

*1Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

The first thing I will bring to your recall is that the original documents did not have paragraph breaks and verse numbers that interrupt the train of thought.

Our Bibles end chapter one and begin chapter 2 as though there is a logical break, but it's important to remind you, that Peter is laying out an argument that continues unbroken from our chapter 1 to vs 3 of chapter 2.

We will never fully understand or appreciate these words as much, out of their fuller context.

And Peter's argument is about salvation. True regeneration from death to life of your dead spirit, brought back to life by the Holy Spirit of God.

In his discussion he keeps comparing the old dead you, to the new alive you. The argument revolves around old vss new. Dead vss. alive. Flesh vss. spiritual. Adamic vss. born again. Those living in Satan's kingdom as opposed to those living in the authority to reign of God.

And he ends his argument with a rather frightening wake up call that most of the commentators and teachers seem to have missed. See it there in vs. 3? *3 if indeed you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

In other words, if the black and white contrasts of new life vss old life, which was death in adam's race, if those new things aren't present, and as we will see in future chapters; increasing, perhaps you need to call into question whether your conversion was real. *3 if indeed you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

So, I want to quickly take you on a very fast big picture review of chapter 1 to set the context for these verses this morning.

And right from the greeting, the idea of being separated, set apart unto God, becoming as it were, His own possession, is introduced.

*1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*

*To those who reside as **aliens**, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are **chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.***

All of that language defines a group of individuals who hold in common that they have been snatched out of this world, and had new life breathed into them. Once they were dead, walking about in Satan's world, ignorant of their condition, NOW they are alive, walking in God's kingdom. His property. Aliens in this world. God's own possession.

So you've got this distinction Peter is going to build his argument on; of a group separated out of this world. Distinct. Separate. Aliens in this world. It's like the world is a slice of cantaloupe, and the Christians are the salt shaken onto the cantaloupe. We're there, but distinct. Salt is salt, no matter where you find it. But now I'm mixing my metaphors, so back to Peter.

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7so that the **proof of your faith**, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

*9obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

Again, a separated group who have an inheritance, waiting for them, as opposed to the rest of the world that is stumbling along, hopeless and who will only inherit the completeness of their death in the rebellion of Adam's race against God.

Everything Peter says revolves around the "have's" and the "have not's". You read through that paragraph, and if you understand any of it, you begin to fathom if only partially, the unfathomable wealth God has set us apart from this sinful world to inherit.

There's always this tension that Jesus set up over and over in His teaching and His parables. Wheat and tares. Fruit producing plants and seed that never produces fruit.

Here Peter recognizes one of the proofs that you are in the set apart group, the have's of regeneration, is that you have had your faith proved by trials. You've survived the fiery trials. You're still IN as it were. Salvation vss lostness. A faith, not your own, given to you and proven in the fires of distress and trials.

*10As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the **grace that would come to you** made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you **through those who preached the gospel** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*

Again, the "have's" of salvation vss. the lost. This salvation. This grace that has come to you. Brought to you by the Holy Spirit of God, how, by the preaching of the word. The gospel.

And hold onto that distinction. The new life came by way of preaching the Word. The Word caused the new life. The Word separated you out of this world and gathered you to Jesus. The Word gave you this

inheritance of unfathomable wealth. Peter's going to keep coming back to this idea of The Word. The LOGOS. God, in you, revealing Himself to you, by His Word.

We'll come back to that in our verses this morning. The Word gave you life. The Word separated you out of this world. The Word made the dead, alive.

*13Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*

The behaviour of those who are the saved. The called out ones. Separated people are not conformed to the former lusts and desires. We didn't know any better when we were dead in our sins. Peter says we were ignorant.

But now we have been called to something better. God's elect saints, His adopted children are called to live apart from how this world lives. "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

*17If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

We were bought with a price. And the most precious elements this fallen world can offer, silver and gold, rare and valuable as they are to a fallen world, are of no comparison to the blood of the Son of God which

was required to purchase us out of this world.

Peter encourages us to get serious about the business of "*the time of our stay on earth.*" Since the cost to obtain us was more precious than anything this perishing world can offer, we should conduct our time here with seriousness. Living a seperated life is deadly serious. Serious enough to cost the blood of God's Son.

Angels long to see what God has bought. And the prophets who spoke long ago realized they were speaking about a time that you are living in; first hand. Being a christian is serious business.

This offer of free grace, a free pass into God's kingdom, out of Satan's kingdom, your sin paid for by Holy blood, was brand new. We take it for granted now, 2000 years later, but when Peter wrote this, it was a brand new dispensation of grace. He says those old prophets would have loved to see *this* day. They wrote those things . . . for you.

And now finally, if I've lost you, tune back in, because these final verses in chapter 1 set the stage for what Peter says in ch. 2:1 - 3.

*22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,  
23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.*

*24For,*

*“ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,  
AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.  
THE GRASS WITHERS,  
AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,*

*25BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.”*

*And this is the word which was preached to you.*

We are born again, seperated out of this perishing world, quickened from the dead and made alive together with Christ. And we were born again by seed. And Peter says that seed that gave us spiritual life is not

like any seed this world knows of.

It is imperishable seed. And he gives us this comparison from Isaiah. Fleshy seed, this world's seed only produces things that live and flower for a time and then die.

But the imperishable seed produces life that lasts forever. And that seed is the enduring word of God. **25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.** *And this is the word which was preached to you.*

There's so much in that first chapter. We are chosen. Separated. Sanctified. Set apart. Born again. Called to live apart from this perishing world. Bought with a price more precious than anything in this world.

It was the Word of God that accomplished that amazing salvation. The Word of God makes the perishable; imperishable, the dead; alive. Peter says this is the word we preached to you.

Now follow that same logic right into chapter 2. That long introduction was our reminder, our refresher because now we get to the point of the argument. First word in Chapter 2; Therefore.

*1Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

Peter dives into his "therefore" in the same mode as chapter 1. This is how dead people act. This is how alive people act.

Dead people exhibit these characteristics; malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander. Have you flipped on the news channels lately?

Christianity, over its 2000 years, tempered all of these things that are the fruit of dead people, living in Adam's race. But as christianity recedes, so also does any tempering of these 5 traits Peter mentions.

And the farther away from christian values the world gets, the more prominent these five descriptive words become.

**malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander** Exhibit A; congress. Exhibit B; any of the news networks doing political reporting. Or any reporting as far as that goes. We are rank with these indicators of Adam's race. Peter says, that old life is not for you. You put these things aside. Have no part in them.

We'll take just a moment to break down those 5 things mentioned. Although, my comparison to congress and the networks is so apt, we probably don't need to.

**Malice.** This is the spiritual equivalent of decaying waste. Things that produce a foul odor. Because they are rotten, vile, decaying.

Move that same deadness into the spiritual realm, and you define the stench with this word. Our word malignant comes from the same greek root word. Are you getting the image. Evil intent against another.

Think about Stephen Colbert talking about the president. There, you've got it. Malice. That's just one example. That's how the world rolls. Christians **do not** do this.

**deceit,** In two other translations you'll find; guile, and trickery. Treachery. The original use of the word is for the stick with a string tied to it that holds up a trap that will fall.

Ever build one of those. We did when we were kids. Up at Burger's lodge. We got a suitable box, a stick with a string that we had the end of, inside the cabin looking through a window, and we put some juicy cantaloupe rhinds inside the box to entice a chip munk to get underneath our trap. Guile. Treachery. At least it was to the chipmunk. Satan has many traps.

Words that look like one thing, but they are a trap.

**hypocrisy,** Congress. Fox News. CNN. NBC. Pick your poison. Do

I need to expand? These five words have brought our nation to it's knees. Our government is stalled. But Peter says, that's just business as usual in Satan's kingdom. We are seperated from all of that. Right?

The literal greek word spoke of an actor. Somebody acting under a mask. Someone pretending to be what they are not. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

**envy**, This one has far more going on in the greek than the surface translation of envy. This is ill will that is happy when it's object suffers loss.

*You shall not covet.* Coveting is envy, right. This goes beyond the coveting. This envy has within it, not only do I want what you have, but I want you to die because you have it. This is really an evil form of envy. Envy that has metastasized into hate. Again, click on your TV if you need to see more.

**slander**; What comes out of your mouth as a result of the other 4. Lately the news is so depressing I find myself going to You Tube and watching clips from Laurel and Hardy, or W. C. Fields. The Little Rascals are about my speed. Spanky McFarland, where are you. I need to forget now, and just chuckle for a minute or two.

But these words are a wake up call, because they are the definition of business as usual in a world that is in Satan's grasp. A world rebelling against the God who lovingly created it without all of these things.

These 5 words describe the fall. This is how a sinful world rolls. And the farther this world removes itself from the civilized restraint of christianity and this book, the more prominent these things become.

Christians, fasten your seat belts. I fear we're in for a rough ride.

Peter begins here after his "therefore". Therefore, because of salvation and new life, and all of the sovereign grace and unfathomable price paid for you; Therefore, this is how the world lives, and this is how you live.



So we've spent some time covering how the world rolls. How is it that christians are supposed to roll. Because Peter says, we've put those things aside. We aren't citizens of that world any more. We, hopefully, have left all of those things, in the old dead world where they belong, and moved on to something better.

*Therefore, . . . 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,*

One of the few things I understood from almost day one of my christian experience was that I wanted to mature, and I understood that what I wanted came from understanding this book. This book could bring maturity to me.

Within just a few months, people were already saying to me, "knowledge puffs up, but love edifies". I gobbled up this book. But real maturity takes a while longer. Like 45 years? Understanding is one thing. Doing is another.

Never-the-less, that foundation of those first months of gobbling in this book has stood me in a safe place, even if maturity didn't come immediately.

Peter says, you set the worlds way of doing business aside, and you desire this book like a baby desires it's mother's milk. That my friends is the picture of normalcy for christians. No one teaches a baby to desire milk. And the word used for baby is the word that describes a newborn.

Babies come out helpless. They can't throw something at you to get the milk they crave. If they could, they would. But they come out with one thing well developed. They can make noise. Lots of it.

Peter's picture is apt. People called out of this world, made alive together with Christ, should have the same desire for the very word that caused their salvation, as a baby does for it's mother's milk.

Now just here, we need to dig in a little deeper, because Peter uses an

obscure word here that the translators have taken the liberty to call all kinds of different things trying to get the idea across.

The authorized version says sincere milk of the word. Most of the newest versions say something like spiritual milk and leave out "the word". The NAS that I lean towards says "pure milk of the word" which I think is the best translation . . . but the word for "word" isn't really there.

That word would be logos. But Peter says desire the pure milk of logikon.

We get our word logic, but this word means divine reason. The pure milk of divine thinking. Now of course the only source for that is this book, so the translators, the two best, I believe, say pure milk of the word, or sincere milk of the word.

Vss 23 and 25 of ch 1 tell us it was the word that got us here, so in context, we're talking about pure milk of the word. But I love that Peter uses this obscure word that has within it the idea of reasoning. Thinking. Divine thinking.

I listen to Al Mohler every week day morning that I can. His little 22 minute dialogue on the internet is called simply "The Briefing". And he always begins by explaining that he's presenting select bits of current news and he's presenting them "from a christian world view."

What's a "christian world view" you say. You take the news, and you regurgitate it through this book. You fill your brain up with this book, and Al Mohler is the most perfect example of that you could find, then you talk about the news, from a biblical point of view. He combines divine reasonableness . . . to the news.

That's one example, trying to get you to understand what Peter's getting at here. We're hungry for this book, we crave this book, like a baby craves milk, because the only way to thrive in Satan's world is to be steeped in divine reason. Divine thought. A christian world view.

We need to be steeped in that. You folks should be battering my door

down screaming like babies scream for milk, to have more of the word. 40 minutes a week isn't enough.

How many times have I told you there's a banquet feast of spiritual reasonableness, the pure milk of the word, available for you on line. How many of you starving folks have gone and feasted. I've got a whole bunch of links on our internet site. Caution: There's bad stuff too. Plenty of it. I've linked to some of the best. Anybody hungry??

We crave divine reason, divine thought, a world view baptized in this book, like baby's crave milk. Why? Well, why do babies crave milk. It's built in. The thriving is built in. Give me the milk I need to thrive or I'll scream until you do.

Peter says, that very thing should parallel into Christians living separated from this world in newness of life. Christians should be hungry for the word. They should gobble this book up, so that like those babies, they can thrive.

So normal is this parallel in Peter's mind, that in verse 3, he says; *3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

That gives me pause. It should give you pause. If Christians aren't clamoring for more of the thriving brought by a spiritual mindset bathed by this book . . . why not? Peter says that's normal . . . if. IF. Folks, that's a scary if.

*3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.* That sounds an awful lot like he's saying, this is normative, if you've actually been saved. If you are truly regenerated, like what he describes in all of chapter 1, if that's true about you, craving spiritual life by being steeped in God's thoughts, is normative. One goes with the other. Just like babies and milk.

The only word in that short phrase that I would look at in any depth for more understanding is the word "tasted".

Used 15 times, it means to experience in totality. It's the word used in Hebrews where it says Jesus tasted death, for every one. It is

experiential tasting.

Peter says if you've experienced regeneration, a new life, a love relationship with the risen Jesus; if the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in your heart, if you've been quickened from the dead and are walking separated from this fallen world \* then \* this desire for a spiritual mind, this mind bathed in divine reason, should be something you crave in order to thrive, just like that newborn screams for his milk.

I look around me at the evangelical church in America, and I have to say, I'm not seeing what Peter just described in pretty simple detail in these verses. Indeed he laid the foundation for this little discussion after the "therefore" in all of chapter 1.

That concerns me. The modern church is all about "what's working". There are magazines, monthly trade journals for pastors, I don't get them, but people have given me several issues of expired copies, and you can read article after article about what's the latest gimmick that's working for church growth.

And I'll confess that I'm a bit worried about my job security in this pulpit. Because I'm about as far away from that mindset as anyone could possibly be. I'm all in with Peter's formula right here. But honestly, you folks could look around, and perhaps you're already questioning this.

We aren't really thriving. It's taken 3 years, but I've been able to turn a church with 28 members into a church with 18.

So, do we jettison the book, and Peter's formula for growth and thriving, and read up on all the the "10 things you can change to cause church growth" articles? I'll close with this thought. It's not gonna happen on my watch. I plan to keep right on teaching this book with God's help.

Peter gives the church an unmistakable path towards thriving. The sweet reasonableness of God as found on every page of this book, as opposed to the chaos that the world experiences identified for us in the 5 word examples he presented for contrast.

This book should be as sweet to our ears, our hearts, our souls as mothers milk is to an infant. We should be those who crave the things in this book. When you find yourself craving this book, what you're really craving is more of Jesus.

It was this book that caused life from the dead. And it's this book that satisfies our hunger pangs for more of that life. And this book is all we have, until we see it's author, face to face. Until then, I urge you to feed your craving for more of Him, by staring into this book.