
Keep Your Spiritual Diet Pure (2 Peter 1:20-2:3)
6/18/2017 Sermon by Pastor Jason Liebenow



Milk is an amazing thing. As a parent, I have heard a good bit about the value of having my kids drink milk as they grow up. It's important for them to grow up big and strong. But even as we get older, milk is still a very beneficial thing for us! It has several vitamins and nutrients that are very important. In fact, if you don't drink milk, you had better make sure you find those same nutrients in something else, or you can get sick! Milk is good and good for us.

Now, let me ask you, how much toilet bowl cleaner do you like in your milk? I've also got some toilet bowl cleaner here. There are some powerful chemicals in here and it even says on the bottle that if any of it is swallowed you better call poison control right away. But, we don't want to be judgmental, right? So why don't we just put a couple drops of toilet bowl cleaner in our milk. Anyone wanna try it? It's just a little bit! No? Isn't that being judgmental? Yes, and you are making a wise judgment not to drink this! There's poison in here!

In our lesson, Peter shows us that we have our spiritual milk in God's Word. In fact, Peter even makes it clear to us in 1 Peter 2:2, where he says, "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." Just as milk helps a body grow, God's word helps us to grow spiritually.

In 2 Peter 1:20-2:3, Peter also warns us that many people out there are adding poison to that spiritual milk. Whenever people claim to speak God's word, but what they say doesn't add up to what the Bible says, they are adding toilet bowl cleaner to your milk! Today, our God warns us to Keep Your Spiritual Diet Pure.

How easily that poison ends up in our milk! We live in a culture that ignores truth. The world around us denies objective truth. People say, "It doesn't matter what you believe. What matters is how you live!" They say, "There are many ways to get to heaven!" Unfortunately, these ideas don't just infect the world around us. They very easily affect us too!

How many beliefs do we hold without proof? It amazes me that we can live in such a society that calls itself "scientific," and yet people continue to hold beliefs for which they have absolutely no proof. I remember talking to someone who said he believed in a mixture of Christianity and reincarnation. When I asked them how they knew it was true, they just said, "That's just what I believe." They had no proof for their belief. They just believed it! Such people believe they are following Christianity, but really they directly contradict Christianity. God says in Hebrews 9:27, "people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Reincarnation does not fit with what Christianity actually says.

What about us? Can you back up all your beliefs with God's Word? I remember going through Seminary after going to church for my whole life and reading the Bible through twice cover to cover, but then as I studied the Bible a little deeper, I found a lot of places where my beliefs didn't

line up with what the Bible said.

We live in a gullible culture. People hear one story or explanation that makes sense on the news, tv, radio, internet, and they buy into it completely, again, without proof. I recently had a conversation with a guy who said, "People just invented religion to explain things they couldn't understand. Now that we have science, we don't need religion anymore." That's a story that makes sense. It's much easier to say, "God did it," than it is to run experiments and learn something new. But where's the proof? How do you know that's where religions came from? What about the fact that Jesus rose from the dead? Where does that fit into that story?

But do we do that with our understandings of the Bible? When we hear one "Christian" teacher explain something, do we believe it without verifying it from God's Word? What is your spiritual diet? Do you believe everything you hear if the speaker calls themselves "Christian"? How many different teachers do you listen to? Do they all speak only what God's Word says?

What is in your spiritual diet? What teachers are you listening to? Are you allowing a little bit of toilet bowl cleaner in your milk? Today, we are bombarded with false teachers. Some are obvious: those who deny that Jesus is true man and true God, those who say that Jesus is just one way to salvation, those who claim the Bible is not actually God's Word.

Some are harder to notice, they look very much like sheep, even though they are ferocious wolves. They seem to teach the same thing we do, but they add in human thoughts and opinions. Maybe they teach very much like us, but they say that all consumption of alcohol is sinful. Avoiding alcohol may be wise for many people, but God never commands that. They may teach very similarly to us, but they add that real Christians must hold specific political views, even though God never says that. They may teach something like what you remember growing up, but then say that we shouldn't be so firm on fellowship issues, that all Christians are basically the same, even though God specifically warns us against false teachers *within* Christianity! That's what the whole wolves in sheep's clothing picture tells us! False teachers will look "Christian" on the outside!

Many Christians love to attend churches of all different denominations. Are all those churches teaching *only* what God says? Are they teaching *all* of what God says? Many Christians today love to listen to "Christian" radio, but who is speaking on there? Are the speakers on there teaching *only* what God says? Are they teaching *all* of what God says? Many Christians today love "Christian" books like the Shack. I've even heard some people say they hold the Shack on the same level as the Bible. But if you compare that book with the Bible, you'll find that it contradicts God's Word again and again.

No matter what the false teaching, big or small, it's adding a little bit of poison to your spiritual diet. Even if it's a useful *human* idea that someone is adding to God's Word, it's still polluting our spiritual milk. Many churches today that now deny that the Bible is God's Word, or deny that Jesus is the only way to salvation; many of those churches did not end up with those

doctrines by first asking those questions. They did not start by asking, "Is the Bible really true?" They did not start by asking, "Is Jesus really the only way to heaven?" Instead, they started by asking, "Are we being too firm with our fellowship principles? Should we be in fellowship with people that are just a little different than us in their beliefs? Should we allow open communion? We don't want to be judgmental, right?" And slowly, they added a little bit of poison to their spiritual diet. Years after they asked those questions, we can see how far they have fallen from God's actual Word. Our spiritual diet must consist of only what God says, and all of what God says.

So, how do we avoid false teachers? How can you be sure the person you are listening to is a true or false prophet? God's people have struggled with this ever since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had to figure out if the serpent was speaking the truth or not. We saw in 1 Kings 22:10-28, when the kings of God's people had to decide whether or not to go to war. Every single prophet told them that they would be victorious, except for one. The true prophet of God, Micaiah told them that they would be defeated. In 2 Peter 2:1, Peter tells us: just as there were false prophets among God's people thousands of years ago, there will be false prophets among God's people today. Often, the message of the false prophets will be much more popular than the message of the One True God.

So, how can we be sure if we are listening to a false teacher or a true teacher? God tells us to judge them by their fruit! Just as you made a wise judgment not to drink milk with toilet bowl cleaner in it, make a wise judgment not to drink in God's Word with false teaching in it!

Now, don't get me wrong. When we are judging false teachers, we aren't judging their faith. I could drink that milk with the toilet bowl cleaner in it and I would probably live. I may not even notice any effects! But if my regular diet consists of milk with toilet bowl cleaner in it, it's going to cause health problems. Again, it might not kill me. I may live through it, but I'll probably have some stomach issues. It will make life rough.

It's the same thing with false teachers. Some false teachers may be believers and will be in heaven one day. Some people who regularly listen to false teaching may be believers and will be in heaven one day. But it is a wise judgment for us to not drink what they are giving us. We don't want to stunt our spiritual growth! Satan will use any lie, no matter how small, to enslave God's people. Therefore, we want to keep our spiritual diet pure!

So how are we to judge them correctly? God tells us to judge them by their fruit. What is the fruit of a teacher? What does a teacher produce? Their teachings! We are to judge a teacher by what they teach! Make sure you are judging what I say too! Don't just drink in my words without comparing them to God's Word! When you are listening to *any* teacher, ask yourself, "Are they teaching in line with God's Word?"

Check the big questions. Do they teach that human beings are thoroughly corrupted by sin and all of us deserve to go to hell? Do they teach that Jesus paid the price for our all our sins and

earned heaven for us? Do they teach that only believers in Jesus will go to heaven? If yes to all those, good! But we still aren't done.

Yes, we want to be sure we aren't drinking straight toilet bowl cleaner, but we also want to make sure that we aren't drinking milk with a little poison mixed in. We need to keep our spiritual diet pure! We want to match *everything* they say up to God's Word. Are they changing some of what God says? Are they leaving out things that God says? Are they adding in things that God doesn't say? We need to make sure their teachings line up 100% to what God says.

You know what that means? It means get into the Word! Each of us needs to know what God's Word says, so that we can match what others say against the Truth. If you aren't studying the Word regularly, you run the risk of drinking your milk with a little poison in it!

And as we grow in the Word, on a pure spiritual diet, our God will surely bless us. I've grown up physically. I'm an adult. Over the years, my body has grown from nutrients in the good things I've eaten and drank, like milk. If I go out for a walk, and a storm comes up, or a flash flood appears, my body is strong enough to give me a good chance to get through those things.

My infant son, however, still has a lot of growing to do. He is still getting those nutrients he needs and over time he'll grow, but right now, he's not too stable. If he's outside and a sudden storm comes up or a flash flood appears, he's not gonna be able to get through those things by himself.

Just as nutrients in things like milk help our bodies to survive harsh times; spiritual milk, God's true Word helps us to grow spiritually. When we mature in our faith, that gives us the ability to get through those storms and floods of life. I'm convinced that just about every problem Christians and Christian churches face stems from a misunderstanding of God's Word.

Think of Job, who lost all his wealth and even his children! Yet he still praised God, saying, "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." (Job 1:21) He was mature because his spiritual diet was pure. Think of the Apostles, who were persecuted, ridiculed, imprisoned, and put to death, but they rejoiced because they were considered worthy of suffering for Jesus' name! (Acts 5:41) They were mature because their spiritual diet was pure.

We've all been lied to. Perhaps some of you have found out years after listening to someone you loved that they were lying to you the whole time. That's hard. It hurts. In the Bible, we have the words of One who will never lie to us. God himself speaks to us through the pages of Scripture. God will never lie to you. He always tells the truth.

Get into that Word. Keep your spiritual diet pure. Be renewed as your God truly promises you full and free forgiveness in Christ; forgiveness for every one of your sins. Be enlightened, as God's true Word exposes Satan's lies in your life, so that you might live more and more maturely. Grow as your God keeps your spiritual diet pure. Amen.