

“Milk & Meat!”

I. INTRO:

- A. Are you a **carnal** Christian? Are you a **spiritual** Christian? What's the difference?
 Do you think you can **fluctuate** or **oscillate** between both?
 When you fall into **carnal Christian mode** what can you hold onto for hope?
 When you are in **spiritual Christian mode** what can become its demise?
- B. 3 kinds of people:
1. Most tend to divide up the human race into 2 groups: **Christians & non-Christians**.
 2. But at the end of ch.2 & in the beg of ch.3 Paul shows **there are 3: the natural, the spiritual, & the carnal**.
 - a) Paul already discussed *the Natural man*...who doesn't receive any of the things of the spirit (2:14). **They are lost, unsaved**. For now at least, as Chuck Swindoll said, **they have pulled in the welcome mat from the door of their hearts, locked the dead bolt, & turned a deaf ear to Jesus' knocking (Rev.3:20).**¹
 - b) Now, Paul introduced us to **2 kinds** of Christian **life** or **2 classes** of Christian **people**:
 - (1) Both are **brethren**(1); both are babes **in Christ** (1); both are **born in the spirit** (2:12); **Yet** one is **Carnal** & one is **Spiritual**.
- C. **God, help Your church today!** [stats: 3,500 churches close or die every year in US. **80% of churches plateau**. The average church in the US has between 40-60 people in them. **An even bigger problem** is that when polled about attendance, churches lie & say they have 70/80]
1. **Often they close because:** bad doctrine; bad moral examples; bad moral teachings

II. MILK & MEAT! (1-4)

- A. **YOU ARE STILL CARNAL!** (1-4)
- B. **Spiritual** - **These** people are saved. **They** are enjoying vital fellowship with God. **They** are active, productive members of His family. **They** have the mind of Christ (2:16b). **They** have spiritual insight that natural people cannot have. **They** live heavenly lives on earth & carry with them peace, faith, & steadfastness. **They** daily practice living in God's kingdom.
- C. **Carnal** - **These** people are saved. **They** are heirs of the same kingdom. **They** choose instead to live in the pigpen. **Wallowing in sin's slop, they squander their spiritual inheritance which is intended to be enjoyed on earth**. They trade it for a romp in the slime of their selfishness. **They** are still headed for heaven...but are living like hell.

¹ Chuck Swindoll, 1 Corinthians, Strong Reproofs for a Scandalous Church. Pg.47.

1. Immediately, many Christians **judge a carnal Christian** as: never knowing the Lord; **they** never had a relationship; **they** believed in their heads & not in their hearts; **they** found redemption **but** them let it slip through their muddy fingers.
 2. But the answer Paul gives here is that there is an eternal destiny for these **pigpen Christians**. So Brian its ok to stay that way? No, Paul pleads here that these carnal Corinthian or Murrieta'n Christians, should be challenged to **come out** of the pigpen of their lives. [He wont run & yank you out of the pigpen; **but** as soon as you repent & start heading home, He'll run so fast to meet you]
- D. (1,2) When **cats** are no longer **kittens**, they say it isn't good to feed them **milk** any longer (possible *Kitty Dysentery*). **But we are not Cats, we are Christians!**
1. So on one hand...we never outgrow the nourishing milk of God's Word!
 - a) Thats like getting **awestruck** in your devotions of a basic concept...again! (see John 4:26)
 2. 1 Pet.2:1-3 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, **as newborn babes**, desire the **pure milk** of the word, that you may **grow** thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.
 - a) I still love a glass of milk, **but** it isn't the only thing in my diet (I've added cookies!)
 - b) **But** Paul warns against a steady diet of "**milk only**"! (anyone do powdered milk growing up?)
- E. We can't **grow strong** unless we also have the *solid food*!
1. Heb.5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again **the first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to need **milk** and not **solid food**. For everyone who partakes only of **milk** is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a **babe**. **But solid food** belongs to those who are of **full age**, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil.
- F. We grow by **eating & exercising**.
1. 1 Tim.4:7b,8 ...**exercise** yourself toward godliness. For bodily **exercise** profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things,
- G. **Age** is no guarantee of spiritual maturity! (I don't care what the date on your Christian card reads!)
1. There are unfortunately many old saints who are still holding their **bottle**, their **blankey**, & are simply **spiritual thumb suckers!**
- H. (3) In verse 3 Paul lists some of their carnality as: **envy**(jealousy), **strife**, **divisions**(quarreling) & **living like men of the world**.
1. Charles L. Allen in **The Miracle of Love** writes of a fisherman friend who told him that one never needs a top for his crab basket. If one of the crabs starts to climb up the sides of the basket, the other crabs will **reach up and pull it back down**.
 - a) I think you get the analogy...Some Christians are a lot like crabs!

2. See, the church's greatest threat isn't from outside, but from **inside**.

- a) It's from people on our team! (Jesus/Judas; Paul in Acts 20:29,30)
- b) Christians are often found fighting against the **unbeliever & his/her lifestyle**.
Or worried about a Darwinian, or a Morman, or a homosexual.
- c) No, the greatest threat to Christianity; to Jesus' precious name; to our church; or the church at Corinth is...***the Carnal Christians!***
 - (1) Their bad example; their bad lifestyle; their lack of holiness.
 - (2) They just continue to **root around** in the **piggens** of their **old natures**.
 - (3) They rebel against **the control of the Holy Spirit**.

I. Now, **do you struggle with being a carnal Christian?** I hope you all said **yes**. Paul was honest to admit it. Paul wrote a whole chapter on his struggles w/carnality.

1. Rom.7:21-24 **I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**
 - a) The whole chapter is a **portrait** of *the Carnal Conflict*.
 - b) It is a **constant conflict**, a moment by moment battle between 2 natures.
 - c) The carnal man, *though in dwelt by the H.S.*, is mastered by the *flesh* (carnal=fleshly)
 - (1) *Flesh* = that which pursues its own ends, in self-sufficient independence of God.

J. Why did Paul use the analogy of a **baby**?

1. It is a wonderful experience when a baby comes into a home, **but what a tragedy if he never grows up!**
2. **The characteristics of a baby:** Absolutely dependent on other people, needs to be fed, he can't walk, he has to be held, & he is only happy when he is the center of attention.
3. **The characteristics of Carnal Christians:** Absolutely dependent on other people (constantly needs everyone's counsel), needs to be fed (his only feeding is the ministers milk bottle on Sunday morn), he can't walk (by himself), he has to be held (propped up by others), & he is only happy when he is the center of attention.
 - a) His heart is still mostly in the world, & there is an atmosphere of worldliness about him.
 - b) The Carnal Christian is a child of God, born again & on his way to heaven,...**but** he is traveling 3rd class!²

² Alan Redpath

K. Does this describe your christian walk today?

1. Repeated defeat. You find no power over the principle of sin in your life?
Are you torn up by jealousy, strife, & quarrels? Are you living out a long drawn out infancy? Do you have stunted & stunted growth?

L. Instead of *beating up* the Carnal Christian, listen up for some encouragement: (from Spurgeon)

M. Are you mourning, believer, because you are so weak in the divine life: because your faith is so little, your love so feeble? Cheer up, for you have cause for **gratitude**.³

1. Remember that in some things you are = **to** the greatest & most full-grown Christian.
2. You are as much **bought with blood** as he is.
3. You are as much **an adopted child** of God as any other believer.
4. An **infant** is as truly a child of its parents as is the full-grown man.
5. You are as completely **justified**, for your justification is not a thing of degrees.
6. Your little faith has made you **clean every where**.
7. You have as much right to the precious things of the covenant as the most advanced believers, for your right to covenant mercies lies not in your growth, but in **the covenant itself**; and your faith in Jesus is not the measure, but the token of your inheritance in him.
8. You are as **rich** as the **richest**, if not in *enjoyment*, yet in **real possession**.
 - a) The **smallest star** that gleams is set in heaven.
 - b) In *the family register of glory* the small & the great are written with the same pen.
 - c) You are as dear to your Father's heart as the greatest in the family.
 - d) Jesus is very tender over **you**.
 - e) You are like *the smoking wick that He will not extinguish*. A rougher spirit would say, "put out that smoking wick, it fills the room with an offensive odor!" but the smoking wick He will not quench.
 - f) You are like *a bruised reed*; and *any less tender hand* than that of **the Chief Gardner** would tread upon you or throw you away, but He will never break the bruised reed.
9. Instead of being downcast by reason of what you are, you should triumph in Christ.
10. **Am I but little in Israel?** Yet in Christ I am made to **sit in heavenly places**.
11. **Am I poor in faith?** Still in Jesus I am **heir** of all things.
12. **Carnal Christian where do you start? I will rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation.**

N. The Tale of **2 Prodigals**:

³ Taken from Spurgeon Morning & Evening Oct.19.

1. In Luke 15:11-32 Jesus tells us about a man w/2 sons.

- a) **1 son** rebels, wandering from his fathers love. Runs away, ends up in a pigpen.
- b) **But the other son** was in a pigpen too; rolling & squealing in the mire of his self-righteousness.

(1) **The younger son** - cameos 1 type of carnal Christian, **the type who doesn't try to mask his rebellion w/a false loyalty.**

- (a) Once he got his hot hands on the money, he packed up went far away (it's easier to sin the farther from home you are) & squandered it all.
- (b) **Note:** no sudden calamity fell on him. The sky didn't fall. The bus he took didn't get a flat. He didn't come down w/leprosy. **Because the ax didn't fall immediately, he felt encouraged to stay in his rebellion.**
- (c) Eccl.8:11 **Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.**
- (d) Then he finally reaches his desperation level. Knee deep in swine slop, hungry, alone, he comes to his senses & makes plans to go home.

(2) **The older son** - shows another type of carnal Christian, the type who does try to mask his rebellion w/a false loyalty.

- (a) **Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!** Lk.15:29,30
- (b) Note the pride in the rebels words. He drags his brothers name back through the mud. He denies any familial relationship w/him(*this son of yours*).

(3) **Yet the father reaches out to this carnal son also,**

- (a) **And he said to him, Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.**

(4) **Then, Jesus leaves the older son in the spiritual pigpen, never telling us whether or not he decided to clean up his attitude & join his brother's welcome-home party.**

(5) Clearly, Jesus expects us to **finish the story** with **our own response!**

O. **If you've wandered from the Lord & you think God is awaiting your return *with a club in His hand*, you're mistaken.**