

1 Peter Chapter 2A

Every mother knows where to go in the attic or on the laptop to find her family's precious collection of baby pictures from days gone by.

When you take the time to look through all of those images, whether they are on your PC or pasted in chronological order throughout dozens of paper albums, observing the growth of your precious child can easily bring tears to your eyes.

- How did they get this big?
- Where did all of the time go?
- How is it that the child that once played at my feet is now driving my car?

As you reminisce after your children are grown, it feels as if the time just flew by, BUT when you are enduring the daily grind of feedings and changing, when you are in the thick of training and disciplining those little ones a day can feel like a month and a month very much like a year.

- What felt like an eternity of sleepless nights walking the halls with a colicky baby, in the end was only a light and momentary affliction in the grand scheme of parenting.
- Countless repetition of the word "NO!" in the terrible 2's that lasted well into the traumatic 3's can be exhausting. But, I can tell you from experience when your child has a child of his or her own and they are worn down from all of the discipline, you will secretly give your wife a high five and say "Payback!"
- Before you know it, your baby is walking the Isle of a college graduation or in the church when they will say "I Do" and your long hard days of parenting turn onto a lifetime of sweet friendship.

At this stage of life, watching my children and my grandchildren, it seems to me that natural, physical growth flies by in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

BUT, I have found in my own life when it comes to spiritual growth, the rebellion lasts much longer and real maturity is more elusive. I am thankful that my Heavenly Father is patient, and gentle and kind, because spiritual growth takes a lifetime.

Moving into chapter 2 in our study of 1 Peter, we follow the metaphor of life, from conception to birth and then from birth to growth.

- Those who are Born of God in Chapter One begin to grow in the image of God in chapter 2. Like natural fleshly children, our spiritual maturity involves many changes and continual feedings.

My outline this morning, like the text that we will be studying is built around this metaphor of human birth and human growth.

1. New Birth
2. New Clothes
3. New Appetite (very simple)

As you can see from the Scripture reading this morning, chapter 2 begins with the word "SO" (not best translation) NKJV – "Therefore," KJV – "Wherefore"

Greek – “OUN”

- When we see the word, “**Therefore**,” in the Bible, we need to understand that the author is making a transition. He’s moving on from the truth He previously stated to describe for us the results or the consequences of that truth.
- Therefore, we need to remember what we learned last week in chapter 1 so that we can understand and apply what Peter says in chapter 2. In Ch.1 vs 22

WE begin with a review of the New Birth

1 Peter 1:22 **Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth:**

- Which resulted in:
a sincere (Unhypocritical) **brotherly love** (we must then) **love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**
- In our study last week we learned that God’s call to love is based upon our new birth; that spiritual birth or regeneration that came by the Holy Spirit, through the seed of God’s Word, the Gospel.

23 **since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;**

- Like a seed that we might plant in our garden, the Gospel possess the innate ability to produce spiritual life, The Word of God was planted in the soil of your heart and miraculously produced New Life.

1:25b, **And this word** (This Seed) **is the good news** (Gospel) **that was preached to you.**

- In Jesus’ parable of the Sower:
- The Seed of the Gospel was broadcast, distributed liberally by the sowers who went forth into all of the world casting seed everywhere they traveled.
- That seed of the Gospel was planted in the soil of our hearts and new life arose from our once dead souls.
- In a way, our spiritual birth was very similar to our natural birth. We did not choose to be made alive physically (work of our parents) and we certainly did not chose to be made alive spiritually. (work of God)
- The Bible continually portrays our new birth as a sovereign, single-handed work of our Heavenly Father. We saw that in our study of James.

James 1:18 **Of his own will** (*God’s Own will*) **he brought us forth** (*gave us birth*) **by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.**

The Prophet Ezekiel described the new birth long before Jesus had his famous discussion with Nicodemus at night.

- Take special note of WHO is doing the acting: (Look for the I’s)

Ezekiel 36:25 **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from**

your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

- God is the one who cleansed us, He gave us a new heart, He put a new Spirit within us, He removed our heart of stone and He gave us a heart of flesh.
 - All of this wonderful work of God takes place at our New Birth.
- Ezekiel goes on to say that the results or the consequences of our new birth is that He will cause us to walk in His statutes and careful to obey His rules.
- These same results are affirmed by the Apostle Peter as we move into chapter 2.

Since we have been Born of God, we must now lay aside the filthy clothes that enshrouded our lives.

So as we move from Ch 1 to Ch 2 we see the consequences of our new birth.

SECOND POINT – NEW CLOTHES

1 Peter 1:23 **since you have been born again**, (through the living and abiding Word of God)

2: 1 **So** (Therefore) **put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.**

- In light of our new birth and the cleansing that has come through the Seed of God's Word, we must now, **"Put Away,"** OR lay aside the evil attitudes and destructive behaviors that were part of our old fleshly lifestyle. WHY must we lay them aside? (2 simple reasons)
 - First: Because we have become new creatures in Christ, Old things have passed away and all things are made new.
 - Second: Because our old fleshly behaviors will always hinder us from obeying the call of God to love one another fervently from the heart.

Every baby that I have ever known (and I have known a lot of babies) every one of them has required two things, they needed to be changed and they needed to be fed.

- Following the metaphor of human birth and growth, every individual who is born of God requires a continual changing. They cannot be left to live in the filth of their flesh. God simply will not allow that.

In Vs 1, Peter provides a list of things that need to be **"Put Away"** or **cast aside from** all of our lives.

Like removing the filthy clothes that were spit up on (or worse) we must take off or put away, the evil attitudes and behaviors that hinder our growth and our ability to love one another.

Peter begins with **"All malice,"** This is a general word for wickedness that describes the sinful heart of man from which all other evil behaviors flow.

Moving through the list it becomes evident that malice gives birth to two sets of ugly twins. The first pair are identified as deceitfulness and hypocrisy.

- Deceitfulness intentionally seeks to distort or undermine the truth for personal gain. (This is everything from simple dishonesty to murderous treachery)
 - That salesman who promises delivery in 3 days when he knows full well that the factory won't even begin manufacturing the order for a week. But he will say anything to get a sale. (wife, kids, mortgage)
- Hypocrisy is the deceitful mask that we hide behind when we don't want people to know the reality of our desperate condition.
 - We expect hypocrisy at work, but the church should be a place where we leave our masks at the door. It should be a place of acceptance and love for those who humble themselves under the Lordship of Christ.

The second set of ugly twins that come forth from the malice of our soul are:

- Envy and Slander. The primary motive for slandering people is jealousy & envy. When we envy someone we tend to speak badly about them and in doing so, we fail to fulfill God's command to love one another from a pure heart.
- Of course, Peter's list of sins **Deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all slander** is not exhaustive; it is merely representative of the soiled clothing we need to set aside
- His list provides a small glimpse into the sinful attitudes that defile our actions and hinder our ability to love one another.
- Throughout the New Testament we see that the Normal Christian Life is a life of actively putting off the filthy clothes of the flesh and putting on the Robe of righteousness that was freely given to us at the Cross.
- Paul uses the same word as Peter when he writes to the Roman Believers:

Romans 13:12, **The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.**

- With the fullness of our redemption in plain view, we should cast off the works of darkness and actively cooperate with the Holy Spirit to put on the new self that is created in the likeness of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 17 **Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ! 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

Because we have been born of God, adopted into His family, we are no longer alienated from the life of God. (HE lives in us, leading, directing and growing us)

- By grace, He has removed the scales from our eyes so that we would no longer walk in darkness and in the futility of our minds.
- We are no longer prisoners to the lusts that once captivated our minds filling our lives with greed and impurity. By the Spirit we can PUT OFF our old self and put on the new

Like the toddler who matures to the point where he can no longer stand to live in his own filth, WE must be quick to run to our Father and cry out, “Change me O gracious God. I can’t stand this filth any longer!”

- We must grow to the point where we love purity and loath wickedness.
- We must mature to the point where we actually cooperate with God in putting off the filthiness of our flesh, embracing His gift of righteousness.

We began this morning, looking back at the New Birth through which we were born into the family of God, made partakers of the divine nature through Christ Jesus.

- Moving into chapter 2 we discovered that Newly Born children need to undergo frequent changes. The soil of remaining sin must be laid aside.
- Spiritual maturity, like physical maturity doesn’t come without a change of garment. But the One thing that is most necessary for the healthy growth of those who are Born of God is continual spiritual feeding.

LAST POINT: New Appetite

1 Peter 2: 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

- All Believers in Christ regardless of their age, or spiritual maturity are called to feed upon the pure spiritual milk of God’s Word in order to grow.
- In these verses, Peter compares the strength of our longing for Spiritual truth to the singular and dominant desire of a newborn baby for their mother’s milk.

Peter’s wording paints a beautiful picture that I have been privileged to witness three times. When he speaks of a “Newborn Baby,” he literally says,

“Just Born Now”

- These words take me back more than 30 years to that final Push, the final scream that came from my wife that was almost immediately followed by a baby’s first cry.
- Indelibly etched on my heart and mind are those initial moments when my children came forth from the womb and were immediately placed at their mother’s breast.

The desperate and passionate cry of a newborn, is designed by God our creator, as an expression of man’s deepest need, in his most vulnerable condition.

- The trauma of birth is eased by the closeness of a mother. The baby's eyes that have beheld nothing but darkness are suddenly flooded with light.
- The desperate need for comfort and nutrition is satisfied by a mother's milk and the lifelong bond of love between mother and child that existed long before the child ever came forth from the womb is now strengthened with every feeding.

As it is physically, so it is spiritually. We enter into our new life in Christ moving from darkness to light, aware of our desperate condition and crying out for spiritual food that we can survive. The love that the Father had for us from before the foundation of the world becomes more and more evident in the closeness that we experience with every feeding from His Word.

So that we understand, Peter is not simply describing the initial state of our life in Christ. He is not making a statement concerning the spiritual appetite of new born believers.

- Actually, and this may be hard to comprehend but Peter is issuing a command. He is commanding ALL believers to CRAVE pure spiritual milk to passionately desire the milk of God's Word.

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

When I read this I wondered, could a father really command his children to crave something? Can we really insist upon our children's desires?

- We can require that they join us at the table for family devotions, but can we really command them to crave the goodness of the Lord.

Well, the phrase that cleared this question up for me is found in vs 3: **if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.**

- The word "IF" I verse 3, is a first class condition which assumes that the statement is true. Very often 1st class conditions are translated "**SINCE.**"
- So we could say, SINCE you have already tasted the goodness of the Lord CRAVE that pure spiritual milk like a newborn baby.

Ladies maybe this will help you relate to Peter's command. After receiving your very first taste of Chocolate. (Belgium chocolate, Godiva chocolate)

- Experiencing that rich, creamy sweetness for the very first time to have someone come along and command you to CRAVE chocolate. (No Problem!)

Once you have tasted the sweetness of God's love in Jesus Christ, once your soul has been satisfied with the delicacies of His grace and mercy, the Holy Spirit creates within us a longing for, an appetite for the Word.

- The longest chapter in all of the Psalms is dedicated to the pure Milk of God's Word.

Psalm 119:19 **I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!**

(don't think you can hide that chocolate from me) 20 My soul is consumed with longing for your rules at all times.

Ps 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

- Those who believe have tasted of the goodness of God and long for more.
- David's life is a great example of what we are learning here in 1 Peter, The Bible doesn't hide his failures, it shows him struggling to lay aside the soiled garments of the flesh and hungering for pure spiritual milk.

Psalm 42:1 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

Psalm 63:1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

As our time together comes to an end, I have to ask:

How is your spiritual appetite? Are you like the deer in Psalm 42?

- Do you possess a strong desire, a passionate craving for pure spiritual milk?
- Is there something in your life that is suppressing your appetite? Something hindering your desire for the Lord and for His Word?
 - Have you really tasted of the goodness of God? (the sweetness of His grace is Christ)
 - Is your appetite still tied to the things of this world?
- One pastor that I heard years ago shared a personal struggle that he had. He put it this way.

He said My wife is an amazing cook, every night with loving faithfulness she creates a nutritious meal that is a joy to my taste buds. BUT there was a time when I began to push away some of her declasses.

A brand new "In and Out Burger" (Pastor from Calif.) opened halfway between the church and my house.

- One day I was so famished from a hard day's work, I stopped to pick up a burger on the way home and consumed it in the car.
- Well, one drive through led to another and another and before I knew it, I had gained 10 pounds and pushed away a number of my wife's gourmet meals.
- I filled myself with so much junk food that I wasn't hungry for the healthy meal that was set before me by the one who loved me more than anyone else.

No one loves you more than the Lord, and there is no more healthy meal than the pure spiritual milk of His Word.

- BUT far too often we settle for spiritual junk food that spoils our appetite for the riches of his banquet table.
- Solomon writing a metaphor of the love between a bride and her bridegroom writes:

SOS 2:3 As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Sustain me with raisins; refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love.

The motivation for our spiritual appetite comes from the taste of God's love that we have received through the Gospel.

- I pray that our time together has whet your appetite for pure spiritual milk.