necessity of pure doctrine).

I was telling some folks a week ago that Preachers should be every bit as equipped as medical doctors

"What you win them with is likely what you win them to. If you win them with the Gospel, you'll win them to the Gospel. If you win them with technique, programs, entertainment, and personal charisma, you might end up winning them to yourself and your methods . . . but it's likely that they won't be won to the Gospel first and foremost. . . . The implication is that once you try to turn the corner from technique, program, or entertainment to the Gospel, it's likely that you'll either lose them, or they will be converted to you, not Christ. The Gospel of Christ has never needed the gimmicks of men to effect conversion in the soul (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:1-5)." [Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, The Deliberate Church, 44]

"In view of postmodern culture's relentless output of informational junk food through radio, television, films, the internet, computer games, books, periodicals, and even so-called Christian pulpits—all of which causes spiritual malnourishment and dulls appetites for genuine spiritual food—believers must commit to regular nourishment from God's Word." [MacArthur, 100]

One can almost picture starving children in third world countries as a metaphor for what believers look like in America today.

Why the Word? Immediate context implies it; wider context of the NT implies it; alludes to Psalm 119:20,131 where the same verb (ἐπιποθεω) is used in the LXX; Rabbis commonly referred to the word as "milk."

Only other use is in Romans 12:1.

"The Jewish writers speak of . . . “the milk of the law”, of which they generally interpret the passage in Isaiah 55:1 but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or “rational milk”: not that the Gospel is a scheme according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, “the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual”: and it is “sincere”; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, Jews or heretics: or “without deceit”; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it." [Gill, 43-44]

Hunger like a baby for God's Word. No immaturity is implied by Peter's use of "milk" here as some commentators suppose (milk vs. meat). Nor in the use of "babes." Peter is simply using an analogy. Milk fits the analogy. Be silly for Peter to say, like new born babies, long for meat (porterhouse steak)!

1 Corinthians 3:2 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

Hebrews 5:13-14 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

To impose these contexts on Peter's readers is w/o warrant.

Natural man does not want pure spiritual milk. He cannot understand it (cf. 1 Cor. 2).

Something else the metaphor implies: that we are dependant on God and His Word for our very lives, just as an infant is dependant on his mother for his very life. We are needy. Cf. Matt. 4:4.

so that by it you may grow with respect to salvation— (ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ ἀύξηθῆτε εἰς σωτηρίαν,)

Note that the KJV omits this phrase: ". . . perhaps because a salvation to which one might attain by spiritual growth seemed inconsistent with a distinctly eschatological salvation waiting to be revealed at the last day (1:4; cf. 1:9). The phrase is found in all the earlier and better MSS and should be retained." [Michaels, 82]

ἵνα ἐν αὐτῷ (αὐτῷ * 3S Dat. Neut. Sing. Indep. Personal PN).

αὐξηθῆτε (αυξανω - to grow * 2PP Aor. Pass. Subj.). Subjunctive in a purpose clause. **Aorist is past-tense only in the indicative mood. This is the purpose or result.

εἰς σωτηρίαν, (σωτηρία * Accus. Fem. Sing.). Adverbial accus. of reference.

What "salvation" is in view here? It is eschatological (cf. 1:5, 9, 10, 13), but the emphasis is that you cannot separate the temporal from the eternal. This is salvation with a view toward sanctification (cf. Phil. 2:12-13). This isn't works salvation (perhaps why the KJV omits this phrase - MSS background).

"Peter's point is that spiritual growth is necessary for eschatological salvation. The evidence that one has been begotten by the Father through the word is that believers continue to long for that word and become increasingly mature. Such a view fits well . . . with the context of 1:5-11." [Schreiner, 101]

You can't be "born again" (born like a baby) and not grow. What would happen to an infant if it is neglected; if it doesn't get the nourishment it needs?

Back to verse 1 - nothing ruins an appetite for God's Word more than sin. Examples?

A spiritually healthy Xn is a hungry Xn. One of the greatest marks of a healthy Xn life is the desire to learn.

Growth comes by way of feeding on God's Word. This goes back to

"preaching" above.

if indeed you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. (εἰ ἐγέυσασθε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος.)

Allusion to Psalm 34:8 - "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Same word is used in the LXX. God is kind; he is good. Both the Hebrew word "tobin" and the Grk. word used here (which is the same in the LXX) refer to kindness in nature. Kindness or goodness is one of God's attributes. He doesn't do wrong. He is the standard of the universe for what good is. Psalm 33:5.

But let's not forget the context; the goodness of the Gospel. Some hear it and are offended (always been the case), others hear it and are drawn to God's goodness. Amazing how the same Gospel can illicit two polar responses: one group hears it and thinks that it is bad (what me a sinner? repent? Jesus the only way? God's wrath will fall upon me if I don't? Hell?); the other thinks it's good (Thank you Lord for saving so unworthy a sinner as I). Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:16-25; 2 Cor. 4:3-4.

εἰ ἐγέυσασθε (γευομαι - to taste, partake of * 2PP Aor. Middle Ind.). Culminative aorist (perfective). First Class Condition.

χρηστὸς - this word is used to mean "delicious" when applied to foods (as milk here). Cf. Keener, 712.

If one has tasted of God's kindness, he will want to continue to taste, drink in, His Word. Not obligation to do so (contra Barclay), but a reminder of who we are and what we need. Should be natural.

"Love for and delight in God's Word always marks the truly saved. Jesus said, 'If you continue in m y word, then you are truly

disciples of mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' (John 8:31-32). The apostle Paul echoed those principles when he said, 'I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man' (Rom. 7:22). The Old Testament saints also expressed a strong desire for the Word of God. Job declared, 'I have treasure the words of His mouth more than my necessary food' (Job 23:12). The opening psalm declares that the godly man's 'delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night' (Ps. 1:2; cf. 19:9-10; 40:8). The prophet Jeremiah cherished God's revelation in a difficult time: 'Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart' (Jer. 15:16)." [MacArthur, 95]

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. The dominant theme is the believer's delight in God's Word. Verses 97-104 summarize this delight:

97 O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. 98 Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine. 99 I have more insight than all my teachers, For Thy testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Thy precepts. 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Thy word. 102 I have not turned aside from Thine ordinances, For Thou Thyself hast taught me. 103 How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 From Thy precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

Have you "tasted of his kindness?" Have you savored his glory? The reference begins at salvation, but it continues t/o life does it not? We "taste" of his kindness at every Sunday morning worship event; when we hear the word proclaimed. So this ending brings us full circle back to the beginning.

Titus 2:11-3:7 summarizes this section.

Thomas Watson gave several guidelines on how to listen to a sermon: "Come to the Word with a holy appetite and a teachable heart. Sit under the Word attentively, receive it with meekness, and mingle it with faith. Then retain the Word, pray over it, practice it, and speak to others about it." Then, Watson also warned his people: "Dreadful is there case who go loaded with sermons to hell." By contrast, those who respond to Scripture as a "love letter sent you from God will experience its warming transforming power." [Cited in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds., page 232]

"The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the word." [John Owen, cited in Whatever Happened to the Reformation, Gary L.W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, Eds., page 232]