

**Sermon Series**  
**The Superiority of Jesus Christ**  
**July 18, 2021**

**Title: The Christian Training Table**

***Subject: Jesus Christ, Aaron, Hebrew Christians, False Faith, False Believers, Maturity, Apostasy, High Priest, Spiritual Milk, Teachers***

***Theme Text: Hebrews 5:14 (NIV2011)*** <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

**Theme Illustration:** Whether for good or ill, Christians become what we eat. For a Southern Baptist, I am not talking about fried Chicken and tuna macaroni casserole. Our text is not referring to physical food nor to physical growth. Our text is referring to the Spiritual maturation of the believer and the spiritual food that is necessary for us to think biblically about the issues facing the church and our faith today. If we are not being continually fed, our capacity to spiritual discernment is stunted and may even die of malnourishment.

The Holy Spirit is pointing to this malnourishment as a causal factor in the possible apostasy of the Hebrew believers who are the addressees of this book. Elite Athletes both at the college and professional level eat special diets to prolong their careers or enhance personal performance. Seminaries are training tables for future pastors feeding them to equip them to feed God's sheep. Jesus' command to His apostles was to feed and shepherd His sheep because by this the Undershepherd's love for Christ is revealed. These Undershepherds will be judged on how well they feed and tend the sheep. But to those who are being fed it is necessary to present oneself at places where food is being served and eat whether at the home and or the church. The health and maturity of each believer is indicative of the diet they have eaten. God is still delivering His manna to His people through the preaching and teaching of the word. A well-fed true believer will persevere unto eternal life and be able to faithfully navigate these turbulent times. The

gospel, the Apostles teaching are the Lord's appointed means of feeding grace.

***Read: Hebrews 5:11-14***

**Introduction:** We have been examining through the wise, omnipotent mind of God by the Holy Spirit, as to why these Christians were succumbing to the pressures to recant the faith and the Lordship of Christ. Our divinely inspired writer has painstakingly presented to our minds and hearts the superiority of Jesus Christ and the temporary and typical nature of the old covenant and is commencing to teach them the eternal nature of the new covenant and its once for all, atonement for sin.

We have seen our divine source writing to these wavering believers, the superiority of Christ and His High Priesthood over Aaron and the ceremonial law. The Holy Spirit, as our heavenly physician, exposes one of the main culprits leading to this crisis of faith which seems to have a long life becoming a mutating virus that affected Christians then and today.

***Transition: We have at first the Holy Spirit's:***

**1. Diagnosis: Hebrews 5:11-12 (NIV2011) <sup>11</sup> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. <sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!**

The human author is handling this this teaching very delicately. The very essence of the Jewish religion was its Temple and priesthood. Thus, this teaching concerning Christ and the new covenant is being actively ignored or suppressed by the Jewish Christian flocks. By declaring that following our Lord's resurrection, God greeted His Son as priest after the order of Melchizedek is tantamount to declaring the old Aaronic order as having reached its expiration date. The superseded old order includes all of the ordinances and ceremonial facets of the law which are now being declared

obsolete. To the Hebrew Christian, this means repudiating that which their forefathers had practiced for 1500 years.

The Holy Spirit and the human author have done much teaching in this letter. But it is hard to make a truth clear to someone who decides not to listen. They do not want to receive the truths that are being presented because the teaching conflicts with what they already have staked their lives on.

In fact, the Holy Spirit makes the point that if they would have teachable hearts, they would by this time be teachers themselves. They are rejecting the notion of typology as a tool of God. They are rejecting the typological predecessors to Christ that point to the antitype or the fulfillment of these types in Christ.

The phrase, no longer, or try to understand in some translations, dull of hearing. I cannot tell you how many Christians ears go silent when someone teaches the doctrines of grace. These Hebrew Christians probably responded; I've never heard this before. They are resisting higher truth, a truth which, if received, would have contributed greatly to a richer, more hopeful and unbelief resistant life.

The apostle Paul put it this way in his letter to the Galatians, **Galatians 5:7 (NIV2011)** <sup>7</sup> **You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?** Recount the issue that Paul was addressing. Paul was teaching them that circumcision was not required for salvation. They have never heard that before. Many professing Christians are deluded into thinking that salvation is secure who evidence no concern over their present relationship to God.

This concerns the process of sanctification. If we do not keep moving forward, we slip backwards. This means that we must be life long learners. If we are to increase in our knowledge of God as prescribed in the Scriptures, we must give ourselves wholeheartedly to the things of God. **Colossians 1:10 (NIV2011)** <sup>10</sup> **so that you may live a life worthy of the**

**Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...** How many so-called believers are the spiritual offspring of Esau, who sold out the truth for a plate of stew, **Hebrews 12:16 (NIV2011) <sup>16</sup> See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.**

Beloved, we must persevere in putting our minds and hearts to the word of God with right motives, not out of curiosity or to fulfill a duty, but so that we might grow in practical godliness and righteousness.

In addressing these wavering believers, the Holy Spirit points out that many of them ought to buy now be teachers. The Lord was saying you have been a Christian long enough that you can now help others. For these Hebrew believers they have tried to live on spiritual Gerber's split pea and ham. To know the truths of Christ to teach others is a duty of all believers. The New Testament does not limit teaching to the pulpit and the classroom. The most important seminary of the church is the family.

**Transition:** Our divine physician, having diagnosed the condition, now moves to:

**2. Causal Factors: Hebrews 5:13 (NIV2011) <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.**

This person lives on nothing but milk. That person is unskilled in the gospel of God's grace. Why are the words teaching about righteousness used in this context? In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed, **Romans 1:16 (NIV2011) <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.** This gospel describes the way to acceptance by a righteous God through the imputed righteousness of His Son and our High Priest. This righteousness means the end of the law as a means of acceptance or justification with God, **Romans 10:4 (NIV2011) <sup>4</sup> Christ is the**

**culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.** Let us consider what of help the struggling Hebrew Christians to maintain their hope? May, this also help you this morning?

The term infant is a perfect description of a person who has an inadequate knowledge of Christ. This state of infancy characterizes the condition of God's people under Judaism. For infant believers today we begin with the elementary truths of the gospel, in John 3:16. But we move on to what he gave His only son means for the believer. This is why it is important for the faithful church to continue to teach the whole counsel of God to every member.

**Transition:** Our heavenly doctor has a:

**3. Prescription: Hebrews 5:14 (NIV2011) <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**

Strong truth, strong teaching is the portion for those who have left infancy. Through the milk of the word, they have grown in faith and love and are beginning to be able to discern between good and evil. Let me inquire of the parents here to ask you a specific question at what age would you like your children to be able to discern what cultural movements are good and evil? Knowing and discerning these things is different than putting this knowledge into practice. Being able to use our knowledge of Christ and put that knowledge into action as our overarching worldview is the result of thinking biblically. CS Lewis in answering an atheist, concerning his Christian worldview replied, *"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it. I see everything else."*

Parents cannot transmit a Christian worldview to their own children unless they have a Christian worldview themselves. How difficult is it for a baby Christian, concerning cultural trends, to discern the harmless from the evil? Do we even have the courage to teach your children or to stand on the fact

that something the culture may consider to be essential or harmless to be actually evil. Are you able to resist the “everybody does it” or the inevitable taunts that you are narrow and out of step? This is where these wavering Hebrew Christians failed so miserably. A child, in the beginning, can be led to eat anything set before him, and even compelled to eat the distasteful. But a man no matter how sweet to the taste is antifreeze realizes that it will kill you. But you say it is perfectly legal! Being legal does not mean that it is good or even moral. The Scriptures would ask is it profitable? Are you employing the powers of Christian discernment? Or are you just going along to get along.

Please notice the phrase by constant use. What is the Holy Spirit reminding us to constantly use? I know this may be embarrassing when talking to your friends, but we are to constantly use, hold your breath, the word of God.

We need our powers of discernment by the diligent study of God’s word. I highly recommend the wisdom books of the Bible. We are to become constant users of these powers of discernment. Then we must pray for the courage to call things accordingly.

Because the cultural issues are constantly confronting believers we need to constantly train ourselves to distinguish between good and evil.

**Conclusion:** This is where many so-called Christians fail today. They do not walk close enough with God to even care to make good evil distinctions. We are afraid of tantrums from our kids, fellow church members, friends and relatives. Again, they may even call us out of date, a Neanderthal, narrow, unenlightened, or we may even be called worse things.

Stand firm saints with the belt of truth, and the shield of faith, and the gospel of peace with God, and may it go well with you.