

“12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Heb 5:12-14)

This subject has gripped me over the past several months; in fact, I have announced sermons in Trinity Lite on this text, and then did not preach them because the ideas were still forming. But I think I am ready now, and something happened to me that happens once in a while when I am preparing. I realize that there is more than one sermon here. The others are still developing, but this one is ready to preach, I think, and I will be preaching the others in the next weeks. But enough of that, for you are not interested in the process; it is enough that you be interested in the product.

I want to set the immediate context, examine the words and doctrines, and make application; as well as set the table for the sermons that will be following.

I. The immediate context.

- A. These words are part of a strong exhortation by the writer to those who would receive this letter. This exhortation continues from these verses to the end of chapter six.
- B. In the midst of showing that the Lord Jesus is superior to all that went before of Moses and Aaron and Jewish worship, he comes to the subject of Melchisedek, and realizes that most of the Hebrews that he is writing to will be ignorant of the importance of this man in the Old Testament. It would be inexcusable ignorance for every Jew should have understood the implication of Abraham paying tithes to Melchisedek, who was the king of Salem and priest of the most high God. Hence, he was greater than Aaron, and represented a priesthood greater than Aaron's. I explored this in the exegetical sermons I preached on Hebrew a number of years ago and in the Wednesday bible classes more recently.
- C. The problem was that his hearers were still babes when they should be adults. As I have said before, a one year old baby is cute and cuddly; "A 1 year old baby is cute and cuddly; a 6 year old baby is annoying; and 16 year old baby is a nuisance; and a 30 year old baby is a danger to society.". Or something like that.
- D. Jesus commended babies for their helplessness with respect to entering the kingdom of God, for no human strength or ability or wisdom qualifies for entry, but having entered we are called to grow up, to be strong, to be men. But let us look at the words and doctrines.

II. The words and doctrines: verse 14:

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Heb 5:12-14)

- A. “full age” is the word for perfection: which means that which something is intended to be. This word has a time context—it is considered at a particular time. What should you be right now? If you are where you ought to be in the stage of growth, then you are realizing the purpose for your existence, which is the meaning of this word. Behavior and maturity at five years old for a human is something different that five years old for a cat, or for a 40 year old human. A 40 year old peach tree is past its productive years; a 40 year old human is just reaching potential; a 40 year old dog has been dead for several years.
- B. “Senses” is used in two ways: either literally, meaning the five senses of the body by which we interact with the physical world. These senses are sight, hearing, smelling, taste, and touch.
 1. But these senses only convey information to us though the mind; for the mind must interpret the sensory data that is sent to us.
 2. Disease, drugs, alcohol
- C. “Use” means habit, either inborn or acquired. In this case it is both. If you are a Christian you have all your senses; that is not the question; the question is are they developed and mature?

- D. “Exercise” means simply exercise. Practice over and over until you get it right. It because a habit by exercise. This is true in art, in athletics, in work, in all manner of skills, in the use of the senses.
- E. The senses can be improved by exercise and practice. The blind can become very acute in the sense of hearing and touch, and other senses can in some way compensate for deterioration in others.
- F. Doctrine: Just as a baby develops in the use of his physical senses, and the mental awareness that makes the senses meaningful; so the child of God is to grow in his spiritual senses, and he is blameworthy if he does not do so. There are juvenile delinquents in the church just as there are in society. [None in this church] It is very important that you and I grow and mature in the faith, exercising our senses to the glory of God almighty.
- G. Right and wrong is not inborn, although the capacity is inborn. We are born moral creatures, but the conscience must be taught; habits of moral behavior are to be learned and followed or we will make shipwreck of the faith.
- H. Sin is three-fold: action, habit, original. We are talking here about the habit of righteousness, which must be learned. The principles are inborn in us when we are born again by the Spirit, but the habits must be developed. “Desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.”
- III. Application: I will make the first application this morning:
- A. Over the next few Sundays I will make the application to each of the five senses of the body; for the Scripture makes these same application. Sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. I will only make the first one today.
- B. The senses of the body are very closely connect to each other; certain sounds may invoke the memories of smells and sights; etc. But each of the sense in scripture emphasizes one important aspect of our growth in Christ.
- C. Sight: is knowledge and wisdom. If you see something, you know it and understand it in context with other knowledge [wisdom].
- D. Prayerfully consider the following:
1. Re 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:
 2. Lu 12:20 But God said unto him, *Thou fool*, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?
 3. Ps 119:105 NUN. Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Ps 119:130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.
 4. Joh 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd
 5. Joh 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.
 6. Ac 26:18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.
 7. 2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.
 8. 2Co 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 9. 1Pe 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
 10. 1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
 11. 1Jo 2:8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.
- E. How can we gain wisdom and knowledge, and exercise our spiritual eyesight: discernment:

1. By rejecting our own thoughts: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa 55:7)
 2. Study the Bible: read it every day.
 3. Meditation: turn off distractions unless you can use them for meditation: Limbaugh, PBS, Music. Etc. “In his law doth he meditate day and night.”
 4. Pray for wisdom and knowledge: “If any man lack wisdom.” “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (Ps 119:18 AV)
 5. Spiritualize everything of the creation: for all speaks to us of wisdom if our eyes are open: Creation is a visibilization of hidden things. The bible is the key, but creation and experience give data.
- F. 1Pe 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.” God has knowledge and wisdom.

May God bless you. Amen and Amen.