

## Got Milk?

### 1 Peter 2:2-3

During the 1990's the American dairy industry began a hugely popular ad campaign to encourage people to drink more milk. It featured smiling celebrities, like athletes, models, movie stars, and singers sporting milk mustaches and the tagline, "Got milk?" Britney Spears, Beyoncé, Venus and Serena Williams, Tom Brady, and Brett Favre, Kate Moss, and even Bart Simpson all lined up for a glass of milk. It became one of the most successful advertising campaigns of the last 30 years and spawned hundreds of parodies.

Despite the popularity of the ads, the amount of milk people drank only went up a little, and has steadily declined since. Over the last few decades, the health value of milk has gone up and down. It's full of calcium and does a body good, but it can be full of fat. But maybe it's the right kind of fat, the good kind of fat, that can be healthy. But people object to how dairy operations are run, they seek plant-based alternatives. There's a movement to allow unpasteurized milk, claiming it's more natural, ignoring the potential for infections. Now, we don't always think that milk does a body good.

For almost 2,000 years the Sunday after Easter was known as Quasimodogeniti Sunday, and then some liturgical scholar determined at the end of the last century that this Sunday would be better named 'The Second Sunday of Easter.' Quasimodogeniti is a Latin word that means literally "as newborns." Due to the book's place in popular culture, many of you know the name Quasimodo from the novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, written in 1831 by Victor Hugo, or one of its film adaptations. In this book, a child is found abandoned on the steps of the famous Parisian cathedral on Quasimodogeniti Sunday. Subsequently, the

child is given the name of the Sunday on which he was found.

Quasimodogeniti was the first word in the Introit for the Sunday after Easter, which we spoke this morning, "Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk..." "So, I guess that tells you that the words of this Introit have been around for a very long time. They are in fact the words of Peter in 1 Peter 2:2-3: "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

Quasimodogeniti...as newborns...Peter calls on us to crave spiritual milk because we have tasted that the Lord is good. How good is the Lord? Maundy Thursday good. Good Friday good. Easter good. How good is the Lord? Good enough to eat and drink. Good enough to die for us. Good enough to live for us. Quasimodogeniti is seeking to put us in an Easter place. And then Monday came and Easter was over. So, what remains of Easter for us? The Introit gives us direction.

"Quasimodogeniti," "-- "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation..." Easter is not an end but a beginning. We are reborn in Christ that we might live new lives. And when does Easter begin for me? When I was baptized into Christ and reborn to eternal life. And when does Easter end? Easter never ends!

And here's the point about Easter that is so easily missed. Easter is not only about our Lord's promise that he has gone to prepare a place for us in heaven...Easter is about today. Eternal life has already started. Easter is about how I live with you in the here and now and

love you now. Easter is about craving the blessings of God so that I can grow up spiritually now.

“That by it you may grow up into salvation.” To rest on “Jesus died for your sins and rose again” is saving Gospel but it’s like skim when the Bible offers so much more nurture for growing Christians. How satisfying to taste that Jesus’ Spirit is in the world, that He’s exalted and ruling all things for the eternal well-being of His Church, and that He will be revealed in righteous judgment, fearful for many but for us who believe, our final salvation. Peter wrote to believers who trusted Jesus’ death and resurrection, but their faith was also growing toward what is to come, “that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

Throughout his letter, Peter is quoting scripture – in this case, Psalm 34 verse 8. ‘Taste and see’, says the psalmist, ‘that the Lord is good.’ Then, like a newborn baby who has tasted his mother’s milk, you will want more. And more. That is the controlling image of this section: the baby that has recently been born and now needs to feed, to grow and to learn to live within the family. Becoming a Christian is about the new life within us first coming to birth, then being nourished and sustained, then growing to maturity. That last stage is marked, as it should be for a growing child, with the discovery that there are good ways and bad ways of relating to those around you. You have to learn to choose the first and renounce the second.

When I first came to Ames, I led some internationals through a study called “Eight Bible Lessons for New Christians.” In the second lesson, we talked about the characteristics of God. One of the readings was from Revelation 4:8, when John has a vision of God’s throne room in heaven. While the question in the study focused in on the words of

the angels, that God is holy and powerful and was and is and is to come, that reading always caused distraction. The description of the creatures surrounding God’s throne, with six wings and full of eyes, always caused us to go off track. The students were always more interested in discussing what those creatures were than their message.

It’s not that those questions aren’t important. It’s not that knowing and learning about the details of Bible passages isn’t important. But it can be easy to get distracted by the details away from what’s going on. We needed to focus on the milk first before getting into the solid food.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk. The milk is the Bible. The way the newborn baby craves milk is the way God wants you and me to crave the word of God. Why? Because that’s the way, Peter puts it, that’s the way we grow up in our salvation. What would happen to a baby if you brought the baby home and the baby was healthy and the baby was good and the baby was fine, but you never fed it? Would it grow? No. In fact, eventually it would die. It’s the same thing in our life of faith. “Crave pure spiritual milk,” God says. “Crave the Bible.” Why? Because God doesn’t want you and me to be spiritual infants. God doesn’t want you and me to be spiritual infants who can be blown back and forth by false teachings or could eventually lose our faith. “Crave pure spiritual milk so that you and I can keep on growing.”

Martin Luther said in his preface to the Large Catechism, “I am also a doctor and a preacher, just as learned and experienced as all of them who are so high and mighty. Nevertheless, each morning, and whenever else I have time, I do as a child who is being taught the catechism and I read and recite word for word the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the

Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the catechism daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the catechism—and I also do so gladly.” He knew where the pure milk of God’s word was found, and continued to crave it.

Karl Barth, a famous German theologian, was at Rockefeller Chapel on the campus of the University of Chicago during his lecture tour of the U.S. in 1962. After his lecture, during the Q & A time, a student asked Barth if he could summarize his whole life’s work in theology in a sentence. Barth allegedly said something like “Yes, I can. In the words of a song I learned at my mother’s knee: ‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.’”

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – since indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good” (1 Peter 2:2). There is a power in our heart stronger than the sins that want to show up on our lips, the Word of God that enables us to resist temptation. Because we long for our Lord’s pure spiritual Word to get down into our hearts, we go to church and listen, hear the word of God. We hear the promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation we have in the name of Jesus. We hear the words of hope we have because of what we just heard about last week, Jesus’ death and resurrection. We hear words of peace and love and joy.

My encouragement to you this first Sunday after Easter, Quasimodogeniti, is to be like newborn babies, to crave spiritual milk, “so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” Seek the Lord’s will for your life with sincerity and truth. God has things for us to do in his world and we cannot accomplish what he would have us do if we are still babies. We need to grow up...and that will happen when

we know in our hearts that the Lord is good. Then his goodness can overflow in our lives with one another, our lives wherever God has placed us.

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