

Preached on September 12th for Christian Education Day by Pastor Michael Johnson.

iGrow

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,³ now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.¹ - 1 Peter 2:2-3

Today is our Christian Education Sunday as we begin our Sunday School, Confirmation classes, as well as youth and adult Bible studies. It's an exciting time for your church and Sunday School staff as we begin a new year. To the outside world, I'm sure it seems quite odd that we would be excited to start giving up more of our time on Sunday morning. In fact, I bet most people outside the church would even contest that going to church only every once in a while is good enough. Having just a little biblical knowledge is just fine. I'd like to show you a short little video – that while making you laugh, also shows you the problem with this way of thinking.

“Lo-Depth Video”

Now, while the video was cute and had horribly low production values – it shows quite well how just knowing something about the Bible without knowing what it actually says is actually a dangerous thing.

That is why today we focus on our theme of iGrow and pray throughout the year that God bless our studying of his Word. This is the same encouragement the Apostle Peter gives in our reading today. He says, **“Now that you have tasted that the Lord is good...”** Now that you have heard that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died to take away your sins. **“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk.”** Just like a brand new baby, crave – this is an intensive verb – earnestly desire, crave pure spiritual milk. Sara and I are not all that far removed from the newborn stage. And in that stage, when all a baby can do is sleep, eat, and get rid of that food in one way or another – you learn what it is to crave something. It doesn't matter how much you love your child. You can be rushing to make that bottle as fast as you can, but it doesn't matter. Nothing can describe that gut wrenching feeling as a parent as you listen to your child and you learn what it means to truly crave something. It becomes the only thing that matters in life. With this same desire, Peter says **“crave pure spiritual milk.”** Crave pure, unadulterated spiritual milk. Always crave the basic truths of your salvation. Always crave to hear how Jesus has done everything for you and by his death on the cross has declared you not guilty. Crave this spiritual milk as much as you crave physical food when starving.

I must confess to you, though, that there are times I wake up in the morning tired and in my fatigue – I don't crave to begin the day with spiritual food so much as some caffeine, a doughnut, and a couple taps of the snooze button. We don't crave spiritual milk when we look at church attendance as a chore instead of a joy and privilege. How much do we crave God's Word when the Bible study attendance rate for our church body nationwide is only 14%? At least here at Eternal Love we are doing better. So far, the past year, the attendance has been about 25% - about 10% higher than the nationwide average. Not bad right? That still means that potentially 3 out of 4 people here won't be in a Bible Study. It's poetically sad when you think about how much energy people put into scrutinizing over the labels on food products looking for organic and less chemicals – yet we sometimes are almost careless in our need for spiritual growth in Bible Study. Taking the attitude that a low depth knowledge of the gist of it is good enough. I've seen it in my past too. And when we are careless in our need for good spiritual food, we are like someone who builds their house on the sand. When waves in life – hard times – come, we may be knocked down.

So **“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.”** Crave spiritual milk because as Peter later writes, **“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.”**

You have indeed received mercy. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners like you and me. Because of his sacrifice on the cross, God has shown you mercy. Not only did Christ pay for your sins, but he gives you plenty of opportunities to as Peter puts it **“grow in your salvation.”** It's not that salvation is a process that you have to work for but to grow in your salvation is to grow stronger in your faith. Picture saving faith as holding onto this book. If I hold onto it with two fingers – it's still life saving faith, but like that house built on sand, it would be so easy for life to come by and swat that book out of my hand. But as I grow in my salvation, as my faith grows stronger, I mature in my faith and desperately cling to God's salvation. When you immerse yourself in God's Word he blesses it and says your faith is like a house built on a solid foundation. When storms come in life, your faith, built on the firm foundation of God's Word, weathers the storm.

So take advantage of the many opportunities offered to grow in God's grace. These opportunities are continued blessings of Christ's grace. That is why Eternal Love is striving to offer you a wide variety of Bible studies this year at many different times. We are blessed with a dedicated Sunday School staff to work with you parents in the training of your children. Teen ministry will offer studies to grow in God's Word and how to apply it to today's concerns. Adults will have opportunities throughout the week to grow in salvation. Sunday morning and Wednesday night studies give you the chance to begin and continue your week on the solid foundation of God's Word. Grow together with other women in our self motivated women's' ministry. But maybe none of these options really fits you and your schedule. That's why you made the bold move to call a second pastor. Now we are better suited to meet your needs for spiritual growth. If there is a way we can work towards better serving your needs for growth – talk to me some time. That is why I am here – to help you **“grow up in your salvation.”**

You have tasted that the Lord is good. You know your loving Savior has done all things for you. Crave pure spiritual milk so that you may grow up in your salvation built upon the solid foundation of God's Word.