

What's your diet, milk or meat? Hebrews 5:12-14, 6:1-2

In this hour, the Lord is calling His people to partake of the strong meat of the word. I pray that you will be blessed by the following lesson.

Hebrews 5:12-14, 6:1-2:

¹² By this time you should be teachers. But in fact, you need someone to teach you all over again. You need even the simple truths of God's word. You need milk, not solid food.

¹³ Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby. That person does not want to learn about living a godly life. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are grown up. They have trained themselves with a lot of practice. They can tell the difference between good and evil. NIRV

¹ So let us leave the simple teachings about Christ. Let us grow up as believers. Let us not start all over again with the basic teachings. They taught us that we need to turn away from doing things that lead to death. They taught us that we must have faith in God. ² They taught us about different kinds of baptism. They taught us about placing hands on people. They taught us that people will rise from the dead. They taught us that God will judge everyone. And they taught us that what he decides will last forever. NIRV

The notes from the NIV study Bible sheds further insight into the text stating:

“These Jewish Christians were immature. Some of them should have been teaching others, but had not even applied the basics to their own lives. They were reluctant to move beyond age-old traditions, established doctrines, and discussion of the basics. They wouldn't be able to understand the high-priestly role of Christ unless they moved out of their comfortable position, cut some of their Jewish ties and stopped trying to blend in with their culture. Commitment to Christ moves people out of their comfort zones. In order to grow from infant Christians to mature Christians we must learn discernment. We must train our consciences, our senses, our minds, and our bodies to distinguish good from evil...Our capacity to feast on deeper knowledge of God (solid food) is determined by our spiritual growth. Too often we want God's banquet before we are spiritually capable of digesting it.”

The notes further state: “Certain elementary teachings are essential for all believers to understand. Those basics include the importance of faith, the foolishness of trying to be saved by good deeds, the meaning of baptism, spiritual gifts and the facts of resurrection and eternal life. To go on to maturity in our understanding, we need to move beyond (but not away from) the elementary teachings to a more complete understanding of faith”

The Lord has some questions for us today, such as, “Are we growing in the revelation and knowledge of His word or are we stuck on milk and baby food?” Have we allowed ourselves to explore and embrace the deeper truths of the Word or are we content to play it safe and stick to what we know and are comfortable with? Are we able to detect truth from error? Have we disciplined ourselves in the study of the word to a place where we are able to intelligently and articulately communicate with others various Bible principles and concepts? Are we versed enough in Scriptures to be able to extract principles and teachings that can be applied to solve world issues and challenges or is our Bible knowledge limited to Jesus saves and that’s good enough for me!

Can we effectively speak about the love, grace and mercy of God as well as principles and protocols of spiritual warfare?

I note that in verse 11 the author states the people had become dull of hearing. The word dull is the Greek word nothros (G3576) and it means, “Sluggish, i.e. (literally) lazy, or (figuratively) stupid, dull, slothful.”

One definition for the word slothful is indolent which means, “Causing little or no pain, slow to develop or heal, adverse to activity, effort or movement, habitually lazy, conducive to or encouraging laziness.”

Do these definitions define our current approach to the reading, studying and meditation on God’s word? My prayer is that it does not!

The Lord is ready to take His church to other levels, dimensions and realms of understanding in the Word. To prepare us for a place of greater understanding of the word, He is in the process of building our spiritual digestive systems by introducing us to deeper and deeper revelation of Himself through His word.

Revelation 19:13 refers to Jesus as the Word of God

John chapter 1:1-3&14 Amplified states, “¹IN THE beginning [before all time] was the Word-(Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

²He was present originally with God.

³All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.

¹⁴And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth.

From these Scriptures we understand that to know Christ and to experience a tangible manifestation of His operation in lives, we must know the word! We must ingest it, consume it and be intimate with it.

The King James Version of the Bible uses the word (know or knew) oftentimes to describe a sexual or intimate encounter with someone. If we want to know Christ we will have to have an intimate knowledge of His word.

If we want to reproduce Christ in this world, which is in desperate need of Him we will first have to become pregnant or full of the word.

James 1:21 admonish us to turn away from wickedness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.

This word engrafted is comprised of several Greek words, which yields the following definition of, “implanted, to puff or blow, i.e. to swell up, by implication to germinate, or grow (sprout, produce or spring up.” One of the definitions for germinate is, “to come into being” (Strong’s Concordance).

When we allow the implantation of God’s word or (Christ) in our spirits, we as the Bride of Christ (female) conceive or become pregnant with His purpose and are then able to give birth to His will in our lives and the rest of the world.

The only way we are going to receive a greater revelation of our multifaceted Lord and become a viable force in this world is to move from the milk of the word to the meat of the word.

We have got to allow the Lord to mature our understanding of the greatness of who He is and who He has called us to be. The world views the church as irrelevant, unviable, and ineffective at best. Regrettably, as the church we have often been the ones who have helped the world come to this erroneous conclusion because we do not have a mature revelation of Christ and who He has called us to be.

Many times we reject a new truth in the word of God when it is too hard for us to digest or makes us uncomfortable.

Going back to our original text, Let's read it from KJV of the Bible, rather than from the NKJV: There are a few differences in the KJV Bible that are worth taking the time to discuss:

¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. KJV

The KJV of the Bible uses the term strong meat to identify someone mature in his or her understanding and use of God's word. For clarity, I want to take a moment to break down the two words.

The word strong is the Greek word stereos, which means, "stiff, i.e. solid, stable, steadfast, strong, sure" (Strong's Concordance).

Meat is the Greek word tro-fay, which means among other things, "nourishment, rations, wages, convulsion, to stiffen i.e. fatten, to cherish, pamper, rear, bring up, feed, nourish" (Strong's Concordance).

A curious word found in the definition of meat is the word convulsion, which can mean among other things, "One of the irregular ridges on the surface of the brain especially of the cerebrum of higher mammals, difficulty presented to the understanding, obscurity" (Merriam-Webster).

Bringing it together, Strong Meat is consumed by those who have matured to a place in Christ where they are spiritually and mentally nourished, fattened and strengthened by solid and even difficult biblical principles.

Strong Meat is for those who are willing and thus enabled to embrace Christ in His fullness even though doing so will at times destroy our personal theologies and ideologies about the world around us.

Strong Meat is for Christian's with permanent teeth that can rip, tear and chew (meditate on) the meat until they are able to swallow it and then digest it. A babe in Christ either has no teeth or baby teeth both of which are ineffective for Strong Meat.

In John chapter 6:48-58 Jesus is preaching and tells to the people the following:

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” ⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?”

⁵³ Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed,^[a] and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

John 6:60, 66 record the people’s response to Jesus’ words:

“⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?” ⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”

The question we need to ask ourselves today is, “Are we turning our backs on and walking away from Christ the Word because He is too hard for us to hear, understand or accept?” If we are turning our backs on Him (the Word) we are not His sheep. I’ll prove this statement by defining the word sheep as found in Scripture.

The word sheep as used throughout the New Testament are the Greek words probaton and probah-ee-no which mean, “Something that walks forward, a quadruped specifically a sheep, to walk forward i.e. advance literally (or in years): be of great age, go farther on” (Strong’s Concordance).

If the core definition of sheep means something that walks forward, it then firmly suggests that those in John 6:66 who went back and walked with Christ no more were not His sheep. It’s a tough word but there is no escaping its truth. It is time for the church corporately to grow in the knowledge of God’s word and not pick and chose which parts we will obey.

I don’t know if you noticed, but 666 make up the chapter and verse that speaks of those who walked away from Christ and walked with Him, *no more*. Not only did these followers turn away from Christ but also, they never came back to Him. They made a final decision about their eternal destination the same way those who accept the mark of the beast will do (Rev. 14:11).

Continuing with sheep, I did a little research on them and learned that they graze at dawn and in the late afternoons around sunset. They graze on average for 7 hours a day! What a voracious appetite they have! As the Lord's sheep we need to develop that kind of appetite for His word!

Naturally speaking, a good shepherd will carefully choose pasture for his sheep that is abundant and supplies the type of nutrition the sheep need for healthy development. When the pasture area the sheep were grazing in is depleted, a good shepherd shifts them to another area of fertile pasture so that they may continue to grow and flourish.

I liken this shifting of sheep to how a pastor or leader of a church ministers to God's people. The leader responsible for the flock must be one who carefully studies the word (pasture) and then feeds the people what the Lord has taught them.

When it is time to grow in another area of the word, the leader must lead the people or flock to that place and the people should follow. What an incredible responsibility shepherds have to the flock of God is being properly nourished. A malnourished flock is an indictment against the shepherd of the house. The Lord has given responsibility to leaders to ensure the proper growth and development of His people.

While all of us start off as babes in Christ, the expectation is that we will mature into strong meat eating Christians who the Lord can call on to solve the challenges of our society and the world. The purpose and function of the Church is to positively and forcefully impact the world for Jesus Christ and usher in the reality of the Kingdom of God.

To get to the place of being strong meat eating Christians we need potent, faithful and effective leaders as well as the desire to become new wineskins. As the church, we must be willing to expand our spiritual and intellectual borders and allow God to increase our intake and understanding in all areas of His Word.

In Luke 5:36-39 we learn the importance of being those who can expand in the revelation of the word of God. Jesus had just answered a question about a religious approach to fasting and then gave the following parable:

³⁶ Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. ³⁹ And no one, having drunk old *wine*, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"

The NIV Bible gives the following information about wineskins as it states:

“Wineskins were goatskins sewed together at the edges to form watertight bags. Because new wine expands as it ages, it had to put in new, pliable wineskins. A used (or old wineskin) having become more rigid would burst and spill the wine. Like old wineskins, the Pharisees were too rigid to accept Jesus, who could not be contained in their traditions or rules. Christianity requires new approaches, new traditions, [and] new structures. We too must be careful that our hearts do not become so rigid that it prevents us from accepting the new way of thinking that Christ brings. We need to keep our hearts pliable so we can accept Jesus’ life changing message.”

The life-changing message mentioned above is the fullness of the Word of God. Our lives and hearts are truly changed when we embrace the fullness of Christ the Word.

The Lord has called us PROBATION which means He expects us to march forward in the revelation and knowledge of Him and carry the message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

God bless and share this lesson if it has been a blessing to you!

Sincerely,

Apostle Jael J Hodge

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