

## St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church

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"Crave Pure Spiritual Milk" 1 Peter 2:2-10

Sunday May 10, 2020 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Peter 2:2-10** - Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup> As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup> you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." <sup>7</sup> Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," <sup>8</sup> and "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Crave pure spiritual milk. That's Peter's directive for believers, for us. Crave pure spiritual milk. Seems simple enough, but then you have that, "Wait, what's he talking about exactly?" moment. First of all, what is this milk? In the NIV translation of the Bible there are 47 verses that contain the word "milk." Most of them refer to the Promised Land as a place flowing with milk and honey or to the idea that having abundant milk means that you are taken care of. Only four verses use milk as a metaphor for God's Word, often in the sense that "the milk" is the simple teachings from the Bible like "Jesus loves me this I know," while solid food refers to harder, more complicated teachings like predestination or election. In three of the four passages, the solid food is preferable to the milk, but here, in 1 Peter, the milk is simply God. Peter says, "**...Crave pure spiritual milk... now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.**" (verses 2-3) We are to crave milk because it's good. It's good because the Lord is good. The thing that we taste is the Lord. When Peter says crave milk, he is saying crave God.

Now we know what the milk is, but what about it being pure and spiritual? Pure is self-explanatory — it hasn't been tampered with, it's clean, there are no defects and no flaws, it's perfect. This is our God. He's perfect, defect free. The other word, spiritual, makes sense because we think of God as the one who fixes us spiritually. While this is certainly true, this word translated as "**spiritual**" also carries with it a meaning of being real and genuine, true to its essence. So, this Lord that we are to crave is to be the perfect God, the genuine and real God. This is the God revealed to us in the Bible.

So, crave the perfect and real God of the Bible like a newborn craves milk. It's a simple command with a powerful picture. Crave, long for, desire the Lord just as a newborn baby desires its only source of food. If you've been around a newborn, you

know that they will not be happy or give you any rest while they are hungry. They will cry until you feed them, and you know that they are not quiet about doing that. They want it now, and they won't accept anything less. This kind of fierce hunger is how we should feel about getting God.

Can you say that you crave God as a newborn craves milk? Are we, like clockwork, every 2-3 hours, demanding to have more God in our lives? Every three hours do we have to kneel down and pray for God to bless us and others? Do we frantically look for the Bible at those hourly intervals needing to read it before we can do anything else? Do we crave God like a newborn craves its only food source?

Why don't we naturally crave Jesus as much as a newborn craves to be fed? Why can we go days without receiving another meal from Him? How can we view God as someone that we can separate out of the rest of our lives? How can we be okay taking a break from Him to do other things? Lessening the picture from a newborn baby craving milk, why don't we crave Jesus like we crave a good, juicy burger or a scoop of ice cream or creamy milk chocolate? Why don't we "chow down" on the Lord three times a day like we do with our regularly scheduled meals? Plain and simple, how do we develop a craving for God?

Physical cravings are easy to understand. You taste something good, and your body wants more. If your belly is empty, it wants to be filled up. If you are thirsty, you drink water. We have a brain and a nervous system to naturally handle these things for us. There's no training necessary to develop a craving for food.

Spiritual cravings are harder to understand. Our soul doesn't typically send out an "I'm-hungry-for Jesus" impulse to our brains. There are times when we realize that something is

missing in our lives; we crave to be complete. When life seems out of control and priorities have become wonky, we crave for help, for order, for peace. When life is changing constantly and nothing is secure as it once was, we crave security and identity. These are the subtle ways that we crave God; it's just that we often don't know that we are craving Him.

So, how do we develop a craving for God? It's the same way that we get any craving: we taste something good. Whether it's McDonald's fries, Coca Cola, or beer (or whatever you get a craving for), we get a craving for these things because something about the taste appeals to us at certain times. The more you have something that you enjoy the taste of, the more you develop a craving for it. In the same way, the more you come to the Lord and taste the good things that He gives you, the more you will want it.

You have tasted that the Lord is good. You know what He has done for you. It's a fine time to talk about these things as we have tasted so much good lately. "Wait a minute!" I hear you say. We have been locked up in our homes for the last 2 months. We haven't been able to work so no money is coming in. Kids are stuck at home and can't go to school. People all over the world are dying and you tell us we have had it good??? Yes! Through everything that has happened over the last couple of months and that we may have to endure in the future, God has never left us. We may not have been in church for the last two months but on Palm Sunday Jesus still rode into Jerusalem with the crowds shouting, **"Hosanna in the Highest!"** "Save us, Jesus! Save us!". The economy may be shut down, but Jesus still went through His trial and execution on Good Friday. Getting cabin fever can be awful and we need to get out and have things return to normal but nevertheless Jesus took the bitterness of our sin as He experienced hell on our behalf on the cross when God turned His back on Him. No matter how bad it has been or if the future looks even worse, Jesus still rose from the grave on Easter Sunday. We are rescued from the flames of hell because Christ conquered Satan with the empty tomb of Easter. His perfect life substitutes for ours. Our sins are forgiven. God has given us **new birth into a living hope** through His resurrection, and with it He also has given us **an inheritance** of eternal life in heaven **that can never perish, spoil, or fade.** (1 Peter 1:3-4) These are the good things that you have tasted, good things that are confirmed by Jesus' promise in our Gospel reading today when He said, **"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."** (John 14:2-3) He has gone into heaven. He is preparing that place for us. He has given us the best possible gifts imaginable. We have tasted that the Lord is good.

Peter doesn't want us to stop at the taste. He doesn't want us to stop with "Jesus loves me this I know, and that's all I really

want to know." He doesn't just want for us to know that we are saved. He wants us to keep tasting God to develop a craving for Him.

There are more good things that the Lord has done for us that are out there for us to taste. Aside from giving you total and free salvation, He has also given you an identity. Peter wrote, "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." (verse 10) God has made you into someone. He has made you a part of His people, the ones that He protects and cares for and listens to. Even while everything else in life may change and it feels like your world is coming apart, you know who you are: God's royal priest. You belong to a holy nation that rests in security because God watches over it and protects it; He protects everyone in His kingdom. Following your craving for the pure spiritual milk will lead you to learn more about this perfect and genuine God who has made you a part of His chosen people **"that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."** (verse 9)

What's more God is building us **"into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."** (verse 5) God has not only given us salvation, He has also given us purpose. He brought us to faith. Now He directs us to use our lives to serve Him. This doesn't mean that we all have to become pastors or spend our lives in a monastery somewhere studying the Bible, but it does mean we are not just working for a paycheck, not just studying to get good grades, not raising kids because you have to. We now do these things as our service to God. God calls us wherever we are in life to act in service to Him. When we carry out our responsibilities faithfully and to the best of our ability, we are putting to work all the gifts and talents that God has given us to good use. All these good works then become our spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We have tasted that the Lord is good. Now, brothers and sisters, it's time to feed that craving so as to develop it in our lives. These cravings can be denied, but this is a case where we are told with no exceptions, indulge in God. Demand Him. Search for Him. Serve Him. Crave Him as pure spiritual milk. Be a glutton when it comes to seeking God in His Word. As you keep tasting Him, learning about Him, you will find so much more that He does for you. The good things that He is and that He does for you will cause you to desire more of Him.

Fuel your craving for God. Indulge in Jesus. You have tasted that the Lord is good; feast on Him. Set a place at the banquet of the Word of God. Crave Him as a newborn craves milk. Amen.