



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Peter 2: 1-5

Summer 2024

"Drink Milk"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. It is good to be with the saints on a Sunday morning, and to do what we're doing and what we just sang about, our firm foundation. And that's really the subject of our text this morning in 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 1 through 5 where Peter reminds us of the importance of studying God's Word,

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

⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2: 1-5

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, this is an important time for us, for the people of God, this first day of the week when we meet to do what we're doing, read and study the Word of God—and then later take the elements of the Lord's Supper. It's a great opportunity for us to reflect, and to learn, and to worship. Thank You for the great hymns of the faith that we have, and the one we just sang, *How Firm a Foundation*—and then to be able to come to the text and learn about that foundation and the importance of it. LORD bless us, teach us, build us up in the faith and give us a desire to know You better—and to read Your Word because we will not know You apart from Your revelation.

This revelation isn't the end—it is knowing You personally, but this is the avenue through which we know You. And we cannot know You well and properly without studying Your Word, Your revelation, which You've given to us. We could spend the rest of our life doing that, 24 hours a day, and we'd still just be scratching the surface. So help us this morning to understand how important it is that we know Your truth, and encourage us in that way to be students of it—to study in order to know You, and live for You, as You've called us to do.

That's our great spiritual concern this morning, but we have material concerns as well. We don't know all who are going through various difficulties—but You do and I pray that You'd give blessing and strength, and provide grace where it's needed. We all need it, Father, even when we're healthy. We are healthy because of You, and we're stable in various ways, financially, emotionally, because of You. Help us to understand that, and to be grateful for all that You give us.

We're grateful for this time You've given us to be together as a body, as a church redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we're grateful for the opportunity to study like we are able to do this morning. Bless us as we do that. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In January, 1963, President John F. Kennedy gave a speech on what he called a very important subject, '*Milk*'. He was speaking to the National Conference on Milk and Nutrition, and he called milk our most nourishing food. He worried about the

health of Americans, many of whom were deficient in the very minerals and vitamins that are prevalent in milk. So the solution for a healthy America was simple: 'Drink milk!'

Peter had a similar speech, (or homily), in 1 Peter chapter 2—only it was milk of a different kind, "the pure milk of the word." (vs2). He wanted the saints to "long for", (ibid.), Scripture, the Word of God, and consume it. It's spiritual nutrition for our growth and salvation, and the experience of salvation's blessings. And it makes us fit to participate in the Christian life—being God's temple and His priests. That's our lesson: 'Drink milk, drink lots of it, and be healthy and active.'

But before Peter gives that instruction, he first tells the saints to, 'clear away all of the rubbish of their former life that hinders the building of the temple.' Before they could grow in God's virtues, they had to get rid of their vices. He lists them in verse 1: *"malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander"*.

But he begins with, "Therefore". It's a conjunction that joins this sentence with the previous passage at the end of chapter 1, where in verse 22, Peter instructed them to "fervently love one another."

The vices listed here were common among the pagans, and were inimical to 'love', (the opposite of it). Love is selfless—these vices are selfish. They only gratify personal desire and personal advantage. A saint is selfless. He or she loves the LORD, and loves His people—and should love them fervently. So Peter instructed them to put aside the habits and attitudes of the old life that are contrary to love.

This word, "putting aside", or, 'putting off', (vs1), is used of 'taking off clothing', like removing a robe. That's an appropriate metaphor for putting an end to harmful habits and practices.

That's what happened when we were justified. We're given a picture of that in Zachariah chapter 3, verse 2, when, "Joshua the high priest", was stripped of his filthy clothes. Satan is standing at his right side accusing him, when the LORD rebukes the devil and orders the angels to remove the old garments that were covering the high priest,

and then put on him new ones. He says, "See, I have taken your iniquity away." (vs9). In its place He clothed Joshua with "festal robes", and a "clean turban."

It's a picture of justification. We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ—an alien righteousness, not our own, not of our doing, but of the Lord's doing. It is the righteousness of Christ.

Paul talks of that in Philippians chapter 3, verse , and Peter's instruction here is based on that. Since they have been converted and justified, since God has removed their guilt, legally, and clothed them in righteousness, legally, the righteousness of His Son, we are absolutely accepted by the Father at that very moment, (and forever) — therefore we are to live according to that declaration that God has made that we are 'just' —'justified'.

As new creatures in Christ we are to live consistently in practice, (in the world, and in the sight of the world), with what God has declared us to be—and according to what we are in His sight and how He treats us and considers us. That, in reality is what we are to be doing continually; that's our daily life. Our daily life consists of living righteously, and putting off our sinful habits.

As Martin Luther said, "We are saints, holy and righteous before God, forgiven and forever accepted by God." But at the same time, as we all know, we are still sinners. So he, (*Luther*), spoke of us as "righteous sinners."

So we are to be "putting off" sin daily, and "putting on" righteousness—clothing ourselves, as it were, with that which we are in God's eyes.

Now Peter didn't actually command them to, 'put on righteousness', or, 'behave righteously'; but that follows from what he said earlier—the command that he gave in verse 22 of chapter 1 to, 'love the brethren.' Love for others should characterize us; and Christian love involves behavior. It's not merely affection. (It is certainly that; it has to do with feeling and sentiment and that is a motivation, in many ways, for our behavior. So it's essential part of it.) But love is essentially *action*. —That's how genuine affection shows itself. Putting away unloving practices is necessary for spiritual growth. We cannot

love without doing that; and that's what Peter desired for these young Christians, scattered throughout Asia Minor.

And that's the reason for his instruction next in verse 2. So while he didn't tell them to 'put on righteousness', he did instruct them to do what would result in that: They were to, "long for...the word." (vs2).

Verses 1 and 2 are one sentence. The saints can't 'love one another' and can't 'long for the Word of God' while living contrary to both. So his instruction was, 'Leave vice, malice', (and all of the rest that he listed), and, "long for the pure milk of the word," just, "like newborn babies" did. That's spiritually healthy.

This is positive encouragement, unlike what we read from Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 2, and the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 5, verse 12: Both of them used "milk" also—but there it's of 'the basics of Christian truth and doctrine'. And there, they both criticize these believers in Corinth and in the Jewish believers, that were vacillating in their faith. They were not as mature as they should have been; they were not growing as they should have been. —And so they are corrected for that. Instead of being teachers, as they should be, they needed to be taught the very basics of the Christian life. Instead of being able to eat '*meat*', they had to 'drink *milk*'. They needed baby food, rather than the food of maturity. Well that is a proper, necessary rebuke to the saints—and we need to take that in and hear that ourselves.

But here Peter has a different motive, a different reason for what he's saying. His meaning is encouragement. The saints are to 'drink milk', 'take in' spiritual nourishment and do it eagerly. And I think this is the reason he probably chose this metaphor. It's to be like a baby's desire for physical nutrition. The image here is very vivid: Every parent understands it; every sibling that has seen his baby brother or sister brought home from the hospital has seen this image. New born babies want their mother's milk—and cry for it! That's a good sign; it's evidence of health. The baby doesn't want a pacifier, it wants the real thing—and won't stop crying until it gets it! —

and upon getting it, receives it eagerly. It's an easy thing to picture in our minds, what Peter is saying.

So too, a hunger for God's Word is healthy. The Christian, new or old, young or mature, needs it and should demand it—and settle for nothing short of it. We can't be deprived of it for long without crying out for it: It's what David expressed in Psalm 42, verse 1;

"As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So my soul pants for You, O God."

In fact the writers of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, used that word that Peter used here in David's Psalm.

"My soul *earnestly longs* for thee, O God."

The idea of this word, "longs for", is '*intense personal desire*'. In fact, the word is used in James chapter 4, verse 5, of the LORD, "*jealously desiring*" the Spirit, the Holy Spirit within us.

So we are not to be jealous or envious of one another, but we are to be 'jealous' to have the right things for ourselves—to have the Word of God for ourself. We're to be *jealous* for that. It's like milk for our soul, full of spiritual vitamins and minerals. The reason for that is the Word, the Scriptures, the Bible, is about Christ, it's about God the Father, it's about the Spirit, it's about the Triune God. And that is how we learn of Them and enter into fellowship with Them.

So we earnestly desire the pure milk of the Word because it reveals the LORD to us and is the avenue to fellowship with Him. As is prayer—but prayer is informed by, it is instructed by, the Word; we cannot pray correctly if we don't know God's Word and His will. But it is the *pure* milk of the Word that we long for, meaning it is free of impurities. It's free of additives, it's free of anything that would dilute, the *pure* milk of the Word.

I had a friend in seminary, a fellow student, who lived with a cow in his backyard when he was growing up. His chore in the morning as a boy was to milk the cow for his father's breakfast. Well that's not easy to do. I've never milked a cow, but I know of it,

and I know what it's like, and I don't think I'd be very good at it. It takes some skill, and it's physically difficult—and especially for a boy on a cold morning.

So one morning he took a short cut, and rather than fill the pail with milk, he filled it about half way and added water. Seemed like a good idea at the time, but his father immediately recognized the difference—and I don't think he spared the rod on my friend.

Well what Peter recommends here and what he says we are to desire, is, “pure milk” —‘unadulterated truth’. We will long for that if we're healthy. And if we want to grow to be healthy spiritually, we will long for ‘the pure milk of the Word’. Every word there is important: Not just milk, *pure* milk, which is the Word.

When I was a month out of high school, 1967, my father brought us here. Actually not here, brought us to Believer's Chapel, but at that time it was on Midway Road. A year or two later we moved over here. We had attended a church here in Dallas for a number of years but my dad became acquainted with Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, enamored of Dr. Johnson, enamored of his teaching.

And so he brought us here where Dr. Johnson taught ‘the pure milk of the Word’. That's what my father wanted for himself. He wanted it for us, and I'm grateful for my father's wisdom. What a privilege for myself, to have been nourished for so long by such teaching. ‘Milk and meat’ —that's what we got. And that's what you should be getting from everyone who occupies this pulpit.

Now the goal given here is so that by the Word of God, you may, “grow in respect to salvation”. (vs2b). Not grow ‘more saved’; we can't be ‘more saved’ than we are at the very moment of faith. We are justified at that moment; we are fully forgiven of every sin—past, present, and future; we are considered righteous and fully, completely accepted by God at that moment.

We don't increase in our salvation. We don't become ‘more and more saved’ in other words. But we do, “grow in respect to salvation”—in our understanding of it, in our experience of it, and our maturity in it.

We grow, we expand. As when a child is born, he or she can't be more human than at that moment; but the infant grows from infancy into childhood, into adolescence, then into adulthood. 'From infancy to maturity'; and so it is with our salvation. We grow up into it and into our relationship with the Lord. Our understanding of it expands; our relationship with the Lord expands and grows. But it grows only, only, by the nourishment of the Word of God, His special revelation.

"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of Christ." (Rom 10:17). If you want stronger faith, if you want an expanded understanding of the world we live in, and more importantly, of the Lord God who rules it—study the Word of God. "Sweat over it!", as Mike Black told us this morning. 'Dig into it.'

Then in verse 3, Peter gave another reason for his instruction to "long for" the pure spiritual milk: "...if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord." (vs3). The translation of the New International Version may be better; "Now that you have tasted...", or it can be translated, "Since you have tasted..." Peter wasn't questioning that they had or had not tasted God's kindness; he assumed that they had. He begins the book by calling them God's "chosen". (1 Pet 1: 1). "So since", or, "Now that", may give more the idea of what Peter meant; 'Since you've done this, you must grow in the knowledge of the Word of God.'

"Kindness", (as the New American Standard translates it), is a correct translation. But I think a more literal translation is better, and would be the word, "*good*", "So since you have tasted that the Lord is good." (vs3).

Now that's a quote from Psalm 34, verse 8.

"O taste and see that the LORD is good." (vs8a).

The Psalm then encourages trust in the LORD;

"How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (vs8b).

David went on to say,

"For those who fear Him there is no want." (vs9b).

God provides the daily needs of those who look to Him.

And Peter's point here is that Scripture is God's Word: And as we take it in; as we understand it; as we believe it and obey it, we are blessed. And we're blessed in many ways: We're given direction to our lives; we're given wisdom for the decisions of life; Providence favors us; the LORD provides for our needs. He is reliable—and we learn how reliable and trustworthy He is, as we trust in Him.

We experience Him in our lives. In Psalm 34 that's what David was saying—that he had experienced it, the LORD was his refuge. We've learned a lot about that in the adult Sunday School class, as Mike has gone through the life of David, *A King Without a Kingdom*, with all those preliminary years leading up to being King. Life was dangerous for him: But he trusted the LORD, and he slew Goliath. For years, Saul chased him through the desert. David told Jonathon, "There is but a step between me and death." (1Sa 20:30). But the LORD preserved him, saved him from Saul. The LORD who gave Goliath into David's hand, delivered David out of Saul's hand. There was but a step between them, but that was sufficient.

And that's what the Lord God does for His people. He protects us—and He prospers us. Maybe not materially, as we might want, but He prospers us with wisdom and the good life—the truly good life. We can trust Him. That's what David is saying, and that's what Peter is saying.

Psalm 34 is all about *Yahweh*, it's about *Jehovah*. Peter translates that "Kurios", the "Lord", (1 Pet 2:3), and applied it to Christ—which acknowledges Him as 'Yahweh', as 'the LORD'. The Psalm is about Christ. —And as I made the point a few weeks ago, the whole of the Old Testament is about Him; His person, His work. And we see it very clearly in the Psalms. And that's what Peter is explaining, or stating—indicating.

This is about the Lord Jesus Christ: He never changes; He's absolutely reliable. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." —and forever, Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8.

David's life was obviously more sensational than ours, still, the LORD blesses us in the mundane circumstances of life. He's always blessing us; we're to look to Him and trust Him. George Müller did that.

I think I often refer to George Müller; but what an amazing life the man lived, from the very beginning. Soon after his conversion he began ministering. He was a German; he'd come to England; and he settled in England. He had a young wife; they both became believers as young people, and they began to minister.

He visited churches in Bristol, England, and he found that many Christians were weak in faith. He was on fire; he was zealous, but so many of the people, genuine believers, were weak. On one occasion he visited with a man who worked at his trade for nearly 16 hours a day. His health was suffering, and his Christian faith was weak; (it really meant very little to him.)

So Müller suggested that if he worked less, his health would improve and he would have more time to read the Bible and pray—and his spiritual condition would improve. The man was skeptical. 'If I work less, I won't earn enough to support my family. Even now I barely make it. Wages are low. I have to work hard to obtain what I need.' (And that resonates with us today.)

Well Müller thought, 'That's not trusting the LORD.' "Christ said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added to you.' " He quoted that to the man. (Mat 6:33). He replied then to his friend, "Brother, it's not your work that supports your family, but the LORD. The LORD could provide for him; and He would provide for him if he gave more of his time to the LORD and to His Word, and less to work." Well the man was convicted, but not convinced. And I think we can all understand that.

Müller could understand it. He understood life is challenging; but he saw something there that really motivated him in the direction that he took for ministry. He chose a ministry that would first, and foremost, prove to the church, and Christians like that man, that God provides when we look to Him and are obedient—and that we can trust the LORD to do that.

And so he began a ministry to orphans in Bristol. He saw a need; there was a great need for that. He had compassion and concern for the orphans, but the principle reason he chose that was, 'This will be an opportunity to demonstrate the faithfulness of God to God's people who need to learn that.' So he never asked for money; he only prayed—and God was faithful. He always provided for Müller and the orphans; and often in amazing ways.

That's what David was encouraging the saints to do in the Psalm; "O taste and see that the LORD is good." It's what Peter was encouraging here: 'Now that you've "tasted", or, "Since you have tasted the goodness of the Lord", taste more! Drink milk, and keep drinking it! It's spiritually healthy and enables us to *'grow up into our salvation'*,—but especially it produces growth in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God who never disappoints.'

He, the Triune God, can only be truly known through revelation, His Word. And Peter writes specifically of that next, in verses 4 and 5 where he writes of our "coming" to Christ, and knowing Him as a result of our connection with Him. It begins a new section and subject that includes verses 4 through 10, but the passage is still connected with the previous one, the previous verses. Instead of 'tasting the Lord', Peter writes of "coming to" the Lord. (And the means of doing that is the same—it's through 'the pure milk of the Word'.)

Peter now replaces the vivid metaphor here of '*milk*' with another; by describing Christ, to whom we, 'come as a rock, a living rock.' It is "a living stone", he says. (vs4a). It's based on "Him", it's based on that stone, that "living stone" that God's temple is built. And by joining ourselves to Him, by faith, by joining ourselves to Him, we are made part of that temple. And what's more, we have a ministry in God's temple—in that temple as God's priests.

Now this description of Christ as "a living stone" is an unusual expression; just think about it, it's unusual. In fact, it's been described as, "A daring metaphor, for the obvious reason, that stone is not alive; it's completely inanimate."

But Jesus Christ made this identification when, in Matthew 21, verse 42, He quoted Psalm 118, verse 22, which refers to the, "stone which the builders rejected," and applied it to Himself. —He's that stone.

In fact, in verses 6 through 8, Peter quoted "Three Stone Prophecies", (I think Wayne Grudem used that expression), from the Old Testament, and applied them all to Christ. It's an unusual expression, but it is completely appropriate of Christ, because He has the qualities of stone: It is solid, it is firm, and so it's permanent...and Christ is eternal, and reliable like a granite foundation.

But in addition, He is a "living stone", which recalls the *resurrection*. "The builders" rejected Him, the ancient Psalm prophesied. (Psa 118:22). The priests, and the teachers, and the lawyers of Israel—the leaders of Israel rejected Christ and crucified Him. But God raises Him to glorified life, to an indestructible life—an affirmation that He is pleased with His Son, and accepted His sacrifice for His people, and made Him, "the chief cornerstone" of a new temple. (Mat 21:42).

The Temple of Jesus' day, (what He cleansed of the money changers and where He often taught), was a massive and magnificent building. King Herod began building it in 19 BC and it wasn't completed until AD 64. It stood when Peter wrote this letter. He may have thought about that temple, (I would imagine he certainly did), as he wrote these words. Its stones were huge, beautifully cut and fit together. It was considered one of the great wonders of the world. In fact, the rabbis would say, 'He who has not seen the Temple in Jerusalem, has not seen a great building.' It was great. It was magnificent. The disciples marveled over it, remember, (Mat 24:1f), as they leave, and then that introduces the Olivet discourse.

But for all of that, it was inferior to the temple that's described here. Six years after Herod's temple was completed, the Romans came and pulled it all down. A few of the great stones of the outer wall remain, but the temple itself is long gone. It wasn't permanent.

This temple that we read of here, a “spiritual” temple, (vs5), is permanent because its “cornerstone” is permanent, eternal, “a living stone.” And all who have come to Him have also become living stone because, by being joined to Him through faith, faith in the pure milk of the Word, faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that joins us to Him; and by being joined to Him, we are joined to His indestructible life. We have that through faith in Christ—through being joined to Him we have eternal life and are now being built into God's house.

The whole thought, beginning with verse 4 and completed in verse 5, is, ‘And coming to Him, You are being built.’ We, “are being built up as a spiritual house...” (vs5). We are not a tangible, inert structure that can fall down or fall into disrepair—or be pulled down. We're a “spiritual house”, and that means this temple that we are a part of, is everywhere—not in one location, it is wherever the people of God are.

All through the old dispensation, Israel had to travel. Sometimes the whole length of the land depending on where they lived. (There, up to the tribe of Dan, or the northern tribes, they had to go pretty much the length, at least all the way up to Jerusalem, from wherever they were.) They had to travel a long way to get to the temple—and they were to do that three times a year. That was mandatory, that they go to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple, three times a year. It was required. —It was the Law.

Now today, the temple is wherever the people of God are because, we are God's house. And as the Shekinah glory once filled Solomon's temple, the Lord lives in us permanently in a far more glorious way. And we're still under construction: Peter wrote that we, “are being built” —right now. (vs5). When anyone comes to Christ through faith in Him, another stone is added to this spiritual house. It can't be, (as I said), can't be pulled down, can't be destroyed.

Now, Christians die and can be killed. The churches of Asia Minor were suffering persecution when Peter wrote to encourage them. But as Tertullian wrote a century later, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." It, ‘the church’, grew even

stronger through the attempts of the Roman empire to destroy it. The Lord kept adding stones to it. —Still does.

But there is a warning in this: Since the Lord's own nation, the builders, had rejected Him, (and not just the Jewish nation, the nations of the world rejected Him), because of that, we who 'come to Him' can expect the same rejection. He ends the upper room discourse, John chapter 16, with the warning. 'Don't be amazed'; "...if the world hates you...it hated Me. (Jn 15:18). But fear not; take heart; "I have overcome the world." (Jn 16:32).

So we can expect that, we expect the world to reject us, just as it did Him. There will be opposition, and it's one reason we need to 'taste of the Lord', of His "kindness", and, "long for the pure milk of the Word." (vs2). That is how we mature, that is how we, "grow in respect to salvation." (vs2). And that spiritual maturity prepares us for life, prepares us for what is unexpected.

You and I don't know what's coming this afternoon. You don't know what's coming tomorrow or the end of the week. We don't know what the future holds—it may have an unexpected trial, (that is not uncommon). It may come just like those ancient saints suffered what they were going through; but this is how we fortify our souls—by the Word of God. This is how we prepare ourselves for life and what's coming.

But that preparation is also needed for our present service. We are 'living stones in the Lord's house'. We are not inactive; we are *active* stones. We're "living stones". And specifically here, we are "a holy priesthood", and we are, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices." (vs5b).

Now, what those are is a proper question. We know what sacrifices were in the Old Testament; they were material offerings, like a lamb, or a goat, slain on the altar. But these are *immaterial* offerings, "spiritual sacrifices" that we offer.

We find those in the Old Testament; like offering a "sacrifice of thanksgiving." (Ps 116:17). But they're all through the New Testament as well. Romans chapter 12,

verse 1, Paul urges us, "...to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God." Our whole lives are to be a 'spiritual sacrifice', 'an offering' to Him.

Paul thanked the Philippians for their gift of money to him while he was in prison in Rome. He called it, "a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God." (Phl 4:18). He uses these metaphors of the Old Testament to describe their financial gift to him—their help to him; their love for him.

In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 15, we are instructed to, "continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." So, a "sacrifice of praise", what is that, an offering of praise? —It's prayers, it's thanksgiving, it's glorifying Him, magnifying Him. Singing praise and thanksgiving is a spiritual sacrifice.

Really, to go back to Romans 12:1, everything we do as Christians is to be an offering to God. From the least that we do to the greatest, whether it's eating or drinking, (or whatever we do), we're to do all to God's glory—from the simplest to the greatest. Our whole life is to be an offering to Him.—That's a priestly service.

And these sacrifices can only be done by us, that is by Christians—because, as Peter said, they are offered up, "through Jesus Christ." (vs5c). Only Christians; Jews and Gentiles together; born again people; believers in Jesus Christ qualify as priests. Only we have been given this great privilege. Each one of us, male and female, young and old, is a priest to God. The age of a 'professional' priesthood, of an elite institution, ended with the Old Covenant. Now, we are all priests because we are all saints in the New Covenant.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 16, "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace..." To do what? To pray!, that's what he's exhorting us to do. And that's our priestly duty. It's a great privilege to intercede for one another, to offer prayers of thanks and honor to the Lord God, and to intercede for each other. That's our priestly ministry.

Now how do we know all of this? Well we know it by revelation—which is the only way we can know God; know ourselves; the only way we can know salvation and what it is, and how we receive it. It's the only way we can know reality—how things really are. So it's only through the Word of God that we can 'know', because the Word of God is 'The Revelation' of the Creator. Want to know what creation is like? You want to know what reality is? Then read the *Revelation* that *the Creator of reality* has given to us.

Do you want to know the way of salvation? Read what the Savior has revealed to us. It's through the revelation of God that we understand truth.

The world doesn't accept that. —It scoffs at it. It dismisses it as "foolishness"! That's 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 14, '...because the unbeliever does not have the Spirit of God'. And because of that these things are spiritually foolish to him, because they are, "spiritually appraised", (ibid), (or, they are only *spiritually* understood and evaluated).

We have the Holy Spirit, so we can do that. We have the Holy Spirit if we're a believer; and if we do, we know it is true; for He testifies to our hearts that it is. That is, 'The self-authentication of the Word of God.'

The child of God who, has eyes to see and ears to hear, that has a new heart with a new capacity to understand, reads the Word of God and knows, implicitly, that it is true. That's the witness of the Holy Spirit within us. And this revelation, the Word of God, is, (as I said), the *means* to wisdom, the *means* to maturity, to a life of eternal value. What you do as an obedient child of God counts for all eternity—from the simplest things to the greatest things.

So, what are we to do? 'Drink the pure milk of the Word'—and lots of it! Taste the kindness of the Lord!

But if you're here without Christ, if you're here having never believed in Him as your God and Savior, we urge you to do the same: Believe the Gospel.

That's really the counsel of the Psalm, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Believe 'the Good News' of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of man. He tasted death for sinners so that all who taste Him, believe in Him, might have life everlasting—new life, obedient life, the best life. And then you will see that He is good indeed.

May God help you to do that, and help all of us to 'Drink milk!'; the milk of the Word.

(Closing prayer) Father, what a blessing to be able to sing,

"One with Himself, I cannot die

My soul is purchased by His blood.

My life is hid with Christ on high

With Christ my Savior and my God."

(From, Before The Throne of God Above)

We've been purchased; our life is secure in Him. —What a blessing!

We know that through Your Word, "the pure milk of the Word". Give us a hunger for it, that we would learn more of You; and in learning of You, love You more; and in loving You, love Your people. So LORD, we pray You'd continue to transform us. We thank You for all that we have in Your Son. We thank You for all that You've done for us.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)