

## Tasting and Longing for More – 1 Peter 2:2-3

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Union Baptist Church – 6/23/2019

### INTRODUCTION

How many of you like to eat? What are some of your favorite foods? What do you crave? How many of the foods you love and crave are actually good for you? Isn't it wonderful when you find something that not only tastes delicious, but is also really good for you? That's a hard combination to find sometimes, isn't it? One of my favorite meals these days fits into that rare category. It not only tastes really good, I also feel really good after eating it because it's very good for me. Are you ready for the recipe? It starts with quinoa. How many of you use quinoa regularly? "Quinoa [if you're wondering] is a...seed-producing, flowering plant grown as a grain crop. [It's known as] a pseudocereal, not a grass [like] wheat and rice. [It's actually] related to spinach. [Its] seeds are rich in protein, dietary fiber, B vitamins, and dietary minerals in amounts greater than in many grains. [AND it's] gluten-free" (*wikipedia*). You cook it by just boiling it in water.

So here's the plan for dinner tonight: Boil some quinoa and add a little taco seasoning while you're cooking it. When your quinoa's ready, scoop some into a bowl, add some black beans, a little shredded cheese, diced red pepper, green onions, tomatoes, and avocado. Then finish with a small dollop of light sour cream. And, "wa-la," you have a delicious tasting, easy, healthy dinner you can enjoy AND feel good about. That was for free, folks! Aren't you glad you came today?!

Well, why I am talking about good-tasting and good-for-you food this morning? That's a *good* question. I'm glad you asked! If you've looked at the sermon notes, you've probably noticed that our message today is called: *Tasting and Longing for More*. And as we return to our study of 1 Peter, Peter is going to be using a food analogy in verses 2 and 3 of chapter 2. He's going to be talking about food that both tastes good and is very good for us, food that is loved and craved and screamed for every day by millions of babies...and that food is, a mother's milk. Once they've tasted it, they love it and long for more of it and it causes them to

grow, strengthens them, protects them from disease, and fills their hungry tummies.

And though you and I are no longer newborn babies screaming for our mother's milk, there still remains a spiritual milk that tastes even better and is even better for us than our mother's milk. And more than that, this spiritual milk is absolutely necessary for our growth and maturity in the new birth, the new life, we've received in Christ. Let's read 1 Peter 1, verse 22, through 1 Peter 2, verse 3, to get the full picture as we begin our study today. 1 Peter 1:22-2:3. Here we go:

***1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. 2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

Lord, bless the reading of your Word and enable us to understand it and apply it to our lives today.

Now before we dig into verses 2 and 3, let's briefly remind ourselves of how we got here...of what led up to the "So" of verse 1. First, Peter shared with us that our souls have been purified as we obeyed the truth of God's perfect Word...the good news that told us how to be saved, forgiven and brought to new spiritual life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. We obeyed that true message by actually repenting of our rebellion against God and expressing to him our trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and by inviting Jesus to take charge of our lives from here. As we did this, God purified our souls, washed away our sins and gave us a new, pure heart that longs to please him, causing us to be born again spiritually by the work of the Holy Spirit.

We now have capacities we never had before. We can now love and please God and accomplish his will by his power. And we can now sincerely and earnestly

and selflessly *love each other*. We are freed to love! And this new life of love for God and others takes off when we give up pursuing what the world is pursuing...*earthly glory* that quickly fades away...making a name for ourselves, getting the recognition of others, putting our hope in possessions and position and power. When we give that up and pursue instead, eternal glory, and the perfect, imperishable inheritance awaiting us when Christ returns, we are freed to love and can finally start giving up all those earthly methods used around the world to pursue earthly glory at the expense of others: *malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander*. We can cast them off like a dirty cockroach whenever we find them crawling on us. And that's because our hope is no longer set on things of this world, and loving each other has become so much more important than getting what we think we want here.

As Peter will reiterate later in this book, we live “...***the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God***” (see 1 Peter 4:2). And like Paul, “...***we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God***” (2 Cor. 4:2). Our passion now is for the will of God and to walk with him and reveal him to others as we speak his truth and love each other deeply. That's freedom, my friends! And this is the life of freedom Peter is seeking to open our eyes to. And what we need to grow in this new life of freedom is what Peter wants to draw our attention to this morning in verses two and three.

### **TASTING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD**

We're actually going to start at the end of these verses in our study today. We'll start with the *tasting* that leads us to long for more delicious food. Notice the last phrase of 1 Peter 2, verse 3:

***...if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.***

A baby's love for its mother's milk begins with the first taste. When a new baby is born, much time and effort and anxiety is put into helping the baby figure out how to get milk from its mother. I can remember this with my own kids...the stress of trying to get them to figure out what to do so they could get the essential food and nutrition they needed for a good start in life. But once they

figured it out and got a taste, they inevitably wanted more and we could rely on them to let Mom know when they needed and wanted more. And the same is true for us. It's in tasting the Lord and his goodness that we begin to long for more of him. And the great news is that the Lord not only tastes good, he is also extremely good for us.

Have you tasted the Lord and found that he is good...that he is kind and gracious and loving to the core? That he desires what's best for you? If you haven't, you'll have little hunger or longing for more of him. But once you get a really good taste of how good God is, you're going to start wanting more and more of him above everything else in life. I pray that each of us will listen to and respond to the invitation King David gave to us from his own experience in Psalm 34:8: ***Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!...*** Peter has also been making great efforts in chapter 1 to show to us how good the Lord is and to cultivate within us a longing for more of him. ***Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!...***

### **LONGING FOR MORE OF THE LORD AND HIS GOODNESS**

Now let's go back to the first part of verse 2, and discover how we can drink in more and more of the Lord and his goodness...how we can satisfy our cravings and longings for more of that wonderful milk we tasted. Peter says:

***Like newborn babies, long for the pure spiritual milk...***

So what is this pure spiritual milk that we are to be longing for like a newborn baby longs for its mother's milk? The original Greek here is literally, the pure "word"-milk. The Greek word, *logikos*, translated by the ESV as, "*spiritual*," denotes "a word" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*). Other translations, like the New American Standard, the CSB, and KJV, translate the phrase as the "milk of the word." One commentator sees this as "a play on words with the reference in [chapter 1, verses 23 to 25] to the living and enduring word (...logos) of God, through which they were born anew" (*NET Bible notes*). If you look back to those verses, you'll quickly notice all the references to the word of God...the truth...the living and abiding word of God...the word of the Lord...this word...the good news. It's all over those verses.

The bottom line is this: the pure milk we are longing for, after having tasted the goodness of the Lord, is the word of God...holy Scripture. If you want more of the Lord and his goodness, drink it in through the word of God. Peter instructs us to long for the pure, nutritious, strengthening, wonderful tasting word of God, just as a newborn baby longs and screams for and throws a tantrum in order to get more of its mother's milk. Instead of longing for the junk food of the world – the passing glory it's chasing after – junk food that tastes really good but is bad for your body and will eventually give you cancer and heart disease; instead, long for the food that not only tastes really good, but is also very good for you and won't upset your stomach and destroy your body. It's *pure* milk for those whose souls have been made *pure* and who have been given a new, *pure* heart. Are you longing for and drinking in God's pure, wonderful tasting word like a baby longs for and steadily drinks in its mother's milk?

### **GROWING UP THROUGH THE MILK OF THE WORD**

If you want to grow up, if you want to be healthy and strong and reach full maturity as an adult, you must have a steady intake of the word of God. Let's read verse 2 again, this time the whole thing:

***Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation...***

Peter not only tells us to long for the word, but he also tells us WHY we need it. We are to long for it, so that BY it, we may grow up into the salvation we've been given through Christ. Only the pure spiritual milk of the word of God is able to bring about our growth...to make us grow up as followers of Christ. Without it, we remain like newborn babies for our whole lives, dependent on others for everything and expecting the world to revolve around us and come quickly whenever we scream.

This metaphor Peter is using, comparing a mother's milk to the pure milk of the word of God, is such a perfect one. What a difference it would make to each of us if we longed for the word of God as a baby longs for its mother's milk, and if we embraced the truth that a steady intake of the word of God is as important to our spiritual growth and maturity as a mother's milk is to the growth and survival of a newborn baby. Is that the way you view and relate to the word of God on a daily

basis today? Do you want it as badly and do you drink it in as often as a newborn baby does its mother's milk?

I'm reminded of the class Mindy and I took at the hospital before our first child was born. What a big deal they made about the importance of breastfeeding! Why? Because studies over and over have revealed that a mother's milk is vastly superior to formula in providing what a baby needs for a good start in life. And that's because God designed it that way and no human efforts to replace it or find substitutes can match God's design. Listen to just a few of the amazing benefits of mother's milk to a newborn baby:

### **Health benefits of a mother's milk**

(from <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/11-benefits-of-breastfeeding#section5>)

*1) Breast milk contains everything [a] baby needs for the first six months of life...The first milk is thick, rich in protein and loaded with beneficial compounds. Its composition even changes according to the baby's changing needs, especially during the first month of life.*

*2) Breast milk is loaded with antibodies, especially immunoglobulin A, which can help prevent or fight illness in [babies]...*

*3) Breastfeeding may reduce [a] baby's risk of infections and many diseases, including allergy, celiac disease and diabetes... **Middle ear infections:** 3 or more months of exclusive breastfeeding may reduce the risk by 50%, while any breastfeeding may reduce it by 23%...**Respiratory tract infections:** Exclusive breastfeeding for more than 4 months reduces the risk of hospitalization for these infections by up to 72%...**Colds and infections:** Babies exclusively breastfed for 6 months may have up to a 63% lower risk of getting serious colds and ear or throat infections...**Gut infections:** Breastfeeding is linked with a 64% reduction in gut infections, seen for up to 2 months after breastfeeding stops...**Allergic diseases:** Exclusive breastfeeding for at least 3–4 months is linked with a 27–42% reduced risk of asthma, atopic dermatitis and eczema.*

*4) Breastfed babies have lower obesity rates than formula-fed babies. They also have more leptin and more beneficial gut bacteria... Leptin is a key hormone for regulating appetite and fat storage... Breastfed babies also self-regulate their milk intake. They're better at eating only until they've satisfied their hunger, which helps them develop healthy eating patterns.*

*5) Breastfeeding may affect a baby's brain development and reduce the risk of future behavior and learning problems.*

Why am I telling you all this? Because just as God designed a mother's milk to provide for the nutrition and disease-protection and healthy growth of a newborn infant, he has also provided all the same things for our spiritual health and growth from newborn believer through adult Christ-follower through his pure, true, eternal, life-changing word. And there's no substitute for it. There's no other way you can grow to maturity in your salvation than through steady and regular intake of the word of God and a willingness to apply it and obey it.

## **CONCLUSION**

Do you believe that today and does it show in your daily life? Have you tasted that the Lord is good and are you seeking more of him through his word like a newborn baby seeks after and screams for milk? So often we wonder why our progress is slow in growing Christlikeness. So often others wonder why our progress is so slow in growing Christlikeness. Well, the clear, undebatable, unalterable, unchanging truth, revealed over and over in Scripture itself, is that our growth in Christlikeness in our daily lives is directly proportional to our intake of the word of God and our willingness to trust and obey what we find there.

We make a zillion excuses. We say it's too hard to understand. We say we're too busy, while we watch a 2-hours of TV every night and spend an hour on Facebook. We say we're too tired. We say we don't know where to start. And on and on and on. If you want an excuse, it's always easy to find one. But the real problem is that we haven't yet come to fully believe that the word of God is as essential to our spiritual growth as a mother's milk is to a newborn baby. We haven't yet come to fully believe that we must have a steady intake of it in order to become a mature follower of Christ and prepare ourselves to reign with Christ when he returns. We haven't yet come to fully believe that more and more of God's

goodness awaits us through deep and meditative study of his true and perfect word coupled with surrender and obedience to what we find there.

But I'll tell you: if you're willing to believe these simple and perfectly true realities about God's word and start regularly and steadily and prayerfully studying and responding to it daily, the Spirit will give you what you need to understand it and apply it and grow to mature, God-glorifying adulthood, ***to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we...grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love*** (Ephesians 4:13b-16). Develop a habit and stick with it. You'll begin to understand and be transformed by the power of God's word.

Today I call out the truth that Isaiah proclaimed and that Peter quoted. I join with Peter and Paul and the other apostles and all fully surrendered followers of Christ through the ages to believe and proclaim:

Isaiah 40:6b-8

***All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.***

Instead of longing for things that quickly wither and fade away and leave us lost and hopeless and stuck in empty ways of living life, let's long for the living and enduring and life-giving word of God that alone can grow us up into the life of freedom where we taste and enjoy more and more of the great goodness of our loving God...where we taste him and crave for more and more and more!

Make a plan, my friends. Carve out the time and find a reading plan that keeps you in both the New and Old Testaments. Meditate and pray about those parts that stick out to you. Ask the Lord what he's trying to teach you through them and how they apply to your life today. Don't just build an impressive head knowledge of God's Word, but respond to it and humbly apply it to your life daily.

In his book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitney share these helpful application questions:

- 1) Does this text reveal something I should *believe* about God?
- 2) Does this text reveal something I am to *praise, thank or trust* God for?
- 3) Does this text reveal something I to *pray about* for myself or others?
- 4) Does this text reveal something I need *a new attitude* about?
- 5) Does this text reveal something I need to make *a decision* about?
- 6) Does this text reveal something I God is calling me *to do* for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?

Approach Scripture with the expectation that God will provide you an application to your life every day. That's when the pure milk of the word will really start bringing about your growth in Christlikeness.

Don't let another day go by where God's word is on the back burner. Put it on the front burner and let it boil the quinoa dish of your life to a wonderful, delicious feast on the goodness of God. Great tasting and incredibly good for you!