

Easter 5 5/7/23
1 Peter 2:2-10 A

LIKE NEWBORN INFANTS, LONG FOR THE PURE SPIRITUAL MILK, THAT BY IT YOU MAY GROW UP TO SALVATION – IF INDEED YOU HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IN GOOD.

Inquiring minds want to know: What did pastor do on vacation? Hours and hours of mind-numbing golf on the links? Nope. An elated fan in the stands at an Iowa baseball game – ably coached by Rick Heller, I would add? Nope. Slingshotting countless arrows from the Matthews’ bow? Nope. Inquiring minds want to know – what did you do on vacation, Pastor? Alright, alright. You asked, so I will tell you – Pastor spent his vacation feeding and burping and getting drooled on by little girls – the cutest girls in the world, I would add, objectively add, of course. Come on, when you’re that cute, you can drool on grandpa anytime.

I guess I have to admit, maybe because its been a few years since the boys were little or maybe I’m just showing my age, but I had forgotten how much two little girls could eat. Seemed like you would just get them fed, burped, changed, and it would be time for another feeding. And you want to know what I did on vacation!

But really, that’s a good thing. That’s what babies are supposed to do. They eat and they grow. Newborn infants long for milk. They long for it because they need it to grow, develop, and mature.

In our lesson this Sunday, Peter says, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.” As Christians, we are to desire the pure spiritual milk of God’s Word as much as newborn babies desire milk, because we need it to grow, develop, and mature.

That's what the 3rd Commandment is all about, right? It's not about worshipping on a certain day of the week, but rather that we "hold [God's Word] sacred and gladly hear and learn it." We do that because it is through His word that God does His work in us. Luther's hymn on the 10 Commandment says it this way,

You shall observe the worship day
That peace may fill your home, and pray,
And put aside the work you do,
So that God may work in you [*LSB* 581:4].

We know God's Word is good for us. Scripture itself tells us this, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tm 3:16). We know we also need the Word of God in our lives because the Word of God tells us, "Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (Deut. 8:3b). John tells us the great blessings and benefits that come to us through the Word, "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31).

So, let me ask you another question: When was the last time you longed for God's Word? When was the last time you woke up 4:00 AM on Sunday morning and said, "Yeah! I get to go to Church and hear another of Pastor's wonderful sermons!" When was the last time you sent a text to a friend saying, "We get to go to Bible class." When was the last time you said to your spouse, "We get turn off the TV and read God's Word together. Yes!" When was the last time your child said to you, "Oh boy, I get to learn the Catechism." Anybody? You know the problem all too well, don't you?

Something always seems to get in the way; something always seems to be far more important. What is it for you? The desire to sleep in? A

hobby? Is your work schedule an easy excuse? Is it just a lack of self-discipline? Is it easier to trust in lady luck than to believe the promises of God's Word? Is it any of these excuses, or all of the above?

It's easy to find yourself not longing for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word, isn't it? Let me ask you a question: What happens when a baby doesn't get fed? What happens when an infant does not get milk? They don't grow; they don't mature; they don't get strong. In fact, it's very dangerous for their health and very life.

It's no different for Christians. No matter what the excuse is, the result is the same -- you don't grow, you don't mature, you don't get strong; so that you are not ready for the troubles, tribulations, tragedies that come at you in earthly life. You're not able to stand against the temptations of the devil and the world, so they can just come in and beat the tar out of you and leave you by the side of the road, wounded and dying. That's what happens when you don't long for the pure spiritual milk of God's Word.

As you know, God's Word is divided into two parts: the Law and the Gospel. You've heard the Law, right? Here's the Good News: There is plenty of pure spiritual milk for you, Dear Child of God, to taste and see that the Lord is good.

You have tasted that the Lord is good. Look again at Peter's words, "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (v. 10).

When you were a newborn baby in the flesh, you didn't know God. You didn't know His Word. You didn't know His mercy. That is because you came into the world sinful and unclean. You were an object of God's wrath because you were an unrepentant sinner.

But all that changed when you received the mercy of God in and through Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ shows you that mercy by becoming a newborn infant in the flesh. He was just like you, except in one way – He was born without sin. He came into this world to show you mercy by taking from you all your excuses, all your distrust and doubts of God’s Word, and puts it all to death. He put it all to death when He Himself died on Calvary’s cross for you, giving His life as payment for your sins. Then, three days later, He rose from the dead to deliver that mercy to you.

You received the mercy of God -- the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the evil and eternal salvation -- when you were born again in and through the waters of Holy Baptism. In that new birth, you died with Jesus and rose with Jesus, such that just as He died, you died to sin, and just as He rose, you rose from death and the grave. You have a new life, as a newborn infant in Christ Jesus.

As that newborn infant, Jesus feeds you with the pure spiritual milk of His Word. He speaks that Word into your ears. He puts that Word into your mouth with the bread and the wine. He brings that Word into your hearts and body, so that you start to grow and mature like a baby fed their mother’s milk.

How wonderful this is! Paul writes, “from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tm 3:15). As milk strengthens the baby, the Word of God strengthens you to resist the devil and the world, and guards and preserves you in the trials, tragedies, and troubles of this life. The Psalmist says it this way, “I stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you (Ps 119:11.” You receive all these blessings and benefits from the Word of God. Jesus Himself says, “If

anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death” (Jn 8:51). And of course, to “keep” God’s Word means to believe and trust it.

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.” When you receive the pure spiritual milk of God’s Word, you grow, you develop, you mature, you become strong in the faith to face the trials and tribulations of today, you are guarded against sin and temptation, and you receive the benefits and blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation.