

Series: Words of Counsel and Correction

MILK OR MEAT

1 CORINTHIANS 3

Text: 1 Corinthians 3:2

1 Corinthians 3:2

² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

Introduction:

In our passage Paul draws our attention to three individuals.

Note:

1. THE NATURAL MAN

First of all, the natural man, the man who is doing what comes naturally.

Look again at verse 14:

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither

can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Note:

A. He is Born Into a Natural World

Why is he a natural man?

Well, first of all, he is born into a natural world.

He has only one birth—that is, the first birth.

He has not experienced the second birth.

He is just simply a man as he is by nature.

And, nature not only formed him, but nature deformed him.

Remember:

Schools may inform him, and man may reform him, but only Christ can transform him.

This man not yet been transformed.

He is just simply a natural man.

He's just like he is.

He may be a professor; he may be a policeman; he may be a butcher, a banker, or an Indian chief.

He may be a good natural man, a bad natural man, a smart natural man, a dumb natural man, a fat natural man, or a fit natural man, but he is a natural man.

So, he does what comes naturally.

Note the words of the Lord:

Mark 14:21

²¹ The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

And, it is better for the natural man without the new birth that he'd never been born at all, because, if you're born once, you die twice.

Not only is he a natural man because his is born into a natural world but also note:

B. He is Blind to a Spiritual World

There are two worlds, but he's blind to the spiritual world.

He has not appreciation for spiritual things.

Look in verse 14:

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

These words *receiveth not* mean "he welcomes not."

Just like you receive a person into your house, you welcome them into your house.

This man has no appreciation of spiritual things.

He does not welcome spiritual things. He does not appreciate spiritual things.

Now, this doesn't mean that he doesn't have some appreciation of some things.

He does appreciate some things, and he even appreciates church things.

The natural man can appreciate some things.

The natural man, appreciates it when you meet your budget.

The natural man can come to church, and he can appreciate a big love offering.

The natural man can appreciate good preaching as long as it's not regarding him.

He appreciates good music.

He can appreciate meetings, and Sunday school, and certain things, but he does not appreciate the true things of God.

He does not hear what others are hearing.

He does not sense what others are sensing.

He comes, and he's operating on one wavelength, and others are on another, because he is perishing.

He has no spiritual appreciation.

He cannot appreciate spiritual things; he cannot apprehend spiritual things.

Look in verse 14, again:

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither

can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

A spiritual message rolls off his back like water rolls from a duck's back.

He does not apprehend spiritual things.

Turn to John 8:

John 8:47

⁴⁷ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

They can hear the sound; they may even take the outline of the message.

They may be able to walk out and talk about the natural man, the spiritual man, and the carnal man.

The natural man has no spiritual appreciation; the natural man has no spiritual apprehension. He does not have the apparatus to tune in.

Right here, in this room as I speak there's sound waves of music, and football games and probably other sporting events, and even Christian broadcasting; but you can't tune it in, because you don't have a TV or radio receiver with you.

It's here. but, you don't have the apparatus to tune it in.

God's Spirit is here, and to the child of God, God's Spirit bears witness with his spirit; but *"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"* (1 Corinthians 2:14).

He does not welcome them; they don't make sense to him.

He cannot apprehend them; he cannot understand them—*"neither can he know them"* (1 Corinthians 2:14).

He is born into a natural world; he is blind to the spiritual world; and, therefore, he is bound to the material world.

His motto is, "You only go through life once; so grab all the gusto you can get."

That is the Natural Man note secondly

2. THE SPIRITUAL MAN

1 Corinthians 2:15

¹⁵ But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

This is the man who does what comes supernaturally.

What are the marks of the spiritual man?

A. He Lives by the Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:12

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

A spiritual man is one who has received the Spirit of God.

He has been born from above.

He has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Remember:

Christianity is not believing something; it is receiving Someone.

It will be a great day when people learn that Christianity is not a creed, it is not a code, it is not a cause, it is not a church; it is Christ in you.

Christianity is not just simply getting man out of Earth into Heaven; it is getting God out of Heaven into man.

A spiritual man lives by the Spirit but also:

B. He Learns from the Spirit

Notice, beginning in verse 12 and following:

1 Corinthians 2:12-16

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

¹⁵ But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

A spiritual man not only lives by the Spirit of God, but he learns from the Spirit of God.

The spiritual man knows things that cannot be taught in school.

Now, I am not against education but I'd rather be in Heaven saying my ABCs than be in Hell spouting philosophy, any day.

I am not against education, but you do not come to God headfirst, you come to God heart-first.

Luke 10:21

²¹ In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

He learns from the Spirit.

The natural man, with all of his wisdom, with all of his philosophy can never figure out God.

We have considered the Natural and Spiritual Man let me quickly address:

3. THE CARNAL MAN

The natural man; does what comes naturally.

The spiritual man; he does what comes supernaturally.

But now, I want you to notice the carnal man; he does what comes unnaturally.

This guy is a mess.

Look at him. 1 Corinthians 3:1:

1 Corinthians 3:1

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Note what are the three marks of the carnal man

A. He is Deformed

He is deformed.

He is sort of a monstrosity.

He is saved, but he is defeated.

He has too much of the supernatural in him to be natural; he has too much of the natural in him to be supernatural.

He's just unnatural.

Sadly he is average.

Never make the mistake of thinking that the average is normal.

There's a vast difference between the average and the normal.

The normal Christian is the Spirit-filled life.

The carnal Christian is abnormal, subnormal, unnatural.

Don't settle and say, "Well, I'm like everybody else."

Quote:

Vance Havner once said:

"The average Christian is so subnormal that, if anybody ever becomes normal, he'll look abnormal."

When somebody is not a spiritual person—when somebody is a carnal person—that means something has gone wrong, something is haywire.

He is doing what comes unnaturally, because he is a believer.

He often looks and acts like an unsaved person.

He is deformed; he has not matured.

Some come to church on Sunday morning, and get their warm milk—and want somebody to shake their hand, and burp them, as they go out the door.

They have not grown in the Lord.

They are spiritually deformed.

Not only are they deformed but also:

B. He is Dependent

It's all right to be a baby, if you're a baby.

We don't expect much out of these who first get saved; they've got to grow on into maturity.

Note verse 2

1 Corinthians 3:2

² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

There are three classes, or three stages of growth.

- First of all, you have to be fed
- Secondly, you can feed yourself
- Thirdly, you're able to feed others.

Paul says, "I still have to feed you.

I can't give you meat because your not able to handle it so I had to feed you milk,

Sadly today there are some who have been saved long enough, had enough opportunities, heard enough, but they haven't grown.

They are dependent upon others.

Not only are the carnal deformed and dependent but also:

C. He is Divisive

Notice verses 3, 4:

1 Corinthians 3:3-4

³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? ⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Some were expressing their allegiance to Paul while some were expressing their allegiance to Apollos. This was a mark of their carnality.

You want to test whether you're carnal or spiritual?

Never test a person by his actions.

All of these things that Paul is mentioning here are reactions, not actions.

Look at them. Verse 3:

1 Corinthians 3:3

³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

These are reactions.

I can plan my actions.

I've already planned what I was going to say, this evening, in the sermon.

I can plan my actions. I can say, "Now, I'm going to be up there on the platform, act nice, sit nice, smile, and all that because you're watching me.

That's my actions. I plan my actions.

But, if you want to know what I really am, you watch my reactions; you irritate me, and see what spills out.

Whatever spills out is what I'm full of.

Remember:

You can plan your actions; but, it is your reaction that tells whether you're natural, carnal, or spiritual.

Sadly there are many carnal people.

They come to church; they look the part; they sing so nice, but, you let somebody cross them, and you'll see what spills out: childishness, immaturity, envy, strife, and divisions.

Close:

I hope this evening we see where we are.

Are you a natural man—never been born again?

Are you blind to the spiritual world, born in the natural world, and bound by the material world?

Are you a spiritual man with life from the Spirit, led by the Spirit?

Are you a carnal person—deformed, dependent, and divisive?

May we allow the Lord to lead us to the place that He desires for us to be.